The title of this class is Communication Ethics, but it is an introductory course to journalism ethics. Our first three units are aimed at developing ethical frameworks for journalism in general. We will begin by outlining an ethical framework for journalism based on a philosophical ethics that emphasizes the ways in which journalism ought to serve the public. After that, we examine how this framework for media ethics is challenged within the context of globalization, asking whether the ethical framework developed in the previous unit is applicable universally. Next, we will examine the effects of the internet and new media on our framework for journalism ethics.

Our next two units will delve into specific problems related to journalism. The issue to be raised is whether objective journalism is at all possible. Next we will outline a theory for understanding the nature of conflict of interest, how they arise, some tactics for reducing conflicts, and a discussion of conflicts found in the context of the internet and new media. Topics will be addressed through a series of essays that deal with the topics at hand. The course bears in mind recent developments in the condition of the news media on the national and local level, and ask students to think critically about these developments in relation to their class readings.

The objectives of this course will be to familiarize students with some of the literature surrounding the media and journalism broadly; to give students the opportunity to practice and refine their written and oral communication; and to promote critical reading and analysis of scholarly essays.

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