**Senior Seminar**

Communication and Media Ethics Paper (Dr. Holba, CM4900.02)

due **April 10, 2013**

Clifford Christians, the author of the article “Utilitarianism in Media Ethics and Its Discontents” points out what he thinks is the major problem with current journalistic standards—that is, that they are based on utilitarianism. He then advocates for a move toward dialogic ethics.

Howard Kurtz is a journalist who has worked for the newspapers such as the Washington Post and other widely read publications. Currently he has a column on *The Daily Beast* and he is the news anchor on CNNs *Reliable Sources*. He has authored numerous books (take a look at what they say….). Recently, Kurtz has been criticized for his reporting on the Petraeus scandal.

Your assignment is to take a look at some of the news coverage of Howie Kurtz on this scandal AND the criticism of his new reporting at the links below and explore further information on your own. Then consider the ethics of his journalistic practice through the theoretical and practical argument from the Christians’ article. Write a paper using the discussion in the Christians article and answer the following questions:

After exploring various news articles about the Petraeus scandal in general, explore how Kurtz reported on the story and the criticism he received related to his journalistic practices. I have also included other links to commentary about Kurtz’s journalistic practices in other cases. Respond to these questions:

1. Does Kurtz report from a dialogic or consequentialist ethical framework? Use the Christians article and our book chapters to determine your response. Back up your response with quotes from the links below OR other links you find on your own. (appropriately cite all references) Make sure your fully define both ethical lenses.
2. Currently, Kurtz works for The Daily Beast and CNN, does his ethical approach to reporting align with the ethical policies of his employers? (you will need to explore the websites of each employer to determine this)
3. Finally, from Christians’ perspective, evaluate Kurtz’s reporting specifically related to the Petraeus scandal, how would Kurtz report on this matter using Christians’ dialogic approach. If you find in question one that he reports from a dialogic framework, this question is asking you to be more specific since there are multiple dialogic lenses as we saw in our book, so apply Christians’ dialogic ethics frame; if you think Kurtz is a consequentialist, identify how he could change his practices in this case from a Christians’ perspective.

Links:

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/vicky-ward/jill-kelley-interview-daily-beast_b_2527616.html>

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/company/about-us.html>

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/>

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/spin-cycle.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/22/opinion/kurtz-jill-kelley/index.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/CNN/anchors_reporters/kurtz.howard.html>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/howard-kurtz-salary-2011-1>

<http://www.thewrap.com/media/blog-post/fox-news-host-defends-coverage-blasts-cnn-competitor-29192>

<http://crooksandliars.com/karoli/howard-kurtz-tries-rehab-fox-news>

<http://www.cnn.com/2012/11/15/opinion/kurtz-media-petraeus/index.html>

Write a 4-5 page paper (approximately 1000 words) in which you discuss the questions above. You need not do any research unless you want to look for other articles over the disagreement. Make sure you cite references from our course book, the Christians’ article, and the above links that seem most relevant.

**RUBRIC for the paper:**

\_\_\_\_ 5pts Spelling

\_\_\_\_ 5pts Grammar

\_\_\_\_ 20pts Organization of the paper (has an introduction, a conclusion, each paragraph has a topic sentence, the topic sentences make an argument and so on)

\_\_\_\_ 10pts Demonstrates Christians’ understanding of utilitarianism as applied to media ethics

\_\_\_\_ 10pts Demonstrates Christians’ understanding of dialogic ethics as applied to media ethics

\_\_\_\_ 10pts Demonstrates an understanding of the Petraeus conflict and Kurtz’s reporting

\_\_\_\_ 40pts Thoroughly answers and explains each question above.