

MED

Newsletter

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It Is Time to Submit Your Conference Proposals!

by Sorin Nastasia, Newsletter Editor

In the region of the world where I was born, Eastern Europe, as well as the region of the world where I currently reside, North America, public confidence in democratic institutions has been eroding. Growing economic and social inequalities, populist and nationalist political discourses, as well as the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation on social media have all amplified this confidence erosion with dire consequences. These are issues I address in my classes, including in my Ethics in Public Relations and Communication Management course, from a professional perspective which includes my unique personal standpoint.



What issues with ethical bearings do you examine in your classrooms, research endeavors, or other professional settings? Consider sharing your thoughts on such areas of inquiry in a submission to the MED division for the annual AEJMC conference! Share the information included in this newsletter with students and peers and encourage them to submit a paper or where appropriate an extended abstract. See you at the AEJMC conference in August!

MED Newsletter

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Watch for future MED Newsletter issues! Highlights will include:

- Updates on conference preparation and activities
- Updates on Professional Freedom and Responsibility activities of MED
- Updates on articles included in the Journal of Media Ethics

Covering the “Pause” on DEI on College Campuses

by Anita Varma - Division Head



Public universities in Texas, Florida, and North Carolina have made national news headlines this semester for “pausing,” “dismantling,” and “eliminating”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. As most of us remember, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion commitments rose to prominence across colleges and universities in the United States in the wake of police murdering George Floyd in 2020. Solidarity protests across the country (and the world) amplified demands for ending systemic anti-Black racism by dismantling white supremacy. On college campuses, students staged sit-ins, signed petitions, and engaged with alumni to call for changes to curricula, admissions, faculty hiring, and campus culture. Many universities responded by swiftly implementing changes through dedicated offices of DEI, and by promising to prioritize DEI across all units.

Yet recent news coverage of DEI at public universities rarely includes this context. At most, some news coverage includes a line about DEI existing to “help minorities feel more welcome on college campuses.” Feeling welcome would be nice, but the reason for DEI on college campuses has never been so mundane: DEI is part of a response to systemic racism that university leaders publicly acknowledged was necessary and overdue in 2020. As historically elite, exclusive, and homogenous spaces, many universities have fallen short of their

promises to serve a diverse student body, which DEI offices were supposed to help address.

Covering the dismantling of DEI on college campuses raises a range of ethical questions. For example, I would guess that no one reading this text was completely unaware of the context I summarized in the first paragraph – so should journalists bother to include this background at all? Perhaps we all know what DEI means, such that journalists should instead focus on what’s changing based on recent statements and actions from state officials. On the other hand, we might raise concerns about the one-sidedness of coverage that exclusively quotes and amplifies critiques of DEI from politicians aiming to end it.

Efforts to dismantle DEI on college campuses have focused on hiring, and sought to end practices of asking job applicants for diversity statements. At the same time, there are bills under consideration in multiple states that would prohibit faculty from broaching topics of systemic racism and oppression in





publicly funded university classrooms and settings. Are these bills newsworthy, or should journalists focus on what has already happened? Fear-mongering is a risk when covering proposed legislation, but there are also risks of a reactive press that only informs the public after a bill has passed or a change has been made.

Finally, it's worth considering that DEI has been criticized by people on the political right and the political left. Critics sometimes converge on the argument that DEI practices so far have been ornamental, at best. Yet national news coverage usually focuses squarely on politicians on the right who criticize DEI. When should journalists treat critiques of DEI as newsworthy, and does it make a difference who is articulating these critiques?

Has DEI been paused or placed under review at your university? I'd welcome your thoughts and ideas about how we can prepare students to cover this ongoing story.

Anita Varma

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A Preview of MED Sponsored Panels for the 2023 Conference

by Yayu Feng - Vice Head and Programming Chair



We now have our list of panels finalized, and we are here to offer a preview of all our panels to you, our esteemed members and loyal newsletter readers. Thanks to everyone who submitted panel ideas! We

are fortunate to be sponsoring panels that cover a wide range of intellectually challenging and timely topics, with diverse panelists from both academia and industry. We hope you can join us in these panel discussions!

