

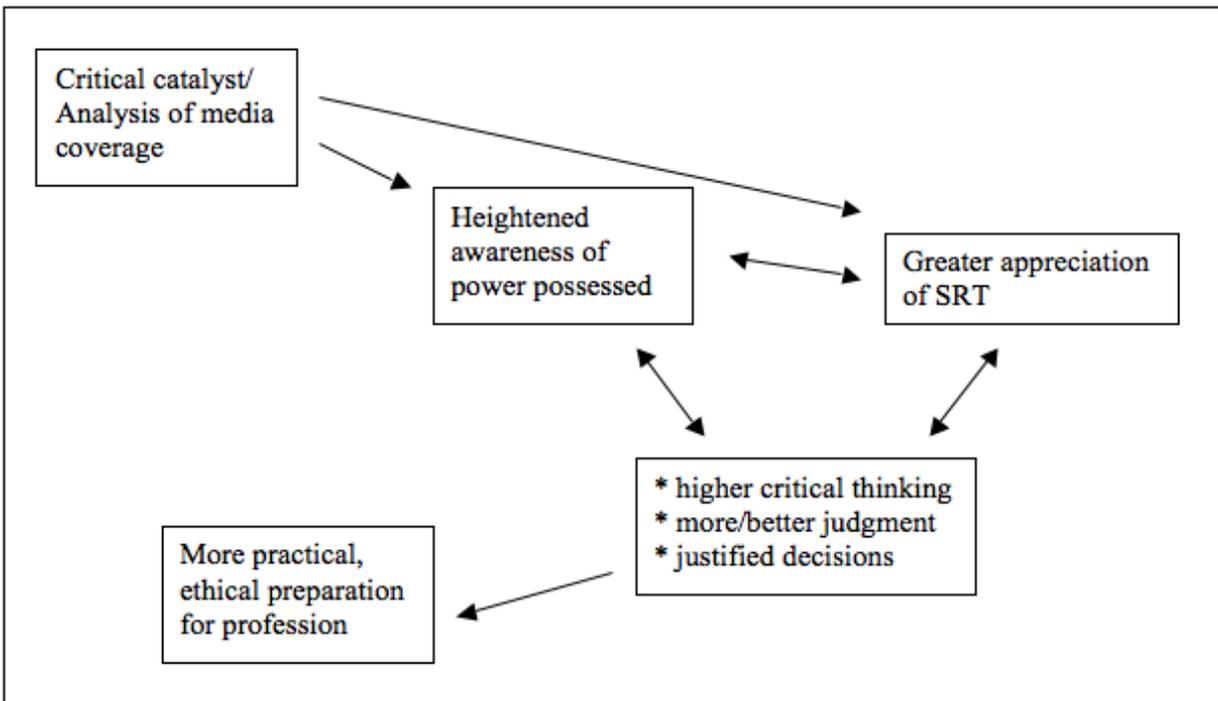
Teacher’s Guide to Rigorous, Responsible Journalists: Applying Social Responsibility Theory to Media Praxis and Using SRT to Develop Individual Ethical Codes

Adam Kuban, Department of Journalism, Ball State University

Lessons from the Arthur W. Page Center for Ethics and Integrity in Public Communication

Rationale and Overview

In an article (Cohen, 2001) about the future of journalism education, Loren Ghiglione, professor in the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, suggested that students have more opportunity to critically evaluate and examine the performance of news practitioners in order to better understand where professional responsibility must improve.



As the above figure indicates, this teaching module includes media analysis as a “critical catalyst,” that is a practical application of theory to personalize the power of the media so journalism students gain heightened awareness of the power they possess as media practitioners. Only by understanding that power in the first place can they appreciate the accountability and responsibility they have in association with Social Responsibility Theory (SRT). This lends to students’ improved critical thinking, news judgment, and justification rationale for their

decisions, all of which should address Black's (2008) call for more "rigorous, responsible journalists" (p. 31) and in the long term may even help restore the public's dwindled trust in current news professionals (Cooper, 2008).

Note: This teaching module aligns with the justification provided at the Arthur W. Page Center website, as it encourages active learning by students by linking both historical and current information. Additionally, this module includes a set of instructions with clearly articulated learning objectives that are well defined and realistic.

Module Format

This module was developed in conjunction with a one-credit, five-week introductory research course (see Appendix B for the schedule from the course syllabus), but could be applied to a number of different course types and schedules. This course currently serves as a prerequisite to advanced reporting and multimedia storytelling courses. However, if you decide to adopt this module for your own course, you can determine how much/little you want to utilize in the timeframe you have available.

The outline that follows will share exercises and resources that align with only the module objectives. In short, the format introduces students to SRT, requires them to apply it via media-coverage analysis of two international events, and invites them to use it in their individual codes of conduct. The module's implementation is quite feasible, necessitating only time and access to media archives (which may incur some expense depending on the availability of news-archive databases). Widespread results, while not immediately apparent, ideally manifest in students' collective awareness of social responsibility and rational behavior in ethical scenarios that may eventually emerge in their budding professional careers. Results from this module will be discussed via excerpts lifted from final capstone papers completed by the students.

