PRSA 2019
International Conference

October 20 – 22 | San Diego

A Menu of Options . . .
How to Meet CEPR ethics course guidelines by 2020

Elizabeth L. Toth, University of Maryland (moderator); Denise Sevick Bortree, Penn State University; Marlene Neill, Baylor University; Deborah A. Silverman, SUNY Buffalo State.

Introductions

- *Elizabeth L. Toth, University of Maryland (moderator)*
- *Denise Sevick Bortree, Penn State University*
- *Marlene Neill, Baylor University*
- *Deborah A. Silverman, SUNY Buffalo State*

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Objectives

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Original Research

- Delphi Study with 29 public relations leaders (first round) and 24 (second round), followed by interviews with 40 public relations professionals

- Sponsored by grant from Arthur W. Page Center

Sample – Delphi Study

	Round 1	Round 2
Gender	14 women, 7 men, 1 other	17 women, 7 men
Average Age	55	57
Average Years of Experience	28	29.5

Interviews

- **Ethics Skills Study** - included 21 women, 19 men with an average of 23 years of experience in public relations.
  - The participants worked in a variety of sectors including nonprofit, government, corporate, public relations firms and higher education; and they represented 20 different states in the U.S. including Alaska, Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

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Motivation for Study

- Commission on Public Relations Education Report found that public relations professionals ranked ethics 3rd behind writing and communication as a necessary competency to work in public relations.

- In addition, the professionals completing the survey indicated that new professionals are not meeting their expectations in this area (CPRE, 2017).

Delphi Study

- Round one resulted in <u>119 responses</u> to the first question (Please list and describe five common ethical issues that you and/or colleagues you personally know have faced in public relations practice in the past five years),

- <u>120 responses</u> to the second question (Please list and describe five examples of knowledge, skills and/or abilities related to ethics in public relations that you consider to be *essential* for a successful career in public relations),

- and <u>82 responses</u> to the third question (Please list and describe five examples of knowledge, skills and/or abilities related to ethics in public relations that you consider to be *lacking* among public relations professionals in general).

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Delphi Study

- The list of ethical issues was narrowed to 20 items, 25 for essential skills and 20 for skills that were lacking. Then the participants who provided their email addresses in the first round were invited to complete the second round.

- In round two, participants were asked to rank the items that emerged from the first round. The items were displayed in random order to reduce bias. The participants also were offered the opportunity to add to the list, which resulted in only a few responses to each of the three categories.

- This step allowed me to identify the top 10 responses to each of the three questions.

Most Common Ethical Issues

- 1)Transparency/Disclosure/ Selective truth telling

- 2) Lack of ethics training

- 3) Deceptive practices/False narratives/Intentional lying

- 4) No consequences for unethical behavior

- 5) Verifying Facts/Information

- 6) Confidentiality

- 7) Conflicts of Interest

- 8) Violation of company/organization's core values

- 9) Honesty/Pressure to lie

- 10) Executive Behavior/Misconduct/Cutting Corners/Hostile Work Environment/Sexual Harassment

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Core Competencies Required (KSAs)

- 1) Personal code of conduct/Ethics/Values system

- 2) Personal behavior/Integrity/ Accountability/ Trustworthiness

- 3) Awareness/Knowledge of code of ethics/Identify ethical issues/Discernment

- 4) Critical thinking/ Problem solving

- 5) Honesty/Transparency/

    Truthfulness/Candor

- 6) Courage/Speak truth to power

- 7) Strategic Planning

- 8) Judgment

- 9) Counseling abilities/ Ability to articulate and provide recommendations/Oral Communication

- 10) Leadership/Team building

KSAs that are Lacking

- 1) Courage/Speaking up/ Confidence
- 2) Ethical awareness/Moral understanding
- 3) Judgment/ Critical thinking/Problem solving
- 4) Leadership
- 5) Personal behavior/ Accountability/Integrity

- 6) Transparency/Disclosure/ Candor
- 7) Moral Compass/Values-based decision making
- 8) Conflicts of interest
- 9) Strategic planning/ Research/Measurement
- 10) Respect for others

Competencies Essential for Ethics Counseling (interviews)

- Relationship Building
- Non-Accusatory or Judgmental
- Oral Communication Skills
- Listening

- Research
- Personal Integrity
- Confidence
- Courage
- Calm Demeanor
- Business Literacy

Implications

- Review list of core competencies and seek training to address any weaknesses

- Seek out mentors/colleagues that can provide counsel when you face ethical issues and maintain those relationships

- Participate in regular ethics workshops/webinars offered by PRSA

- Observe examples in the news and learn from good & bad examples

- Practice making ethical decisions using case studies

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Questions?