Media Ethics Division and Commission on the Status of Women

Adopting Ethics of Care in Journalism

Practice: Perspectives of Women, Indigenous People, and Minorities in Reporting Conduct

This panel explores the application of ethics of care in journalism. It asks how the ethics of care is demonstrated in doing journalism in non-Western countries, Indigenous communities, and in reporting in small communities where everyone knows and is related to each other. It discusses how journalism is demonstrating an ethics of care in reporting disasters and tragedies. Panelists will discuss feminist and life experience roots of the ethics of care, and the challenges of practicing it, as well as provide examples.

Media Ethics Division and Minority and Communications Division

"I Would Much Prefer not to Be Visible:"

Ethical Drawbacks of Visibility for Marginalized People

This panel challenges the assumption that visibility is inherently positive in journalism.

It invites us to think about journalists' responsibilities in reporting marginalized groups. What are journalists' ethical obligations when people ask to remain invisible? When, if ever, do journalists have a duty to people who prefer not to become sources, even if anonymized? How should journalists balance safety considerations for entire communities becoming the targets of hateful campaigns with the public's right and need to know?

Media Ethics Division and Law and Policy Division

Covering Gun Violence Ethically, Legally, and Professionally

This panel presents a timely discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in news coverage of gun violence and aims to provide guidance. Journalists are confronting ethical dilemmas whose resolution may require them to reframe how they report on shootings because of the psychic trauma inflicted by gun violence, and the legal implications of depicting law enforcement officers as potential crime suspects in some of them. Both issues are at the fore when graphic footage is available from police body cameras or bystanders' recordings. News providers may need to consider whether it has become necessary to go beyond episodic reporting to explain how gun violence harms communities.

Media Ethics Division and Public Relations Division

The Assumptions, Ethical Implications, and Unobserved Effects of PR Research

This research panel discusses the ethical considerations undertaken by PR research and the profession to address assumptions made



about data, metrics, and observed effects of communication within the field of PR. Panelists will discuss perceptions of ethics, transparency, and how topics within PR (e.g., corporate social responsibility and corporate social advocacy) enable organizations to align with emerging issues.

Broadcast and Mobile Journalism Division and Media Ethics Division
How Will Local Journalism Change as Metaverse, Mobile 5G and Decentralized Web 3.0 Take Shape?

As Metaverse, high speed mobile internet, and decentralized transaction system in the form of cryptocurrency become increasingly visible in our life, this panel offers a futurist discussion on the new media landscape's impact on local journalism, and the potential ethical issues. The panel will outline a few questions and scenarios to spark discussions to avoid the perils of journalism's encounters with social media that led to many after-the-fact ethics advisories to be issued.

History Division and Media Ethics Division
Coming Clean: Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparation in Journalism

This panel is a continuation of a paper presented to the Media Ethics Division at the 2022 conference. This panel will explore truth and reconciliation efforts by American news organizations in the last few years, the philosophical and theological underpinnings for such efforts, efforts that these news organizations have made to assess racist coverage patterns and practices going back to the nineteenth century, the difference between lip service and meaningful apology and action to mend rifts between news organizations and their communities, attempts to diversify the newsroom and the obstacles that have impeded them, and the need for reparations in American news media.

Commission on the Status of Graduate Education and Media Ethics Division
'Now, I Am #Viral:' Examining Safety, Privacy, and Professionalization for Graduate Students on the Front Lines of Media

This panel explores an interesting phenomenon of graduate students going viral when few of them are truly prepared for the intense media scrutiny or its accompanying life intrusion. Through dialogue in this panel, graduate students and public facing, renowned faculty will unpack the modern landscape of safety, privacy, and professionalization for graduate students emerging as public personas. Attendees will hear first person accounts, discuss proactive strategies, and receive timely tips to navigate the chaos better, both personally and professionally.

Newspaper and Online News Division and Media Ethics Division
Telling Journalism's Story: Teaching News Literacy to Non-Journalism Majors

Many universities are now offering news literacy courses for non-journalism majors in hope to equip students with the necessary skills to consume news. This teaching panel brings together faculty who have taught news literacy courses for a discussion of best practices, what seems to work, what effects these courses have, and how to increase the number of college students who get news literacy training before graduating.

Please submit your papers for consideration for the Media Education Division of AEJMC. Looking forward to reading more of your works!