To accomplish the objectives, the students will complete the following tasks:

- Choose a U.S. print-media outlet to investigate;
- Examine the news coverage from this outlet of two international earthquakes;

- Finish the interactive-map exercise to learn more about these events;
- Read texts pertinent to SRT and observe its five tenets;
- Decide on their own perceptions of general media performance via the related exercise;
- Determine general performance of media from others via the related exercise;
- View select videos from the Arthur W. Page Center website;
- Evaluate news stories in their chosen outlets according to SRT tenets via the related exercise;
- Finish the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exercise; and
- Compose a final paper.

Learning Objectives

In consideration of Black's (2008) call for more "rigorous, responsible journalists" who effectively blend skills with judgment in their careers, and in consideration of research that generally depicts present practitioners as ethically challenged (e.g., Cooper, 2008; Hayes, Singer, & Ceppos, 2007), it is prudent to examine current practitioners' social responsibility. Singer (2006) argued that SRT has become a normative goal, combining individual decision-making with accountability. Thus, aspiring journalists must have a chance to develop their personal, workable definitions of social responsibility as they enter the profession. The three learning objectives for this module are:

- To identify the evolution and the five tenets of SRT.
- To critically examine media performance of two related news events.
- To develop an individual, normative philosophy of SRT.

Key Concepts

The definitions for these key concepts are in the words of the module author.

- Ethical code: A list of actions and behaviors deemed (in)appropriate as defined by one's personal and/or professional values or philosophy.
- Social Responsibility Theory (SRT): An operational guide publicized in 1947 that outlined five tenets that all media practitioners should demonstrate: truth, balance, accuracy, civic-minded, and accessibility.

- Hutchins Commission: A group of 13 individuals, assembled at the University of Chicago in December 1942, whose mission was to generate a normative guide that articulated certain responsibilities the media had to the public. Led to the Social Responsibility Theory.
- Freedom of Information Act (FOIA): Rules that guarantee access to data kept at federal level. State governments may have open-records policies that allow varying degrees of access.
- Earthquake classification: Typically presented via the Richter Scale (based on seismograph oscillation) and/or the Mercalli Scale (expressed through local intensity).
- Peer-review: Evaluation of one's work by one colleague or more who are qualified as experts in that field or discipline.

Module Introduction

This section offers background information about the two international disasters chosen for investigation and how responsibility is delegated for subsequent examinations of news coverage. Also included are links to key websites that connected to module content and exercises.

Two International Tragedies

In this module, students will examine the U.S. print-news coverage that surrounded the Sichuan earthquake in China and around the Port-au-Prince earthquake in Haiti. The former occurred on May 12, 2008, had a magnitude of 7.9 on the Richter Scale, killed about 70,000 people, left 4.8 million homeless, and led to a U.S. government monetary donation of just under \$5 million (USAID, 2008). The later occurred on January 12, 2010, had a magnitude of 7.0 on the Richter scale, killed an estimated (although disputed) 316,000, left 1.2 million homeless, and led to a U.S. government donation of \$125 million (USAID, 2011). Both of these events occurred recently, resulted from natural disasters, and happened in international territory.

Project Setup

Students will examine news coverage of these two events by one of four print outlets: *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *The Houston Chronicle*. Print was selected as the medium of choice due to lack of access to broadcast stories as they originally aired, which meant it would be impossible to detect visual and audible cues. In this module,

students will focus *qualitatively* in terms of their examination. In other words, they should be most interested in the story content itself in order to evaluate its ethical implications.

Media firms were chosen for comparative reasons, including that a preliminary search in LexisNexis Academic resulted in a similar number of “hits.” This was important because the class will be divided into four teams. Each team will read the stories generated from each outlet. For example, the team responsible for content from *The New York Times* will read 17 stories about the “Sichuan earthquake” in China and 48 stories about the “January 2010 Haiti earthquake.” The table below displays the breakdown. The quantitative output for these print-media outlets appeared consistent with the information depicted in the Tyndall Report, which “monitors the weekday nightly newscasts of the three American broadcast networks”: ABC, CBS, and NBC. The Year-in-Review data from 2010 indicated that the earthquake in Haiti was the second-ranked story in terms of number of broadcast stories. Conversely, the 2008 earthquake in China did not even make the list of top stories in that Year-in-Review report. It was suspected that print-media coverage would reflect a similar quantitative trend. These four outlets generated a reasonable, similar number of stories to examine.

	China: Sichuan Earthquake	Haiti: Jan. 2010 Earthquake
The New York Times	17 results (May 12-18, 2008)	48 results (January 12-18, 2010)
The Washington Post	16 results (May 12-18, 2008)	46 results (January 12-18, 2010)
Chicago Sun-Times	11 results (May 12-18, 2008)	54 results (January 12-18, 2010)
The Houston Chronicle	16 results (May 12-18, 2008)	36 results (January 12-18, 2010)

Readings and Video Clips

Students are required to access the following links to complete all the online readings and watch all the video clips included in this section.

