

COMM 215-202: Ethics & Communication



Instructor: Matthew Jungsuk Howard, Ph.D.
(Dr. or Professor Howard)
Pronouns: he/him/his

Course Credit Hours: 3.00
Prerequisites: COMM 175

Course Overview

This course explores various approaches to ethical decision-making and applies that process to diverse aspects of everyday, contemporary life.

Learning Objectives

Over the course of this class, students will:

- Build knowledge of ethical frameworks and concepts.

- Explore the connections between these ethical frameworks & concepts and various communication contexts.
- See these frameworks, concepts, and connections at work in real world case studies.
- Apply the frameworks, concepts, and connections to cases of personal interest in a group setting.

Required Texts

This course requires the use of this book. The most recent edition is available on Amazon for \$13.99. We also have an earlier edition available through the library, but I will see whether we can get PDFs of those chapters.

- Blackburn, S. (2003, 2021). *Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

All other required readings will be available either by hyperlink or on Sakai in PDF format. There is no required textbook for the course. Students will also be expected to contribute their own article findings weekly based on their interests and current events for in-class discussion.

Technology Requirements

This course will require access to both a computer and the internet. I recognize that, while the university provides such resources, there are material and circumstantial limits to their accessibility. If you have trouble accessing materials or need help getting access to necessary technologies, please reach out to me so we can make sure you're set up to succeed.

Additionally, the multimodal forms of deliverables I will accept on projects mean that you may need access to other technologies such as cameras, microphones, and other multimedia equipment. If you need access to such equipment, please get in touch with the Owl Lab. Their website is [luc.edu/owlab](https://www.luc.edu/owlab/), and there is a link to reserve equipment on here:

<https://www.luc.edu/soc/resources/owlab/>.

Course Policies

Class Meeting Structure

This course meets three days per week. Our Mondays will focus on denser readings to establish concepts and contexts. Wednesdays will be more about group discussions and activities as a class. Fridays will be "Current Events" days, that will focus on small group discussions of student-selected cases in the real world that we find relevant or interesting. Before class, you'll post a link to your article, a summary of the situation and the article's major points, and a brief discussion of where you stand on the situation. This Current Events post will go on Sakai.

Trans- and LGBTQIA+ Inclusive Syllabus Statement

In the interest of inviting everyone into this course and this classroom in the spirit of their entire selves, I welcome you to let me know your pronouns, preferred names, and any other identifying information that will help you feel accepted in your entirety. You are welcome to do this in class during attendance or what have you, or privately through email or after class as desired.

Communication with Me

I am best reached by email, and I will do my best to respond to student emails within 24 hours unless they pertain to an absence or project extension. If you do not hear from me within 72 hours (3 days), please follow-up with me so I can make sure I address your questions.

Attendance

TL;DR: Be in Class. My policy for this course is that if you miss 2 weeks or more of class (more than 5 sessions), then it becomes difficult to say that you're getting out of this experience what you should be. Therefore, if you miss more than 5 class meetings unexcused, you will fail the course due to excessive absences.

That's the broad point for this section. However, I get that life happens, COVID happens, illnesses other than COVID (yup, those still exist) happen, etc. The world is a complicated place, and we're all just trying to live, so, there are some exceptions to the above rule. If you experience things that would cause you to miss more than 5 classes, please get in touch with me **immediately** so that we can talk through logistics to help you pass.

Assignments and Grading

Your final grade will be determined based on the following grading scale:

- A (94-100)
- A- (93-90)
- B+ (89-87)
- B (86-84)
- B- (83-80)
- C+ (79-77)
- C (76-74)
- C- (73-70)
- D+ (69-67)
- D (66-64)
- D- (63-60)
- F (59-0)

Your grade in this course will be based on the following assignments. Percentage of final grade is included in parentheses:

- Your Personal Statement on Ethical Communication (5%)
- Current Event Posts (5% each; total of 45%)
- Final Group Project Annotated Bibliography (10%)
- Final Group Project Writeup (20%)
- Final Group Project Presentation (20%)

Due Dates and Late Work

I will accept project submissions up to one week late. However, this will have an effect on your grade. Milestone points earned from late work will be decreased by half.

Extensions

Life happens. If you have something come up that will render you unable to turn in your project module on-time, please notify me by email. While I prefer to know at least 24 hours in advance, I also realize that emergencies are a thing. If you have an emergency that comes up within 24 hours of the assignment due date, please send me an email to let me know. If this happens, even if I do not respond, please consider yourself given a 24 hour extension on your deadline. Me not seeing the emergency does not negate its effect on you.

If you require a longer extension than 24 hours, please notify me in your email when you reach out to let me know you need an extension. We'll settle on something that works for us both.

On Generative A.I. and This Course

The following language was sent out by the Provost's Office on the use of generative A.I. for courses:

To maintain our culture of excellence and integrity, students are not to use AI assisted technology in the classroom unless they are specifically authorized to do so by their faculty for an assignment, a test, a quiz, or any deliverable that will be graded.

