

<p>Course Number: MCM 307</p> <p>Course Title: Media Ethics</p> <p>Number of Credits: 3</p> <p>Hours of Instruction/Student Work: (45 hrs. / 90hrs = 135hrs)</p>	<p>Term and Year: Winter 2026</p> <p>January 12, 2026 – May 2, 2026</p> <p>Modality: Campus (In-person)</p> <p>Location: Ellison Building Room 216</p> <p>Days and Time: Tuesday & Thursday @1:00 PM-2:25 PM</p>
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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor Name: Professor Christopher "CJ" Nurse

VUU Faculty Email: cjnurse@vuu.edu

Telephone Number: 904.469.0263

Office Hours:

- **Mon/Wed:** 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM (Room 214 Ellison)
- **Tue/Thu:** 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
- **By Appointment:** Via Canvas or Microsoft Teams

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION (SIMPLIFIED)

In the media world, it takes years to build a reputation and five minutes to destroy it. **MCM 307** is a survival guide for modern creators.

We will look at real-world examples—from YouTuber apologies to AI Deepfakes—to figure out "The Rules" of the game. You will learn how to spot a scam, how to handle a cancellation, and how to protect your name.

This course is not about writing long essays on philosophy. It is about **critical thinking**. We will watch videos, debate headlines, and analyze social media disasters to understand what it means to be a credible professional.

2. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Spot the Trap:** Identify when a sponsorship or contract is unethical.
2. **Debate the Issue:** Verbally argue both sides of a controversy.
3. **Protect the Brand:** Explain how to apologize correctly when mistakes happen.
4. **Understand AI:** Know when using AI is a tool and when it is cheating.

5. Follow the Rules: Understand the basic FTC laws for influencers (Ad Disclosures).

3. REQUIRED MATERIALS

- **Canvas Access:** All learning materials will be provided as **Videos** or **Short Articles**. No textbook purchase required.
- **Smartphone:** For recording short video assignments.

4. PROFESSIONAL RELIABILITY (THE "5 FOR 5" POLICY)

"80% of success is showing up."

- **The Policy:** You are allowed **5 Unexcused Absences**.
- **The Consequence:** If you miss more than 5 classes without an excuse, you automatically **Fail (F)**.
- **Why?** This class relies on discussion. If you aren't here, you aren't learning.

5. ASSESSMENT & GRADING

We prioritize verbal and visual skills over long-form writing.

Component	Description	Weight
The "Ethics Check" Quizzes	10 Short multiple-choice quizzes on weekly topics.	30%
"The Reaction" Video	A 2-minute video analyzing a media scandal.	20%
In-Class Debates	Participation in "The War Room" discussions.	30%
Final Project	"The Code" Graphic (One-Pager).	20%
Total		100%

6. MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS (NO ESSAYS)

A. The "Ethics Check" Quizzes (Weekly)

Instead of writing summaries, you will take a short, 10-question quiz on Canvas about the week's video or lecture.

- *Goal:* Did you watch the video/come to class?
- *Grading:* Automatic (Canvas does it for you).

B. The "Reaction" Video (Midterm)

You will choose a recent "Apology Video" from a celebrity or influencer.

- **The Task:** Record a 2-minute video of yourself breaking it down. Was it sincere? Did they fake cry? Did they take accountability?
- *Goal:* Assessing analysis skills without requiring a 5-page paper.

C. "The War Room" (Participation)

Every week, we put a controversial headline on the screen. (e.g., *"Is it okay to use AI art?"*).

- **The Task:** You must pick a side and argue it in class.
- *Goal:* Building verbal communication and confidence.

D. "The Code" (Final Project)

Create a visual **One-Sheet** (using Canva) that lists your personal "Top 10 Rules" for your career.

- *Example:* "Rule #1: I will never promote a crypto scam." "Rule #2: I will always disclose ads."
- *Goal:* A practical, visual manifesto they can keep.

7. COURSE SCHEDULE (TOPICS THEY ACTUALLY CARE ABOUT)

Weeks 1–4: The Basics (Right vs. Wrong)

- **Week 1:** Can vs. Should. (Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's right).
- **Week 2:** The "Clout" Trap. Lying for views.
- **Week 3:** Privacy. Is it okay to film people in public? (TikTok Gym Pranks).
- **Week 4: CASE STUDY:** The Paparazzi.