Ethical Codes

- Society of Professional Journalists: Ethics [code](#)
- National Press Photographers Association: Ethics [code](#)

- Radio, Television, Digital News Association: Ethics [code](#)
- Public Relations Society of America: Ethics [code](#)

SRT Text

- Press in America: [Hutchins Commission](#)

Public Perception

- Gallop Poll: [August 2011](#)

Arthur W. Page Center Videos

- John Curley: [Journalism Education](#)
- Gene Foreman: [Code of Ethics](#)
- Wolf Blitzer: [Accuracy & Fairness](#)
- Gene Foreman: [Taste & Sensitivity](#)

Earthquake Comprehension

- United States Geological Survey: [Sichuan \(China\) earthquake summary](#)
- United States Geological Survey: [Port-au-Prince \(Haiti\) earthquake summary](#)
- UPSeis-Michigan Technological University: [Earthquake magnitude measurement](#)
- UPSies-Michigan Technological University: [Richter classification](#)
- Kansas Geological Survey: Modified [Mercalli](#) classification

FOIA Assistance

- Environmental Protection Agency: FOIA [summary](#)
- USAID: [About USAID](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [About the CDC Center for Global Health](#)

Module Exercises

Students will complete the following exercises to achieve the aforementioned module objectives.

Personal Perception of Media Performance Exercise

Note: The second day of the course, after students reviewed the syllabus and learned some basic statistics about both earthquake events, we delved into ethical codes and SRT. Most students, depending on academic standing and experience, should have heard of the Society of Professional Journalists' current ethical code, which was established in 1996. However, less might be able to name the four "pillars" that comprise it: (1) seek the truth and report it, (2) minimize harm, (3) act independently, and (4) be accountable. Many students might also be unfamiliar with the fact that industry-specific organizations such as the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA), Radio, Television, Digital News Association (RTDNA), and Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) have their own ethical principles for professionals to practice. Links to these sites are provided in the Readings and Video Clips section. Even less than that may be unable to recall the five tenets of SRT.

Related to SRT, in December 1942, Robert Hutchins along with 13 others formed the Hutchins Commission at the University of Chicago, whose goal was to generate a normative guide that articulated certain responsibilities the media had to the public. At that time, media comprised radio, newspapers, film, magazines, and books. The Commission's intent was to preserve freedom of the press as stipulated in the First Amendment but to establish accountability. The original text that appeared in 1947 is provided, however, the "Press in America" text offers a compelling summary.

Five tenets emerged from the Commission's effort, which have been paraphrased from the original text:

- Truth: that the media are obligated to seek/report the truth and help the public understand it;
- Balance: that media are obligated to report fairly, allowing all conflicting sides equal time;
- Accuracy: that the media are obligated to represent population groups honestly;
- Civic-minded: that the media are obligated to adhere to the goals and values of society;
- Accessibility: that the media reach out to the public and that the public can reach back.

Researchers have conducted a number of recent studies to study the public’s current perceptions of the media. “In one recent survey asking opinions of various local and national media, not a single outlet was seen as credible enough for even 30% of the respondents to say they believed ‘all or most’ of what it reported” (Hayes, Singer, and Ceppos, 2007, p. 270). This same study showed that only 44% of Americans are confident in media accuracy and fairness (p. 270). An August 2011 Gallup poll (available in the Readings and Video Clips section) reported that 40% of those contacted had a negative view of the television and radio industry, a decrease of three percentage points from 2001. Unfortunately, this poll did not include the print sector.

In light of this research, the students will conduct their own experiment by asking the following questions: In general, how would you rate current media performance? The exercise works in conjunction with the five tenets of SRT with a Likert scale for each. In other words, on a scale of one to five, where one means never and five indicates all the time, how truthful are the media? Contemplate each tenet in terms of this Likert scale. See Handout A for the entire exercise.

In the first portion of the exercise, students will consider their own perceptions of general media performance, but in the second portion, they are required to take this exercise into the field and find five people to interview. The reason behind this second portion of the exercise was to see if their perceptions, as aspiring public communicators, might be inflated compared to others’.

Pilot Module Results	Student’s Average Score	Others’ Average Score
Truth	3.25	2.98
Balance	2.33	2.55
Accuracy	2.50	2.52
Civic-minded	3.00	3.05
Accessibility	3.58	3.32

Note: For the pilot module, the results, while anecdotal, demonstrated that students enrolled in this course viewed the media in much the same way that others do. The table below compares students’ average score for each tenet alongside others’ average score.

Additional Note: As this is not an empirical study, one cannot infer general conclusions. However, it is interesting to note that of the 59 “others” interviewed by pilot module students, zero said the media were truthful all the time. Additionally, half of those interviewed gave media accuracy a “1” or a “2”.

This exercise and the results should be discussed in class.