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Public Relations Ethics:
Models for Implementing CPRE recommendation

Denise Bortree
Director, Arthur W. Page Center
Penn State University

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Ethics Committee Charge

- Members of Committee
  - Denise Bortree, Penn State University
  - Shannon Bowen, University of South Carolina
  - Karla Gower, University of Alabama
  - Nance Larsen, Strive Group
  - Marlene Neill, Baylor University
  - Deb Silverman, Buffalo State University
  - Krishnamurthy Sriramesh, University of Colorado
- Gather resources and offer suggestions to fulfill CPRE recommendation for sixth class to cover public relations ethics

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Literature on PR Ethics Education

- Bowen, S. A. (2008). A state of neglect: Public relations as corporate conscience or ethics counsel. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(3), 271-296.

- Bowen, S.A. & Erzikova, E. (2013). The international divide in public relations ethics education: Advocacy versus autonomy. *Public Relations Journal* 7(1).

- Neill, M.S., & Drumwright, M.E. (2012). PR practitioners as organizational conscience. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 27(4), 220-234.

- Silverman, D., Gower, K.K., & Nekmat, E. (2014). Assessing the state of public relations ethics education. *Public Relations Journal*, 8(4).

- CPRE report (2017). *Fast Forward: Foundations and Future State*

- Delphi study by Marlene Neill

Background: Analysis of ethics syllabi (2016)

- Purpose of analysis
  - Determine most common topics taught in public relations ethics course
  - Determine types of ethics courses taught by public relations faculty

- Method
  - Gathered syllabi
  - Graduate student conducted content analysis

- Topics
  - Identified 35 topics within syllabi
  - Narrowed down to most common topics
  - Identified the types of courses taught

Models for Ethics Course

- Public Relations Ethics Course

- Public Relations Law & Ethics Course

- Ad/PR (Strat Comm) Ethics Course

- Ad/PR (Strat Comm) Law & Ethics Course

- Media Ethics Course

Most common topics in PR Ethics syllabi

- Ethics and Persuasion
- Ethics Theories/Principles
- Moral Development Theories
- Transparency
- Ethics in Advertising
- Ethics in the Digital Age
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Decision Making
- Professional Codes of Ethics

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PR topics on Media Ethics syllabi

- Only a few had discernable public relations content. Typically a review of PRSA code of ethics (alongside Adv and Journ)
- Most relevant topics for public relations
  - Ethics theory/principles
  - Moral development theories
  - Ethics and visual comm
  - Loyalties
  - Transparency
  - Privacy
  - Social media policies

2018-2019 Ethics Committee Work

- Work from literature and expertise on committee
- Conduct additional research (Marlene Neill)
- Create a course proposal for public relations ethics
- Identify topics to be taught in public relations ethics courses
- Gather and share sample syllabi
- Gather and share resources for public relations ethics

Creating the Public Relations Ethics course

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Ethics Education Report

In 2017 The Commission on Public Relations Education issued its report Fast Forward: Foundations and Future State, a product of three years of research with practitioners and educators in the public relations field. The report made 10 major recommendations based on the finding of the study. The first recommendation was to add an ethics course to the required public relations curriculum, bringing the minimum number of courses to six. This course should be a stand-alone course in public relations ethics, as differentiated from courses in media ethics or media law.

As a follow up to the recommendation, the Commission charged a committee of academics and practitioners to develop additional guidelines for a public relations ethics course.

Below are the names and affiliations of the committee members:

Denise Bortree
Penn State University

Marlene Neill
Baylor University

Shannon A. Bowen
University of South Carolina

Deborah Silverman
Buffalo State University

Karla Gower
University of Alabama

Krishnamurthy Sriramesh
University of Colorado

Nance Larsen
Strive Group

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New Course Proposal

Below is content that faculty and administrators may use to complete a new course proposal for a public relations ethics course, including a course description, reason for course addition, student learning outcomes, recommended assessments, and course content. In some sections, options are provided. Please feel free to adapt this material to fit the requirements of your college or university.

