

Comms 201

Tutorial topic: **The Fourth Estate and Journalism Ethics**

Assignment and quiz

- Essay

15 April 2020 - new submission deadline (during mid-semester break 11th-27th April)

- Quiz

6 April 2020 – first quiz (online)

Calendar (as of 30 March 2020)

Week	Date	LECTURE TOPICS	NOTES
1	2 March	Introduction to Journalism and Journalism Studies	
2	9 March	News Values: Defining and Understanding News	
3	16 March	The Fourth Estate and Media Ethics	
3a	23 March	TEACHING FREE WEEK	
4	30 March	The Power of Private Interests: Media Ownership	
5	6 April	Media Law	Quiz 1 - ONLINE
		MID-SEMESTER BREAK	New essay deadline, 15 April
6	27 April	No lecture - Anzac Day	
7	4 May	Interviewing and Sources	
8	11 May	News conference and writing exercise	News writing /Press Conference
9	18 May	Race and gender: who is in and who is out of the news	
10	25 May	Tabloidization and the Celebrification of News	
11	1 June	No lecture - Queen's Birthday	
12	8 June	Digitisation - New sources and outlets - Fake News	Quiz 2

Agenda for today

Objectives	Activity
to explore journalism's watchdog function and its relationship to one of the key institutions in our cultures: the democratic state	Discussion of Fourth Estate theory
to reflect upon the power of government, public relations and 'spin' to distort or even control the content of news	Case study of propaganda and PR spin (Nurse Nayirah and incubator babies story)
to study the normative values, practices, and media ethics that professional journalists are expected to adhere to	Ethical Issue Analysis/Debate

Activity 1: Discuss the “The Fourth Estate”

Consider the two differing ideas of The Fourth Estate posed by Hampton:

(a) The press as agency of public discussion, rival ideas and interests ie. ‘the public sphere,’ and

(b) The press reflecting public’s interest by publicising corruption/scandal (by the powerful) or government inattentions.

Examples of Fourth Estate theory in action: *He Toki Huna: New Zealand in Afghanistan*, *Fahrenheit 911*, *Hit and Run*, and *Watergate story*

Activity 1: Discuss the “The Fourth Estate”

Guide questions

- Where and how do you think the “watchdog” role is being maintained?
- Where and how do you think this role is possibly being eroded?
- What role do you think social media and digitization has played? Has it hindered or helped towards fulfilling the ‘ideals’ of The Fourth Estate?
- To what extent can you see the “Reithian “Principles of Public Broadcasting (Inform, Educate, Entertain) operating in contemporary coverage and do you think they’re operating in this order

Activity 2: Nurse Nayirah testimony



[URL](#)

[Background CJR
article](#)

Activity 3: Journalism Ethics

Code of ethics: <https://etu.nz/journalist-code-of-ethics/>

- Can you think of any examples of news-work or coverage (past and ongoing) where these codes may have been breached or fall into slippery territory?
- How have scenarios of ethical concern previously been handled by journalists (or citizen journalists)?
- CNN physician-journalist poses ethical dilemma after treating Nepal victims <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/may/01/cnn-physician-journalist-ethical-dilemma-nepal-sanjay-gupta>

Ethical Issue Analysis/Debate

Situation analysis 1:

- A friend sends you a Direct Message on Twitter linking to a photo they've seen someone posted on Twitter, in the public domain. It shows a car crash in their neighbourhood, taken ten minutes ago. There's no text with the image but the location of the tweet is shown in the app, and you can tell from this where it was taken. There is no one in the car but it is very seriously damaged, so there could have been serious injuries or worse. This tweeter has 37 followers, and no one has replied with a comment or retweeted or 'Liked' it yet. You look online for other breaking news of this crash, but there's nothing. So, you are tempted to try and cover this story: how do you go about it?

Ethical Issue Analysis/Debate

Situation analysis 2:

You are working for an investigative television programme and your next assignment is a story on human trafficking. You went undercover to be able to get first hand information and you also used hidden camera to document the illegal transaction. Is this ethical?

Al Jazeera's *How to sell a massacre* is also good alternative for this scenario (see lecture slide)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/investigations/howtosellamassacre/>