Note: The range of discussion possibilities are extensive, however, one possible avenue would be to focus the discussion on why people may have such a low opinion of the media industry and what the possible effects of that low opinion might be. The module author was also interested to know why his students, who had such an honest albeit cynical view of the field, chose to major in this area.

To further complement the ongoing dialogue about responsibility, students will view four video clips, including two from the Arthur W. Page Center website: John Curley’s “[Journalism Education](#)” and Gene Foreman’s “[Code of Ethics](#).” The additional videos are Wolf Blitzer’s “[Accuracy & Fairness](#)” and Gene Foreman’s “[Taste & Sensitivity](#).” An online quiz can be used to ensure students understood what these media practitioners had to say about ethical conduct.

The following quiz questions can be used to check students’ comprehension of the module content (answers are boldfaced):

1. The Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Code of Ethics consists of four “pillars” designed to preserve professional integrity. In class, however, we acknowledged which two that often conflict with each other?
 - a. Seek Truth and Report It AND Be Accountable
 - b. Seek Truth and Report It AND Act Independently
 - c. **Seek Truth and Report It AND Minimize Harm**
 - d. Minimize Harm AND Act Independently

2. Robert Hutchins served as chair of a 13-member commission assembled to articulate “the responsibilities of the owners and managers of the press to their consciences and the common good for the formation of public opinion.” This Commission produced five (5) tenets that we now regard as the Social Responsibility Theory, or SRT, of the press: (1) a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning; (2) a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; (3) the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society; (4) _____; and (5) _____. What are the last two tenets? [Note: Please follow the original Hutchins Commission (1947) text. Deviation from this will result in deduction. I want you to examine the tenets in their initial version.]

4. the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society

5. full access to the day’s intelligence

3. Based on the scholarly article from the *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (Hayes et al., 2007), “A Gallup poll taken during the 2004 fall election campaign found that just ___% of Americans were confident in the media’s ability to report news accurately and fairly.”
- a. 24
 - b. 34
 - c. 44**
 - d. 54
4. In his Arthur W. Page Center video interview, Wolf Blitzer, a CNN reporter and anchor, said this in regards to the timeliness-versus-accuracy debate that all journalists face: “I’d rather be second or third than be first and wrong.”
- a. True**
 - b. False

Interactive Maps Exercise

Students first learned basic information about earthquake classification and statistics of these particular tragedies via the sites listed and linked in the Readings and Video Clips section.

After learning basic information about earthquake classification and the statistics of these particular tragedies, students will complete an exercise that requires them to investigate interactive maps of these international events to enhance their memories about certain facts, e.g., radius of shaking from the epicenter, access to healthcare facilities, and population displacement. See Handout B for this exercise that the students will complete as a homework assignment.

Note: You will notice from the course schedule (see Appendix B) that students in the pilot had one week from the date of their introduction to the University Libraries Maps Collection to finish this exercise. This seemed an adequate amount of time. However, students scored a mean of 22/30 on this assignment, which indicates perhaps some struggle navigating and/or using the interactive maps. This exercise connected to the overarching research course via information gathering, so once it was graded and returned, the module author discussed how and where to find the answers.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exercise

Another assignment related to information gathering about these two events requires students to compose a letter that they could hypothetically send to a federal-government official in order to seek additional information about either earthquake event.

Note: It may be best to initially discuss the importance of open records before providing a succinct overview of the Freedom of Information Act via the link in the Readings and Video Clips section.

Before completing this exercise, students should review the websites for [USAID](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) to learn about government organizations likely connected to the international earthquakes in China and Haiti. As they begin this exercise, they should think about the following question: What records might be available via these organizations that you could/would want to know?

Note: In terms of assessment, the assignment can be given a completion grade, where students receive full credit for simply composing the letter and submitting it by the deadline. As the instructor, the goal should be to familiarize students with the FOIA and expose them to a situation where this legislation might help them in their quest for more information. It necessitates some preliminary investigation on their part: determining the record(s) they need, selecting the organization that may have it/them, finding a specific contact person to reach, etc. Whether you require students to send their letters to the respective contact personnel is up to each individual instructor.

Ten Sources and Evaluation Exercise

Note: After introducing SRT, discussing ethics, gathering preliminary information about the two earthquakes, and breaking into teams to examine an outlet's content, the next step is to evaluate the stories. This exercise was created to guide you through the analysis process. See Handout C for the complete assignment.

Students should begin by reading two scholarly (i.e., peer-reviewed) journal articles about U.S. media coverage of these events. Students will need to find their articles via a database search (suggestions include Communication & Mass Media Complete or J-STOR). Once they have discovered two usable articles, they should write a one-sentence summary of each. They will need to demonstrate how they knew each article was credible and scholarly.

For the remaining eight sources, student will include stories from their chosen media outlet. For each, they should identify the main angle and attempt to connect it to the five tenets of SRT. Then they should think about whether each story, in general, satisfied the responsibilities articulated in the theory.

Students should consider the following questions as they start to think holistically about the performance of their chosen print-news outlet in relation to its earthquake coverage.