Yayu Feng
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Heartfelt Gratitude and an Appeal for Grace

by Joe Jones, Research Chair



Thanks to all MED members for considering the ethical issues we do. And an extra thank you to everyone who signed up to be a reviewer for this year's conference (there's still time to do so by April 1 by completing the form available at the following link: <https://forms.gle/6ftIJGGxgm4QYpSSA>)!

Our time is precious and not nearly enough credit and gratitude are given for our service. In many academic positions, service requirements are the least valued by administration – it's difficult negotiating salary based solely on one's service contributions – while service requirements for professionals, freelancers, and a host of others is the expected “above and beyond” that just comes with being an employee (and what the moral panic over quiet quitting was about). Simultaneously, I would argue that service is one of the main reasons many of us do what we do. Service is certainly the primary animating force of AEJMC as an organization, education as a profession, and MED's existence in particular. If we ask what each of these three things is for, the purpose of each, we find that service – assisting and helping others as an end in itself – underlies their entire mission and social role.

So while we all need and deserve resources and fair compensation, service is both a crucial force driving our reasons for being and also something that must be voluntary given independent of remuneration. Service (like care) is a limited resource that depletes a person for the sake of others. Also like care, it is necessary to survive. When I thank you for considering ethics and providing service to others, I have all of this in mind. My gratitude runs deep, and I offer a friendly hug, handshake, or whatever you are comfortable with. Service in our organizations, our communities, our daily lives is required, and you answered the call. Without you, I could not be the best version of me, so how could I not be thankful?

To those who have my extra thanks for reviewing this year, I have a humble appeal for grace. I firmly believe that media ethics is for everyone, and that every educator, practitioner, and citizen should think through and incorporate ethical thinking. I have therefore personally appealed to more graduate students, academics outside MED, and professional media makers to consider submitting to MED this year. Because this is such a quality space to deliberate ethics, more people should be participating in and enriching our conversations. This does not mean we have to sacrifice rigor or quality, far from it. But it does mean we need to be more inviting to those who should be participating and offer truly constructive feedback when we critique their efforts.

Just as ethical thinking involves more than answers, I hope reviewers will be extra considerate this year and give the reasoning behind their criticisms. We've all had a “Reviewer #2” and some of us have faced rejections that made us question our abilities. Showing your work and articulating why something does not meet your requirements for ethical thinking can go a long way in helping others (and may end up stimulating the kinds of ethical thinking you do prefer). While we should absolutely hold high standards for MED, I also ask that we are empathetic to other, less traditional points of view. Ethical thinking is for everyone, and if we have evaluated someone based on their merits and still found them wanting, then I hope we have the courtesy to explain why. I realize I'm asking more from those who have already offered their service. But if you have read this far and are still willing to review, then I have every confidence that you care and are willing to put in that effort as an end in itself. Please let me know if you prefer a hug, handshake, or something else you are comfortable with as gratitude for your service, and I'll see you in D.C.!

Gratefully yours,

Joe Jones

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AEJMC Conference Call - Media Ethics Division



The Media Ethics Division (MED) seeks a diverse range of original faculty and graduate student paper submissions related to ethics. Media ethics pertain to all manner of communication types and practices, and we welcome submissions that address both traditional and emergent issues in our changing media landscape.

Ethics-related topics and concerns include but *are not limited to*: issues of justice, power, and representation; the ethics of storytelling; the ethics of diversity, inclusion, and belonging; ethical decision-making; moral development; truth-telling and deception; privacy; credibility; accountability; the relationship between journalism and democracy; organizational norms and routines; global ethics; the impact of technology on ethics; the relationship between economic structures and ethical practices, audience considerations; applied ethics in journalism, advertising, public relations, digital technology (such as social media and platforms), or entertainment; and the relationships between law, history, and ethics.

The division seeks scholarship on all media contexts such as journalism, advertising, public relations, entertainment, digital media, social media, etc.; from a range of theoretical/paradigmatic approaches including philosophical, critical, sociological, psychological, pedagogical, etc.; and using a range of methods including qualitative, quantitative, critical-cultural, and mixed methods. Essays grounded in ethics theory are also welcome.