Name of Course: Public Relations Ethics

Credit Hours: 3

Catalog Description:

Option 1: This course provides an overview and analysis of ethics issues confronted by public relations professionals and organizational leaders; discussions and case studies of ethical reasoning; philosophical, theoretical, and practical concerns affecting everyday matters of moral choice and moral judgment; current trends on these topics in public relations; the moral responsibilities and impact of public relations on public policy and on society

Option 2: Today's public relations professionals face a range of ethical dilemmas on the job. The purpose of this course is to explore the most common issues and to provide students with tools to work through moral dilemmas. The course will cover a wide range of topics including transparency, digital ethics, social responsibility, and media framing. Students will discuss case studies, complete online modules, and apply learning from the course to an original case study paper. This course provides a framework for approaching strategic communication work from an

Content Topics

I.	Introduction to Ethical Decision Making
II.	Ethical Decision Models & Theories
III.	Professional Code of Ethics
IV.	Loyalties in Public Relations
V.	Ethics & Persuasion
VI.	Impact of Organizational Culture on Ethical Decision Making
VII.	Building Credibility/ Allies & Coalitions
VIII.	Last Resort Approaches – Rocking the Boat & Whistleblowing/ Personal Crisis Plan
IX.	Ethics in the Digital Age
X.	Diversity and Inclusion in Public Relations
XI.	Corporate Social Responsibilities
XII.	Ethics in Crisis Communication
XIII.	Ethics in a Global Context

Outcomes	Course Content References	Assessment
1. Identify ethical issues in communication situations	I, II	Written assignments, class discussions, quizzes, exams
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the major ethical approaches that affect moral decision making by organizations, as well as the role of public relations professionals in shaping those decisions	II, IV, V	Written assignments, discussion board posts, exams, final project
3. Analyze the conflicting duties and loyalties in ethical issues that public relations practitioners and organizational leaders confront	III, VI	Written assignments, in-class presentations, exams
4. Develop additional skills in listening, managing, and resolving potential ethical issues in public relations	V, IX	Written assignments, in-class presentations, exams
5. Construct written and oral arguments explaining particular ethical choices	III, VI	In-class presentations, written assignments
6. Create a personal ethical standard for communication	III, IV	Personal code of ethics
7. Develop critical thinking and analytical problem-solving skills to address ethical issues using ethical decision models	II, VI	Class discussions, discussion board posts, written assignments
8. Develop an action plan to address an ethical issue including identifying appropriate communication strategies to raise	VIII	Written assignments, exams, final project
9. Understand the role of organization culture including motivations of others in ethical decision making	VII	Final project
10. Understanding broader impact of organizational ethical decision making	X, XI, XII, XIII	Quizzes, Final project

Implementing other models

- Other models
    - Public Relations Law & Ethics Course
    - Ad/PR (Strat Comm) Ethics Course
    - Ad/PR (Strat Comm) Law & Ethics Course
    - Media Ethics Course

- Priority content
    - Ethics theories/principles
    - Decision-making
    - Codes of ethics
    - Loyalties
    - Ethics & persuasion
    - Diversity & inclusion
    - Ethics & culture (global)
    - Transparency/truthfulness

Implementing PR ethics across the curriculum

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Modules

1. Introduction to Public Relations Ethics

2. Core Ethical Principles

3. Professional Codes of Ethics

4. Ethical Decision Making

5. Digital Ethics

6. Ethics in a Global Context

7. Transparency

8. Corporate Social Responsibility

9. Ethics in Crisis Management

10. Ethics for Public Relations Writers (Under Development)

11. Media Framing and Ethics

Help

Search

Go

Need help? Check out the Support FAQ page or contact support .

MODULE 1
Introduction to Public Relations Ethics

Introduction

Lesson 1: Understanding Ethics & The Profession

Lesson 2: Ethics, Trust & Decision Making

MODULE 2
Core Ethical Principles

Introduction

Lesson 1: Mind the Gap: Key Ethical Principles for Ethical Literac...

Organizational Conscience." *Journal of Mass Media Eth...*

234.

Instructor Resources

☁ Module One, Lesson One Lesson Plan

☁ Module One, Lesson One Powerpoint

☁ Module One, Lesson Two Lesson Plan

☁ Module One, Lesson Two Powerpoint

Module Overview

Ethics are the foundation from which effective public
practiced. While ethics is a topic often discussed, the
fundamental misunderstandings about what ethics ac
integrate with the profession, and the role ethics play
activities of professionals. This module addresses tho

Module Developer

Dr. Carolyn Kim

Public Relations Professional and Professor, Biola University

Carolyn Mae Kim is a public relations professional who comes from a
background working with global charities and national non-profits,
developing creative PR and marketing campaigns. Her specialties include
digital strategy, brand development, SEO and social media engagement.