- Based on your research, how would you describe your media outlet's performance? Where is it strong in terms of its social responsibility to the public? Where, or in which tenet(s), could it stand to improve?
- How have the five tenets changed, in your opinion, to adapt to our current media environment? In other words, which tenet(s) are harder or more difficult to apply to today's media market?
- As a budding professional, what will you (not) do in order to build and maintain a responsible rapport with your primary clientele—the public?

Final Paper

Throughout this module, students will have examined news stories that surrounded the Sichuan earthquake in China (2008) and the Port-au-Prince earthquake in Haiti (2010) in order to assess the medium's performance of two similar events in relation to the five tenets of Social Responsibility Theory (SRT).

The final paper requires students to synthesize findings (i.e., the news coverage of these events) along with scholarly sources and other materials to generate an informed critique asking them: How would you describe the medium's performance? Where/in which tenet(s) was it strong? Where/in which tenet(s) could it stand to improve? This will comprise the research portion of the final paper.

Then, based on the tenets of SRT and their findings, students should answer the two following questions: How have the five tenets changed, in your opinion, to adapt to our current media environment? As a budding professional, what will you (not) do in order to build and maintain a responsible rapport with your primary clientele, the public? This will comprise the reflexive portion of the paper.

Module Results

The following section is provided by the author and comprises their conclusions on the module.

From reading and evaluating their final papers, the author immediately noticed that no students believed any of the four media outlets always practiced all five tenets of SRT in the stories about the Sichuan and Port-au-Prince earthquakes. Balance seemed to be the weakest of the five. From one student who analyzed stories from *The Houston Chronicle*: “I realized the two natural disasters were reported with different prose. The Sichuan [earthquake] was reported with facts and statistics while the Haitian earthquake was reported with personalization.”

Another student found a similar occurrence in a different outlet: “While analyzing The [New York] Times 2008 articles about the Sichuan earthquake, I noticed a lack of balance. Many times the article[s] presented only the citizen’s perspective and pushed the blame wholly on the Chinese government.”

This particular student also commented, however, on the consequences of unbalanced content: “It is imperative that journalists are unbiased and include every possible side of the story. If they don’t, it is only a matter of minutes—literally minutes with our technological advances—before a reporter can lose his or her clout and respect.”

Several students connected poor professional performance in regards to SRT to their personal aspirations, but the author found that few attempted to posit *why* news outlets appeared unbalanced in their coverage of these similar tragedies. Were journalists unbalanced by choice? Or did external influences such as the Chinese government restrict their access, preventing them from reporting all sides of the event? These questions may lead to a worthwhile conversation.

Other tenets received praise and criticism. A student who examined stories in *The Washington Post* said that this medium’s civic-mindedness “should be applauded.” From their final paper: “Catholicism is the predominant religion in Haiti, and The Washington Post incorporated that value into their coverage of the earthquake. They remained extremely civic-minded in their reporting of Catholic relief efforts. Many articles quote sources close to the Catholic Church.”

However, according to another student who reviewed material from the *Chicago Sun-Times*, this tenet fell short: “It was pretty clear that the Chicago Sun-Times seemed to have a clear, pro-American bias that showed up in [its] writing. Whether or not it was intentional, it was distracting and came across as unprofessional. In that [earthquake-disaster] situation, it was not the time to be tooting your countries [sic] superior wealth and power; rather, they should have made the focus point the Haitian citizens and what we could have done to help.”

With truthfulness, most students seemed pleased with their respective medium’s performance, although some noted that while their outlet presented facts such as a 7.9-magnitude earthquake, it “never explained exactly what it means for an earthquake to be a 7.9-magnitude earthquake.” Thus, performance suffered slightly in this capacity, as the “truth” tenet of SRT goes beyond reporting facts and includes explaining them to the public.

The module author was pleased with students’ ability to connect ethics and SRT to their budding professional lives. Three responses speak for themselves:

- “Learning about the Social Responsibility Theory and being able to actively apply it to one of the best newspapers in our country has allowed my knowledge of this subject to expand. SRT not only helps the journalist abide by the SPJ Code of Ethics, but it allows reporters to bring the relevant information to readers.”
- “I did not realize how much power rested in the fingers of a journalist. With each word typed or scribbled, they have the power to determine a person’s trust. Amid a mere year of studying journalism at a collegiate level under my belt, I have come to the realization that it is necessary for me to know who I am, what I stand for and what morals I possess. These attributes not only shape me into the fabulous being I am, but also the journalist I aspire to be. Journalistic ethics are not taught but rather are a philosophy. In order to be content in my readers and myself, it is imperative to know what I am willing to risk, or not, in today’s age of weary media practices. I will never sacrifice the morals I was raised on. I believe that truth is the most commanding tenet in the media.”
- “It isn’t that SRT has changed, per se—it’s that it’s starting to be ignored, and that isn’t entirely the fault of the reporters themselves. Given the current state of media where instant

gratification reigns supreme, the public doesn't really seem to care about quality... Having lax ethical standards may make things 'easier' and it may get your story out faster than another reporter, but journalism is supposed to be an industry where you give people the truth, and true information is never supposed to be easy to get, write, or even read."

