

MEDIA ETHICS ASSIGNMENT¹

We read and talk a good deal about media. After all, we are all media consumers and connoisseurs. Yet one media aspect that frequently does not receive enough attention is Ethics. This assignment will rectify that.

Please research media ethics. Is there a difference between “ethical” and “legal”? Please explain. What ethical guidelines do the various types of media follow? Do the various branches of media value, as evidenced by their actions, ethical conduct? What effects do ethical media practices—and/or the lack thereof—have on media products and, ultimately, media consumers? Give examples in which media ethics have made a difference, should have made a difference, or could make a difference.

What steps could media practitioners take to ensure that their conduct is ethical? Is this simply a question of being politically correct, or is there some deeper, more fundamental reason to implement them? Why do media ethics matter?

Write a paper on media ethics, considering these points and others that you choose to discuss. One of the best ways to make your points is to use well-known cases and examples. If you do a search for media ethics, you can come up with some fine sites. Among the better ones are Indiana University’s Journalism Ethics Cases Online, <http://journalism.indiana.edu/resources/ethics/>, and the Society of Professional Journalists’ Ethics Case Studies, <http://www.spj.org/ethicscasestudies.asp>.

NO OPINION PIECES. By that I mean, keep yourself and your views out of what you write. This is a **research** paper. You need to be able to back up what you say with balanced evidence. Your readers do not care about your opinion. They want to know **WHAT’S IN IT FOR THEM.**

NOTE: Ethics, and particularly media ethics, are not the same as religion. Many religions have an ethical component. But people – and organizations and actions -- without religion can still be ethical. Also, the Golden Rule (Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You) is **NOT** sufficient to run an organization. WHOSE Golden Rule? What you would like done to you may be radically different from what I would want done to me. This is a complex issue. Expect to look at different sides.

Write at least three **full** pages on this. Be sure to cite your sources appropriately and on a

¹ Please note: there is a difference between “media” and “journalism.” Journalists use forms of media—such as newspapers, TV, radio, Internet—to get their messages across. But many other genres use media as well: variety, comedy, drama, music, reality, talk shows, etc. Media—everything from books and billboards to MP3 players and Internet savvy phones—are methods of dissemination. They are not the content.

Journalism and media are not the same. Journalism and news are much more restricted.

PLEASE NOTE; “Media” is a plural word. So the correct form is media ARE.

separate sheet. You need to use at least two scholarly/academic, peer-reviewed sources. Do not use .coms.

So your paper needs to include at least four areas. It needs to discuss the difference between ethical and legal. It needs a case in which media were ethical. It needs a case in which media were unethical. It needs to conclude and persuade whether media ethics matter and make a difference. You are easing your way into writing persuasively.