Objectives of chapter:

- Define basic elements in media ethics
- Outline the major systems of ethical reasoning
- Explain the main issues involved in ethical decision making
- Discuss the role of commercialism in media ethics
- Describe the major ethical issues in journalism, advertising, PR, and entertainment
Recognize ethical problems before they arise, and how to deal with them when they do arise
Ethics, Morals, and Laws

- **Ethics**: A branch of philosophy that examines moral questions, or questions of right and wrong.
- **Morals**: What we believe to be right or wrong.
- **Laws**: May or may not be based on moral precepts; many unethical actions are not illegal.
Major Systems of Ethical Reasoning

- Character, or virtue ethics
  - The golden rule
  - The golden mean
  - Virtue ethics in action

- Duties
  - The categorical imperative
  - Discourse ethics
  - Duties-based ethics in action
Major Systems of Ethical Reasoning

- Consequences
  - Utilitarianism
  - Social justice
  - Consequence-based ethics in action

- Relationships, or dialogic ethics
  - Ethics of care
  - Dialogical ethics in action

- Moral relativism
Issues in Ethical Decision Making

• One theoretical approach will not work for all situations; conflicts between ethical precepts produce ethical dilemmas in life and in media

• Potter Box: Systematic method of ethical decision-making
The Role of Commercialism in Media Ethics

- Many media-ethics dilemmas: Conflicting goals of serving the public with information and maximizing profit for the business
- Media types influencing content
Ethics in Journalism

• Privacy rights versus the public’s right to know
• Going undercover
• Victimizing the victims
• Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics
Ethical Issues in Advertising

- Deceptive advertising
- Puffery
- Conflicts of interest in advertising
- Advertising codes of ethics
Ethics in Public Relations

- Conflicts of interest in PR
- Public relations codes of ethics
Ethics in Entertainment

- Stereotypes in entertainment
- Sex and violence