Module References

- Black, J. (2008). An informal agenda for media ethicists. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 23, 28-35. DOI: 10.1080/08900520701753130.
- Cohen, J. (2001). Symposium: Journalism and mass communication education at the crossroads. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 56(3), 4-27.
- Cooper, T. (2008). Between the summits: What Americans think about media ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 23, 15-27. DOI: 10.1080/08900520701753106.
- Hayes, A., Singer, J., & Ceppos, J. (2007). Shifting roles, enduring values: The credible journalist in a digital age. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 22(4), 262-279.
- Newport, F. (2011). *Americans rate computer industry best, federal gov't worst*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/149216/americans-rate-computer-industry-best-federal-gov-worst.aspx>
- Singer, J. (2006). Partnerships and public service: Normative issues for journalists in converged newsrooms. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 21(1), 30-53.
- Tyndall, A. (2010). *Year in review*. Retrieved from <http://tyndallreport.com/yearinreview2010/>
- Tyndall, A. (2008). *Year in review*. Retrieved from <http://tyndallreport.com/yearinreview2008/>
- USAID. (2011, November 14). *Haiti: Earthquake and cholera*. Retrieved from http://transition.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/haiti/template/index.html
- USAID. (2008, August 8). *China: Earthquake*. Retrieved from http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/countries/china/template/fs_sr/fy2008/china_eq_fs06_08-08-08.pdf. Note: The report may be unavailable due to website revision.

Handout A

This handout comprises the Personal Perception of Media Performance Exercise.

Part I

Instructions: As a part of your introduction to SRT, consider the tables below in conjunction with its five tenets. In general, how do you rate current media performance? Complete this portion in class and be prepared to discuss your personal perceptions.

Truth: That the media are obligated to seek and report the truth and to help the public understand it. Are the media truthful in your opinion?

1 – never or at no time	2	3	4	5 – always or in every situation

Balance: That the media are obligated to report fairly, allowing all conflicting sides equal time. Is today’s media coverage balanced in your opinion?

1 – never or at no time	2	3	4	5 – always or in every situation

Accuracy: That the media are obligated to represent population groups honestly. Does media coverage accurately depict all demographics (racial, gender, age, economic) in your opinion?

1 – never or at no time	2	3	4	5 – always or in every situation

Civic-minded: That the media are obligated to adhere to the goals/values of society. Do media practitioners adhere to their constituents’ values in your opinion?

1 – never or at no time	2	3	4	5 – always or in every situation

Accessible: That the media reach out to the public and that the public can reach back. Are current media practitioners accessible in your opinion?

1 – never or at no time	2	3	4	5 – always or in every situation

Part II

This portion deals with the same idea as Part I, however, this time, you'll ask the questions connected to SRT to 5 people to see how their perceptions compare and contrast. You may choose the people, but at the very least, you should note their names and career titles.

Pay particular attention to similarities and differences among these 5 participants' perceptions alongside your own. Remember: You are an aspiring professional in the field of public communication. Are your views slightly inflated? Consider the backgrounds of those whom you ask. Might they have a reason to hold a(n) (un)favorable view of media performance? As applicable, make notes below each chart to qualify and/or clarify your participants' rationale.

Be prepared to discuss what you notice about the public's perception of media performance.

Name and Titles of Participants

Person #1: _____

Person #2: _____

Person #3: _____

Person #4: _____

Person #5: _____

Truth: That the media are obligated to seek and report the truth and to help the public understand it. Are the media truthful in your opinion?

	1 – never	2	3	4	5 – always
Person #1					
Person #2					
Person #3					
Person #4					
Person #5					

Notes:

Balance: That the media are obligated to report fairly, allowing all conflicting sides equal time.

Is today's media coverage balanced in your opinion?

	1 – never	2	3	4	5 – always
Person #1					
Person #2					
Person #3					
Person #4					
Person #5					

Notes:

Accuracy: That the media are obligated to represent population groups honestly. Does media coverage accurately depict all demographics (racial, gender, age, economic) in your opinion?

	1 – never	2	3	4	5 – always
Person #1					
Person #2					
Person #3					
Person #4					

Person #5					
-----------	--	--	--	--	--

Notes:

Civic-minded: That the media are obligated to adhere to the goals/values of society. Do media practitioners adhere to their constituents' values in your opinion?

	1 – never	2	3	4	5 – always
Person #1					
Person #2					
Person #3					
Person #4					
Person #5					

Notes:

Accessible: That the media reach out to the public and that the public can reach back. Are current media practitioners accessible in your opinion?

	1 – never	2	3	4	5 – always
Person #1					
Person #2					
Person #3					
Person #4					
Person #5					

Notes:

Handout B

This handout comprises the Interactive Maps Exercise.

Instructions: Open the links below. Use the maps to answer the questions that follow.