She currently is a Biola University faculty member and leads the PR
program. Through her mentorship, a student-run firm, 6th Street, was
launched and received national affiliation within two years. She also
worked with the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA)
Biola chapter to help them grow from 3 active students to over thirty, as
well as helping two students gain a position on the national e-board for

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Case Study: Facebook & Burson-Marsteller "Smear Google" Campaign

Background

This lesson has addressed the purpose of ethics being the process of determining right from wrong, and the applied ethical obligations of public relations professionals based on the place we hold in society. As mentioned in lesson one, some suggest that the moral purpose of public relations is to create social harmony. With this in mind, the now infamous case of Facebook hiring the well-known public relations firm, Burson-Marsteller to develop a smear campaign against Google poses some very intriguing ethical questions.

Dilemma

In the ever-growing digital landscape, Facebook and Google have become well-known rivals of each other. In early 2011, Facebook opted to run a

Questions?

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Most Effective Methods & Resources

- Public Relations Society of America's Code of Ethics
- Case studies
- Simulations
- Small group discussions

Less Effective Methods & Resources

- Socratic dialogue

- Research papers

- Lectures

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PRSA Code of Ethics

- PRSA Code of Ethics: https://www.prsa.org/ethics/code-of-ethics/

- Created in 1950, updated in 2000 as "educational" rather than "punitive" in nature

- Code contains six professional values and six provisions of conduct

- Poster (at right) developed by PRSA in 2012 after presentation to 2011 PRSA Educators Academy conference to discuss PR ethics cases and resources for students

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PRSA Code of Ethics

- Review Code with students

- Share copies of code with them

- Review of the Code of Ethics is useful before discussing an ethics case

- For comparison, instructor could include codes of ethics from American Marketing Association, Society of Professional Journalists, codes from PR associations in other countries

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Case Studies

- Published accounts of real-world ethical issues:
  - News media "ethics in the news" ("Hot Topics") stories – very topical!
  - Case studies in public relations textbooks
- These case studies can be the basis of assignments such as:
  - **"Ethics in the News" ("Hot Topics") presentations** - Individual student or team presents the "Ethics in the News" situation, then leads a class discussion. Student/team is graded on a rubric shared by instructor in advance
  - **Case briefs**: each student writes a 3 to 5 page "brief" summarizing the facts of a recent ethics situation and analysis based on PRSA Code of Ethics and class ethics lectures, then gives an oral report in class including class discussion
    - **Class discussion component is important!**

Case Studies

- **A variation: invite a PR professional or several to class**

- PR professionals describe a recent real-life ethical dilemma to the students

- Instructor and the PR professionals lead a class discussion about what was done, what could have been done differently

- Students enjoy the "real-world" aspect, opportunity to meet local PR professionals

- Instructor can ask students to write a reflection paper (to be graded) or assign class participation points for the event

Case Studies

- PR professionals also could be invited to discuss ethics at a PRSSA chapter event to speak as part of Ethics Month, a weekly chapter meeting, or a PRSSA conference

Panel discussion on social media ethics at 2012 PRSSA National Conference

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Simulations (Scenarios)

- Based on real-world ethical dilemmas

- Instructors can write their own "What Would You Do?" simulations or look at existing ethics scenarios such as:

- PRSA Board of Ethics and Professional Standards – Ethics Case Studies (https://www.prsa.org/ethics/resources/ethics-case-studies/)
  - Each one also has a discussion guide

- Case study textbooks (handout)

Simulations (Scenarios)

- Instructor can ask students to either: 1) Read simulation at home before the ethics class or 2) Read the simulation in class, following the ethics lecture

- If students read simulations in advance, they could be placed on "ethics teams," four students per team

- Each team comes to class to give an overview of its simulation and what the team would do to handle the ethics problem, based on the PRSA Code of Ethics

- The student team leads a class discussion about the ethics scenario

- Instructor can assign a grade or class participation points to each team

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Simulations (Scenarios)

- If simulations are read in class, instructor can either give same simulation to entire class or present several different simulations

- Students can be broken into small groups

Small Group Discussions

- A critical component for ethics presentations – whether with students in the classroom or with PR professionals at a PRSA event!
  - Four or five people per group generally works best

- Review Ethical Decision Making Guide (PRSA Board of Ethics website): https://www.prsa.org/ethics/resources/:
  - 1. Define the specific ethical issue/conflict.
  - 2. Identify internal/external factors that may influence the decision.
  - 3. Identify key values.
  - 4. Identify parties to be affected by the decision and the PR professional's obligation. to each party.
  - 5. Select ethical principles to guide the decision-making process.
  - 6. Make a decision and justify it.