In the spirit of this statement, I will encourage you only to use generative A.I. in this course in a limited capacity. That is, if I receive papers or reflections that come back from TurnItIn with a massive A.I. score, I will schedule a conversation with you to talk through those findings and the assignment in question. If we find that you've had the A.I. do the work for you, then that will be grounds for unsatisfactory grades on your work. However, I won't "outlaw" generative A.I. use entirely. Because we are going to be living with and alongside these kinds of technologies for a very long time at this point, I think that the use of generative A.I. for helping you get started in the ideas or planning stage of your projects can be useful, not just for now, but for your professional work in the future. If you use generative A.I., please disclose that as part of your project deliverables and note the ways that it affected your work process. Lack of disclosure will be treated as an incident of Academic Misconduct.

Course Calendar

I've built this course calendar along the following format:

- [Course Day & Date] -- Course Meeting Title
 - [Reading/Homework due ON THIS DAY]
 - **[Project/Package Announcement and/or Due Date]**
 - **[LOGISTICS NOTE, I.E. CLASS SESSION CANCELLATIONS, UNIVERSITY BREAKS]**

Please note that the homework, readings, and project due dates I'm putting on the calendar indicate an assignment due that day. So, for Week 2, I'm asking you to have reading X done for Wednesday's class. It is listed as a bullet under Wednesday, February 7th.

All of the assignments, titles, guest speakers, etc. In this schedule are subject to change. If something has to shift, I will let you know at least 24 hours in advance.

Week 1: Introduction and Syllabus

- **MONDAY (1/15) -- NO CLASS; MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY**
- Wednesday (1/17)
 - Read Syllabus
- Friday (1/19)
 - **Your personal statement on Ethical Communication (250 words max) due today.**

Week 2: Positionality

- Monday (1/22)
 - Haraway, D. (1988). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14(3), p. 575-599.
- Wednesday (1/24)
- Friday (1/26)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 3: Deontology

- Monday (1/29)
 - Blackburn Chapter 1
- Wednesday (1/31)
 - Read Isaac Asimov's short story *Runaround*
- Friday (2/2)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 4: Consequentialism

- Monday (2/5)
 - Blackburn Chapter 2
- Wednesday (2/7)

- Friday (2/9)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 5: Virtue Ethics

- Monday (2/12)
 - Blackburn Chapter 3
- Wednesday (2/14)
- Friday (2/16)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 6: Ethics and Technologies

- Monday (2/19)
 - Pranam, A. (2019, November 29). Why the Retirement of Lee Se-Dol, Former Go Champion, is a Sign of Things to Come. *Forbes*.
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/aswinpranam/2019/11/29/why-the-retirement-of-lee-se-dol-former-go-champion-is-a-sign-of-things-to-come/?sh=549e08463887>.
- Wednesday (2/21)
- Friday (2/23)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 7: Ethics and Media

- Monday (2/26)
 - Choe, S. and Kim, S. (2015). Never Stop Playing: StarCraft and Asian Gamer Death. In D. Roh, B. Huang, and G. A. Niu (Eds.) *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History and Media* (p. 113-124). Rutgers University Press.
- Wednesday (2/28)
- Friday (3/1)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 8 – **NO CLASS; SPRING BREAK FROM MARCH 4 TO MARCH 10**

Week 9: Ethics and Fun

- Monday (3/11)
 - Ostler, A. (2024, January 12). Warhammer CRPG opens up debate about good and evil paths, and many think doing the right thing shouldn't lead to better rewards. *GamesRadar*. <https://www.gamesradar.com/warhammer-crpg-opens-up-debate-about-good-and-evil-paths-and-many-think-doing-the-right-thing-shouldnt-lead-to-better-rewards/>.
- Wednesday (3/13)
- Friday (3/15)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 10: Ethics, History, and Communication

- Monday (3/18)

- Sweet, J. H. (2022, August 17). Is History History? Identity Politics and Teleologies of the Present. *Perspectives on History*. <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/september-2022/is-history-history-identity-politics-and-teleologies-of-the-present>.
- Foley, M. and Satia, P. (2022, September 7). Responses to “Is History History?” *Perspectives on History*. <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/october-2022/responses-to-is-history-history>.
- Wednesday (3/20)
- Friday (3/22)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 11: Ethics & Bodies

- Monday (3/25)
 - Hedva, J. (2016). Sick Woman Theory. *Mask Magazine*.
- Wednesday (3/27)
- Friday (3/29)
 - **Post an article with summary and analysis for Current Events.**

Week 12: Analyzing Ethics (Final Project Introduction and Group Formation)

- **Monday (4/1) -- NO CLASS; EASTER HOLIDAY**
- Wednesday (4/3)
 - **Meet at the Cudahy Library for Library Instruction**
- Friday (4/5)

Week 13:

- Monday (4/8)
 - Post links to 2-3 sources you’ve found that you intend to use in your Group’s Annotated Bibliography.
- Wednesday (4/10)
- Friday (4/12)
 - **Group Project Annotated Bibliography due by 5pm.**

Week 14:

- Monday (4/15)
- Wednesday (4/17)
 - Submit an outline of your Group Project Writeup on Sakai.
- Friday (4/19)

Week 15: Group Workshops for Final Projects

- Monday (4/22)
- Wednesday (4/24)
- Friday (4/26)
 - **Group Project Writeup due by 5pm.**

Final Exam: Thursday 5/2 from 9:00am-11:00am – We will do the Group Project Presentations during this period.