- USA Today Haiti earthquake interactive maps
 - http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2010-01-14-quake-interactive-map_N.htm
- USGS (PAGER & Google Map) earthquake impact maps: China
 - <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqinthenews/2008/us2008ryan/#maps>
- USGS (Google) earthquake impact maps: Haiti
 - <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/eqinthenews/2010/us2010rja6/#maps>

Additional Resources

- Digital Globe: <http://www.digitalglobe.com/>
- Article on using Google Earth to view Haiti damage:
http://www.pcworld.com/article/186897/google_earth_reveals_the_devastation_in_haiti.html
- An annotated bibliography on Haiti written by the map librarian at the Army Geospatial Center: <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a528274.pdf>
- CIA World Factbook maps and country information:
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

Exercise Questions

Using the USA Today Haiti earthquake interactive maps, answering the following questions.

1. How many healthcare facilities/hospitals were located in Haiti according to the map?
 - 11
2. According to the map of population density, what two highly populated cities in Haiti did not have access to healthcare facilities?
 - Cap-Haitien & Les Cayes

3. Aftershocks occurred in Haiti through what date?
 - January 21

4. Which city received the bulk of the displaced population seeking refuge from the epicenter area? Was there a healthcare facility located there?
 - Gonaives. No.

Using the (USGS) PAGER earthquake impact map of China, answering the following questions.

5. How many people were exposed to the level IX shaking—considered violent shaking?
 - 528,000

6. How many people were exposed to the level VIII shaking—considered severe?
 - 1.245 million

7. What is the largest city in population in the earthquake zone circles? What is its population?
 - Chengdu. 3.95 million.

Using (USGS) Google Map earthquake impact map of China, answering the following questions.

8. What city is closest to the epicenter on this map?
 - Dujiangyan

9. Google Maps allows you to search nearby features: According to this map, how many healthcare facilities/hospitals were within 10 km of the epicenter?
 - Two – Xuankou Hosiptal & Wenchuan People’s Hospital

Handout C

This handout comprises the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exercise.

Instructions: Use a research database (likely Academic Search Premier and/or Communication & Mass Media Complete) to locate scholarly journal articles that examine and discuss media coverage of the Sichuan earthquake in China in May 2008 and the Port-au-Prince earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. Provide identifying information, the main assertion and evaluation rationale for each article.

Scholarly Journal Articles

Fill out the following information on each article and answer the corresponding questions.

Article 1

Database:
Article Title:
Author(s):
Journal Title:
Volume #:
Issue #:
Publication year:
Page number(s):

Main assertion: Write one focused, complete sentence that reveals something specific about this topic. Aim for something that you learned or something that surprised you.

Evaluation rationale: Write one focused, complete sentence that explains how you know this is a credible source. Hint: Look into the author or source credentials and determine whether or not the journal is peer-reviewed.

Article 2

Database:
Article Title:
Author(s):
Journal Title:
Volume #:
Issue #:
Publication year:
Page number(s):

Main assertion: Write one focused, complete sentence that reveals something specific about this topic. Aim for something that you learned or something that surprised you.

Evaluation rationale: Write one focused, complete sentence that explains how you know this is a credible source. Hint: Look into the author or source credentials and determine whether or not the journal is peer-reviewed.

Next, use a research database (likely Lexis Nexis Academic and/or Access World News) to locate and examine media stories in the aftermath of the Sichuan earthquake in China in May 2008 and the Port-au-Prince earthquake in Haiti in January 2010. Indicate your media outlet / publication below and observe the precise duration given to you in class. Compose an annotated bibliography for these eight stories.

Your media outlet / publication:

For the annotated bibliography: Provide identifying information and the main angle for each news story. Then connect each story with the five tenets of SRT or as many that are applicable.

- **Truth:** Is/Are the reporter(s) truthful, providing facts (and not perpetuating opinions)? And do they, in your estimation, sufficiently help the reader/viewer understand those facts? Consider the presence/absence of definitions, clarifications, relations, descriptions, etc.
- **Balance:** Do/Does the reporter(s) include multiple perspectives? For example, you might consider the presence or absence of medical staff and victims. Do you notice just one source throughout the story?
- **Accuracy:** Do/Does the reporter(s) accurately depict all demographics? Or do you detect stereotypical representations? Look for overt *and* subliminal instances.
- **Civic-minded:** Do/Does the reporter(s) honor public values? Or violate them? For example, consider individual privacy as a value that we have in society. Now think of the Haiti news clip we watched in class. Was that an intrusion of the victims' privacy?
- **Accessible:** Is/Are the reporter(s) able to connect and/or communicate with constituents? Look for e-mail addresses, Twitter or Facebook accounts, etc.

News-oriented Stories

Fill out the following information on each news story and answer the corresponding questions.

News Story 1

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 2

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 3

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):

Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 4

Database:

Story/transcript title:

Author(s):

Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 5

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 6

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 7

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

News Story 8

Database:
Story/transcript title:
Author(s):
Publication date and year:

Main angle: Write one focused, complete sentence that describes the story's primary purpose.