All papers should adhere to APA style (7th edition); must be no more than 25 pages (excluding title page, references, figures, illustrations, and/or appendices); should be double-spaced, use 1-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman or equivalent font; should be saved as Word or PDF; and must otherwise conform to the rules outlined in the AEJMC Uniform Call for Papers. MED also accepts extended abstracts (750-1,500 words) following the Extended Abstract Call Guidelines for AEJMC. Papers or extended abstracts that do not conform to these rules or contain information identifying the author(s) will be disqualified. Before submitting, we highly suggest an internet search for how to remove metadata from your chosen document type (Word or PDF) based on your use of either Windows or macOS. Implementing those steps ensures identifying factors are not present (as can especially happen when someone “saves as PDF” even after clearing metadata from a Word doc). AEJMC’s Uniform Call for Papers includes helpful solutions to self-citations. The Division strongly advises authors to submit papers with sufficient time to review them in the All Academic system and ensure identifying information is removed.

Submitting a paper or extended abstract to the Media Ethics Division implies that the author (or one of the co-authors) intends to present the paper in person at the conference.

Burnett Award Graduate Student Papers:

The Media Ethics Division is committed to supporting and promoting promising graduate

students with an interest in research related to any of the many aspects of media ethics. All graduate students who submit full papers to the Media Ethics Division are automatically entered into the Carol Burnett Award competition. The Media Ethics Division teams with the University of Hawaii, the Carol Burnett Fund for Responsible Journalism, and Kappa Tau Alpha to sponsor this honor for graduate students. Students are invited to submit papers on any topic related to media ethics, from any theoretical approach, using any method or combination of methods.

The winning paper and runner-up will receive the Carol Burnett/University of Hawaii/AEJMC Prize, which includes a monetary award. Authors for the top two submissions also receive a small travel assistance stipend. The winner will be invited to accept his or her prize at the Kappa Tau Alpha Awards Luncheon at the AEJMC conference. Graduate student papers must include graduate student status on the title page. The Burnett Award is reserved for graduate students, and papers with faculty co-authors are ineligible.

Division Awards:

Professional Relevance Award: The Division gives special recognition to a paper that is judged to be the most relevant to working professionals in a media industry. The recipient will be selected from the open and special calls.

Top Faculty Paper: The Division gives special recognition to the faculty paper judged to be the best paper submitted among faculty authors.

The Penn State Davis Ethics Award: Scholars who have successfully defended ethics-related dissertations in the 2022 calendar year are encouraged to apply for the new Penn State Davis Ethics Award. The award provides a \$1,000 honorarium, travel support to present their scholarship in a session of the Media Ethics Division at the 2023 AEJMC annual conference, and a fully supported guest-lecture visit to Penn State's Bellisario College of Communications. The Don W. Davis Professor in Ethics at Penn State, Patrick Lee Plaisance, will administer all aspects of the award competition and selection process.

Applications should include a cover letter stating applicant's ethics-related focus and contact information, statement of defense date, full dissertation (either in PDF format or a web link), and dissertation adviser contact information. All applications are due April 1, 2023, and should be sent to plp22@psu.edu. The award will be presented at the Media Ethics Division's Business Meeting during the 2023 AEJMC conference. This award is intended to recognize new scholarship in the fields of media and communication ethics and is sponsored by the Davis Program in Ethical Leadership at Penn State. Arrangements for a guest-lecture visit to Penn State will be made for fall 2023 based on recipient availability.

Questions regarding submission should be directed to Media Ethics Division Research Chair, Joe Jones, West Virginia University, joseph.jones@mail.wvu.edu.



Announcements



The Penn State Davis Ethics Award

Scholars who have successfully defended dissertations related to ethics in the 2022 calendar year are encouraged to apply for the new Penn State Davis Ethics Award. The award provides a \$1,000 honorarium, travel support to present their scholarship in a session of the Media Ethics Division at the 2023 AEJMC annual conference, and a fully supported guest lecture visit to Penn State's Bellisario College of Communications. The Don W. Davis Professor in Ethics at Penn State, Patrick Lee Plaisance, shall administer all aspects of the award competition and selection process. Applications should include a cover letter stating applicant's ethics focus and contact information, statement of defense date, full dissertation (either in pdf format or a web link), and dissertation adviser contact information. All applications are due April 1, 2023, and should be sent to plp22@psu.edu. The award will be presented at the Media Ethics Division's Business Meeting during the 2023 AEJMC conference. This award is intended to recognize new scholarship in the fields of media and communication ethics, and is sponsored by the Davis Program in Ethical Leadership at Penn State. Arrangements for a guest lecture visit to Penn State will be made for fall 2023 based on recipient availability.