Weeks 5–8: The Influencer World

- **Week 5:** Ads and Sponsorships. (The FTC Rules).
- **Week 6:** Payola. Taking money under the table.
- **Week 7:** Cancel Culture. When does the mob go too far?

- **Week 8: Assignment Due:** "The Reaction" Video.

Spring Break (Mar 9–13): No Class.

Weeks 9–12: The Future (AI & Tech)

- **Week 9:** Deepfakes. Is that video real?
- **Week 10:** AI Art. Is it stealing?
- **Week 11:** The Algorithm. Why does your feed show you violence?
- **Week 12:** Fake News. How to spot a lie.

Weeks 13–15: The Wrap Up

- **Week 13:** Diversity. Representation in movies/TV.
- **Week 14:** The "H.B.C.U. Standard" (Credibility).
- **Week 15:** Final Presentations: "The Code" Graphic.

ALL WORK DUE APRIL 17.

8. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- **Cheating:** If you copy someone else's work, it is a zero.
- **AI Use:** You can use AI to help brainstorm, but do not let it do the thinking for you.

Important Dates: Fall 2025

January 12, Monday	First Day of Class – Terms 8, 9, 10
January 16, Friday	Last Day for Room and Meal Plan Changes
January 19, Monday	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday – University Holiday
January 20, Tuesday	Term 8 & 9, Add/Drop Ends
January 24, Saturday	Term 10, Add/Drop Ends
February 6, Friday	Founder's Day Celebration
March 9-10	Spring Break
March 7, Friday	Term 12 Move-In
March 9, Monday	Term 11 and Term 12, First Day of Class

March 12, Thursday	Legacy Awards Gala
March 14, Saturday	Term 11 & 12, Add/Drop Ends
April 3, Friday	Good Friday – University Holiday
April 5, Sunday	Easter - Holiday
April 6-10	Pantherfest
April 8, Wednesday	Spring 2026 Internship, Career, Graduate Fair
April 9, Thursday	Spring Concert
April 13, Monday	Housing Applications Opens for Fall 2026
April 16-17, Wednesday-Thursday	Sydney Lewis School of Business Senior Exit Examination
April 25, Saturday	Spring Move Out Begins
May 2, Saturday	All Graduating Student Grades Due
May 8, Friday	Baccalaureate Ceremony
May 9, Saturday	Commencement
TBA	Spring University Conference

MCM Tasks for 16-week 1 Credit Hour

Student Expected Time:	Hours
Instructions/Lectures	45
Videos, Practice, and Assignments	82
Discussions/Research	8
Total	135 hours

Letter Grade	% Points
A+	100–97
A	96–93

Letter Grade	% Points
A-	92–90
B+	89–87
B	86–83
B-	82–80
C+	79–77
C	76–73
C-	72–70
D+	69–67
D	66–65
F	Below 65

LIBRARY RESOURCES

Visit the VUU Library at: <https://www.vuu.edu/library>

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

For technology issues, contact the IT Help Desk:

- Phone: 804-257-5630
- Email: itc@vuu.edu
- For Canvas issues: online@vuu.edu

TUTORING

Tutoring support is available through the VUU Tutoring and Testing Center. Call 804-257-5817 or email the center to schedule an appointment. Tutors are available for writing, research, and other academic areas.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS – UNIVERSITY POLICY

Virginia Union University supports students with disabilities through the Center for Student Success. Students eligible for assistance under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or with temporary disabilities should contact the course instructor during the first week of class to discuss necessary accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to self-disclose and work with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities. Instructors will work cooperatively to implement appropriate accommodations once documentation is provided.

WRITING PROFICIENCY

All written assignments must follow APA 7th Edition formatting. This includes proper in-text citations and a complete reference list at the end of all assignments.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic Integrity violations include, but are not limited to:

- Submitting the same work for multiple classes without approval
- Copying another student's work or allowing others to copy your work
- Unauthorized access or use of another person's academic materials
- Falsifying data or documentation
- Plagiarizing — using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation

Consequences include:

1. First offense – Grade of 'F' for the assignment
2. Second offense – Grade of 'F' for the course
3. Third offense – Referral to the Office of Student Integrity and Conduct