Connect to SRT: Explain which tenet(s) apply to this story: How does each relate?

GOOD or BAD? Circle your evaluation of the story in consideration of SRT: How did it do?

Additional Questions

These questions will help you to start making some informed opinions and inferences for your final paper.

1. Based on your research, how would you describe your media outlet's performance? Where is it strong in terms of its social responsibility to the public? Where, or in which tenet(s), could it stand to improve?
2. How have the five tenets changed, in your opinion, to adapt to our current media environment? In other words, which tenet(s) are harder or more difficult to apply to today's media market?
3. As a budding professional, what will you (not) do in order to build and maintain a responsible rapport with your primary clientele—the public?

Appendix A

Grading Rubric for Final Paper

Overall Format (12 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your name (AND ONLY THIS!) @ top left of first page • Paper title centered • Typed text • Double-spaced text • Page numbers included @ top right • Reference list (APA Style) included @ end of paper
Thesis Statement (4 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear, obvious sentence that states your argument on the first page • Bold-faced
Research: Examples (24 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-text citation (APA) to at least TWO scholarly journal articles • In-text citation (APA) to at least TEN news stories • Additional sources—e.g., websites—also encouraged to corroborate
Research: Depth of engagement (25 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis evident; not merely based on superficial observations • Connections made that tie the examples to all the tenets of Social Responsibility Theory (SRT): media truthfulness, balance, accuracy, civic-mindedness, accessibility • Connections made that tie the examples to media performance: Where were they strong? Where could they stand to improve?
Reflexivity: Replies (15 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, evident answers to the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) How have the five SRT tenets changed, in your opinion, to adapt to our current media environment? (2) As a budding professional, what will you (not) do in order to build and maintain a responsible rapport with your primary clientele—the public? • Answers supported via journal articles, news stories and/or websites
Mechanics (15 points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper grammar • Correct spelling • Correct APA citation style format (in-text & reference list @ end)

Appendix B

Suggested Course Schedule

The following is a *tentative* schedule of content, exercises, and deadlines. The module author has provided this information to give an idea of the material that will be presented and approximate placing of material in the course.

For Students

If you are absent, it becomes your responsibility to obtain the day's notes and any assignment(s). Adjustments will be made to this schedule as necessary and changes will be announced in class. Please read/view the assigned material *before* the start of the class listed!

(AP) = “Associated Press Stylebook”

(TS) = “Telling the Story” textbook

(YT) = “YouTube” video in Blackboard

(PC) = Arthur W. Page Center (Penn State) video in Blackboard

(Online) = E-reserve/online document in Blackboard

Week	Date	Topic(s)/Content	Reading/Viewing Assignment(s)	Exercise(s)/Deadlines
1	03/27	introductions; syllabus overview; China/Haiti earthquake stats		
	03/29	ethical codes; theories; Social Responsibility Theory (SRT)	Online: Press in America: Hutchins Commission Online (folder): Earthquake Measurement & Magnitude AP: Statement of News Values & Principles (p. 310) PC: Journalism Education (John Curley) PC: Code of Ethics (Gene Foreman)	<i>(Personal Perception of Media Performance Exercise)</i>
2	04/03	intro to Bracken Library and Maps Collection intro (with guests); research	Online: course syllabus Online: Rutgers University Libraries: What Makes a Journal Scholarly? (tutorial)	

		process	TS: chapter 15 (pp. 323-333)	
	04/05	primary vs. secondary sources; searching databases; evaluating databases; discuss perceptions	Online: Colorado State University Libraries_5 Steps to Better Research YT: Boolean operators TS: chapter 4 (pp. 70-87)	DUE: Bracken Library scavenger hunt assignment DUE: others' perceptions of media performance
3	04/10	searching and evaluating databases continued	Online: NCSU Libraries: Anatomy of a Scholarly Article YT: Researching online for college students: 5 easy steps YT: Scholarly v. popular periodicals	DUE: interactive map <i>(determine media outlets to examine)</i> <i>(ten sources on topic and evaluation)</i>
	04/12	coverage discussion: what have you found so far?; explain final paper	(read news stories and additional source materials for the ten sources assignment) PC: Accuracy & Fairness (Wolf Blitzer) PC: Taste & Sensitivity (Gene Foreman)	DUE: Ten Sources and Evaluations Exercise
4	04/17	NO CLASS! continue searching, evaluating, and critiquing media	(continue reading news stories and additional source materials for the final paper)	<i>(AJK in Las Vegas for BEA Conference.)</i> <i>(own work time)</i>
	04/19	FOIA	Online: National Security Archive: Making the FOIA Work for You YT: How to file a FOIA request	<i>(work time)</i>
5	04/24	Social media as research tools	YT: Storify: Make stories using social media	DUE: compose a FOIA letter
	04/26	NO CLASS! submit final paper		DUE: reflexive / research paper <i>(AJK in Salt Lake City.)</i>