Overview:
The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the major ethical issues that arise in the practice of political journalism. The course will examine and assess ethical theories that will enable students to make discriminating moral judgments about dilemmas commonly faced within the media-related professions. Course content will be focused at two levels of analysis: the foundational conceptions for an ethics for the media, and the exploration of practical ethical issues in the media today. The course proceeds on the premise that the two levels of analysis are inherently related since defensible judgments about media practice should be derived from well-grounded foundational understandings of ethical theory and the purpose of the media in society. The course, then, will focus its attention on the foundational ethical principles underlying the making of moral decisions, and also examine a number of issues central to journalistic ethics through the case study approach.

Books: All students are required to purchase the following books:
- Tom Beauchamp and Steven Klaidman (eds.), *The Virtuous Journalist*
- Terrence Reynolds (ed.), *Ethical Issues: Western Philosophical and Religious Perspectives*
- Additional Materials (To be Distributed)

Requirements: All students will be expected to attend class regularly, to read the assignments carefully and critically, and to come to class prepared to discuss them. Requirements for the course will consist of a Mid-Term, two optional papers of approximately three pages in length, and a Final Examination. Other very brief assignments on the daily readings may also be utilized at the discretion of the instructor. Grades for the course will be based on the two examinations, the papers, and on participation in class discussions. Students are expected to adhere to the George Mason University Honor System in all assignments.

Office Hours: By appointment, whenever convenient to the student.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

I An Introduction to Ethical Theory

| Class #1: | Course Introduction, Paul Taylor, *Principles of Ethics*, Chs. 1 & 2 (To be distributed) |
| Class #2: | Lecture: Uncovering Ethical Lapses in Government: Guest Lecturer: Timothy Carney, the *Washington Examiner* |
| Class #3: | Paul Taylor, Review Chs. 1 & 2 |
Class #5: Reynolds, essays by Aristotle and Stanley Hauerwas with David Burrell, pp. 43-57 and 81-99. Also, James Rachels, “The Ethics of Virtue” and Kenneth L. Woodward’s “What is Virtue?” (Both to be distributed)

Class #6: Reynolds, essays by Louis Dupré, Ronald M. Green, and Carol Gilligan, pp. 52-80.

Class #7: Mid-Term Examination. Discussion of Carl Bernstein’s “The Idiot Culture” (To be Distributed)

II Journalistic/Media Ethics

Class #8: Beauchamp and Klaidman (eds.), The Virtuous Journalist Chapters 1, 2, & 3 Case Studies (To be distributed)

Class #9: Lecture: The Ethics of Covering Combat & War Guest Lecturers: TBD

Class #10: Beauchamp and Klaidman, Chs. 4, 5, & 6

Class #11: Beauchamp and Klaidman, Chs. 7 & 8

Class #12: Final Examination, and Concluding Discussion

Note: Assignments may be modified as the semester progresses.