The Media Ethics Division's Teaching Excellence Award

Nominations for the Media Ethics Division's Teaching Excellence Award are due Monday, April 17. The time is now to get your materials together and send them in. The award recognizes outstanding classroom teaching in the field of media ethics. Past winners include Erin Schauster (University of Colorado-Boulder), Nicole Kraft (Ohio State University), Patrick Plaisance (Penn State University), Katy Culver (University of Wisconsin), Ann Auman (University of Hawaii), and Ryan Thomas (Washington State University).

Any MED member who teaches media ethics, journalism ethics, advertising or PR ethics, or media law and ethics is eligible for the award (except those who have served as division head, vice-head, or teaching chair within the past three years). AEJMC members who are not MED members are invited and encouraged to join MED to be eligible for the award. Applicants for the MED Teaching Excellence Award must have taught ethics for at least three years. The MED Teaching Award Selection Committee for 2022 consists of Division Head Anita Varma (University of Texas), Vice-Head Yayu Feng (University of St. Thomas), and Teaching Chair Rhema Zlaten (Colorado Mesa University).

Nominations, including self-nominations, consist of (1) a one-page cover letter, (2) a syllabus or lesson plan/activity, (3) a statement of teaching philosophy, and (4) two letters of recommendation. The cover letter should include the nominee's name, rank, and affiliation; ethics courses taught and how long nominee has taught them; and a brief summary of why the nominee should receive the award. One recommendation letter must be from a student or former student. The other must be from a faculty member or colleague, supervisor or department chair, or dean or administrator where the nominee currently teaches. We share the winner's syllabus or lesson plan/activity on the division's teaching resources website (<https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/resources/resources-for-teachers-students/>). Nominations, including all materials and recommendation letters, are due to Rhema Zlaten via email (rzlaten@coloradomesa.edu) by Monday, April 17, 2023. The winner will be notified on or before June 6 and is expected to attend the MED business meeting during the AEJMC annual conference. The winner will receive a plaque and a small monetary award. Please direct questions to Rhema Zlaten at rzlaten@coloradomesa.edu.

Announcements



The 2023 Journalism Ethics Conference of the Center for Journalism Ethics at the University of Wisconsin – Madison

We're excited to host our 14th annual journalism ethics conference at the Wisconsin Institutes for Discovery on Friday, April 28, 2023, in Madison, Wisconsin! The conference is free, open to the public and will take place in person and online. "Ethics, Urgency & Climate Journalism" will bring together news media professionals, non-profit news leaders, media innovators, academics, climate change communicators, students, and the public to address the ethical dimensions of covering climate change for our local, state, national, and global communities. Justin Worland, climate reporter at *Time* magazine, will deliver a keynote entitled, "Justice & Journalism's Climate Challenge." Worland was named the inaugural Climate Journalist of the Year by Covering Climate Now, a non-profit dedicated to improving climate journalism. He is a founding steering committee member at the Uproot Project, a non-profit organization that works to diversify environmental journalism. Find the full program and register at: https://ethics.journalism.wisc.edu/2023-ethics-urgency-climate-journalism/?mc_cid=c0db2f5528&mc_eid=fcd17f7bf7

Journal of Media Ethics ***Call for Special Issue: Moral Psychology and Media***

Scholarship on moral judgment continues to illuminate how we internalize value systems, how we form moral identities, and how both motivate and shape our decisions. Having developed within the field of social psychology, moral psychology has grown and broadened substantially over the last several decades, as driving questions about moral responses and motivations are of great interest across populations and professions, including media

environments and audiences. We have seen increasing scholarship explore the moral judgments of journalists, marketers, and other media professionals, as well as the role of moral psychological factors in media effects responses. The *Journal of Media Ethics* invites scholars to submit moral psychology research for a special issue planned for 2024, to be guest edited by Dr. Renita Coleman of the University of Texas. With the special issue, the *Journal of Media Ethics* hopes to showcase the wide variety and promise of moral psychology applications in media ethics scholarship, from theoretical explications to empirical studies. Submissions for the special issue, as well as questions, should be sent by email directly to Dr. Renita Coleman, Professor at the School of Journalism of the University of Texas, at renita.coleman@austin.utexas.edu, by January 1, 2024.

