Spring 2020
PHIL 3315: Communication Ethics
Section MW3  Registration Code 38347
Monday, Wednesday: 3:40 – 4:55 PM
Prof. Quixote Vassilakis

Democracy, Journalism, and Truth: The New Media Environment

This course offers a defense of journalism as necessary for democracy and aims to help make sense of the role of journalism and the media in our contemporary moment of fake news, post-truth, and far-right populism. The class will develop and build on philosophical frameworks for thinking about the ethics of journalism as well as the responsibilities of the public as news consumers, the history and justification of journalism as a moral and political practice, standards of objectivity and verification in the media, and conflicts of interest. However, in light of recent developments, many of the core ideas about the practice of journalism have taken on a new appearance. To address this change, unpack its causes, and consider possible solutions, recent work in cultural theory, media studies, and ethics will be woven into the discussion of the foundations of journalism. By the end of this course, students will have heard arguments in defense of journalism as a practice that is necessary for the function of democracy and will have had the opportunity to think critically about how the core function of journalism as the ‘fourth estate’ is complicated by the recent seismic cultural, technological, and political changes.

For more information, please contact Prof. Vassilakis: quixoteradiovassilakis@gmail.com.