School of Communication and Loyola University Chicago Policies

Instructor Reporting Obligations as a Responsible Campus Partner

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Campus Partner (“RCP”) under Loyola’s [Comprehensive Policy and Procedures for Addressing Discrimination, Sexual Misconduct, and Retaliation](#) (located at www.luc.edu/equity). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a RCP I am required to report certain disclosures of sexual misconduct (such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, intimate partner and/or domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the University’s [Title IX](#) Coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation under Illinois law to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect (<https://www.luc.edu/hr/legal-notices/mandatedreportingofchildabuseandneglect/>).

The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform students who have experienced sexual/gender-based violence of available resources and support. Such a report **will not generate a report to law enforcement** (no student will ever be forced to file a report with the police). Furthermore, the University’s resources and supports are available to all students even if a student chooses that they do not want any other action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take additional action to ensure the safety of the University community. If you have any questions about this policy, you may contact the [Office for Equity & Compliance](#) at equity@luc.edu or 773-508-7766.

If you wish to speak with a confidential resource regarding gender-based violence, I encourage you to call [The Line](#) at 773-494-3810. The Line is staffed by confidential advocates from 8:30am-5pm M-F and 24 hours on the weekend when school is in session. Advocates can provide support, talk through your options (medical, legal, LUC reporting, safety planning, etc.), and connect you with additional resources as needed. More information can be found at luc.edu/coalition or luc.edu/wellness.

Accommodations for Differently-Abled Students

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors will receive an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professor individually in order to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. Please note that in this class, software may be used to audio record class lectures in order to provide equitable access to students with disabilities. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and

recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students whose classroom comments are recorded as part of the class activity. Recordings are deleted at the end of the semester. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu.

Accommodations for Students with Children

Students who are the caretakers, guardians, or parents of children are allowed to bring their children with them to class in the event of an emergency, if childcare plans fall through, etc.

Please let me know ahead of time if you will be bringing your child/children to class and also sit near the door in the event that the student needs to leave the classroom to tend to the child/children.

If the child/children are using devices like phones, tablets, etc. to entertain them during class time, I also ask that the student who is their caretaker/guardian/parent to make sure to provide headphones as to not disturb the rest of the class.

Academic Integrity

A basic mission of a university is to search for and to communicate truth as it is honestly perceived. A genuine learning community cannot exist unless this demanding standard is a fundamental tenet of the intellectual life of the community. Students of Loyola University Chicago are expected to know, to respect, and to practice this standard of personal honesty.

Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. These examples of academic dishonesty apply to both individual and group assignments. Academic cheating is a serious act that violates academic integrity. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, such acts as:

- Obtaining, distributing, or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the teacher.
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor.
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted.
- Taking an examination by proxy. Taking or attempting to take an exam for someone else is a violation by both the student enrolled in the course and the proxy.
- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom.

- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or extensions of deadlines.
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as the Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc.
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material.
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.
- Submitting the same work for credit in two or more classes, even if the classes are taken in different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. A more detailed description of this issue can be found at https://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the instructor's assigning the grade of "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty must be reported by the instructor to the Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication. Instructors must provide the appropriate information and documentation when they suspect an instance of academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor must also notify the student of their findings and sanction.

The Associate and Assistant Deans of the School of Communication may constitute a hearing board to consider the imposition of sanctions in addition to those imposed by the instructor, including a recommendation of expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. In

the case of multiple instances of academic dishonesty, the Dean's office may convene a separate hearing board to review these instances. The student has the right to appeal the decision of the hearing board to the Dean of SOC. If the student is not a member of the SOC, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled shall be part of the process. Students have the right to appeal the decision of any hearing board and the deans of the two schools will review the appeal together. Their decision is final in all cases except expulsion. The sanction of expulsion for academic dishonesty may be imposed only by the Provost upon recommendation of the dean or deans.

Students have a right to appeal any finding of academic dishonesty against them. The procedure for such an appeal can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicgrievance.shtml.

The School of Communication maintains a permanent record of all instances of academic dishonesty. The information in that record is confidential. However, students may be asked to sign a waiver which releases that student's record of dishonesty as a part of the student's application to a graduate or professional school, to a potential employer, to a bar association, or to similar organizations.