Small Group Discussions

- Give each group a printed copy of the ethics simulation, the Ethical Decision Making Guide and if possible, a copy of the PRSA Code of Ethics

Small group discussion of ethics scenario at PRSSA National Conference

Small Group Discussions

- Allow about 10 minutes for small group discussions

- Instructor can walk around classroom/event from group to group

- Instructor then reconvenes the entire group/class, asks for:
  - Summary of the ethical dilemma
  - How does PRSA Code of Ethics apply
  - What would your group do in this situation?

PRSA Board of Ethics & Professional Standards

- Code of Ethics

- Ethical Standards Advisories
  - On specific ethics topics
  - A direct extension of the Code of Ethics

- Ethics webinars (e.g., PRSA)

- Ethics tweet chats

- URL: https://www.prsa.org/ethics/resources

AEJMC Media Ethics Division

- AEJMC Media Ethics Division: http://www.teachingethicsresources.org/
- Features class activities, case studies, and syllabi (including syllabi for combined Law & Ethics courses)
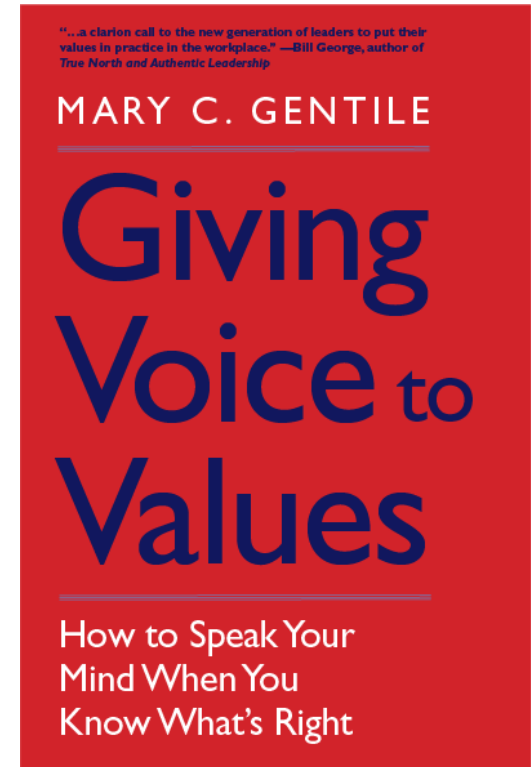- Chair of Media Ethics Division: Dr. Marlene Neill

Arthur W. Page Center

- Arthur W. Page Center teaching modules: https://bellisario.psu.edu/page-center/teaching-modules

- Dr. Denise Bortree, director, Page Center

Giving Voice to Values

- Giving Voice to Values curriculum: https://www.givingvoicetovaluesthebook.com/resources-for-educators/

- Curriculum is free to educators – includes exercises, short cases, readings, teaching notes

- Contact Dr. Mary Gentile at GentileM@darden.virginia.edu to obtain access to the curriculum

"...a clarion call to the new generation of leaders to put their values in practice in the workplace." —Bill George, author of *True North and Authentic Leadership*

MARY C. GENTILE

Giving Voice to Values

How to Speak Your Mind When You Know What's Right

University of Texas at Austin

- Ethics Unwrapped: https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/
- Case studies and videos

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Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

- At Santa Clara University
- https://www.scu.edu/ethics/
- Resources include:
  - Ethics app
  - Approaches to ethical decision making
  - Ethics cases
  - Ethics podcasts and videos
  - Ethics curricula

Markkula Center
for Applied Ethics
at Santa Clara University

United Nations

- U.N.: https://www.unodc.org/e4j/en/tertiary/integrity-ethics.html

- Contains an "Integrity and Ethics" teaching guide and series of 14 modules on various ethics topics

- Each module is designed as a three-hour class but also provides guidelines for instructors to develop it into a full course

Media Ethics magazine

- An independent, open-access, scholarly forum for sharing research and views on current topics in media ethics

- Published online twice a year

- http://www.mediaethicsmagazine.com/

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List of Books - Handout

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Questions?

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