

# RESEARCH IN MASS COMMUNICATION LAW

MMC 6666 – SPRING 2016

WEDNESDAYS, 4:05 – 8:10 P.M.  
2060 WEIMER HALL

PROF. CLAY CALVERT

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***Course Description, Objectives and Goals:*** As the official course description on the College of Journalism and Communications' website states, *"This intensive, writing-based seminar focuses on the research and writing skills that are essential to scholarship in the area of mass communications law. Using online legal databases, students must gather information, including law journal articles, judicial opinions and federal/state statutes, and write a research paper during the seminar that must be an original piece of scholarship on a mass communications law topic. The seminar includes in-class discussions and critiques of students' writing."* It is a four-credit course, so expect to be busy and plan ahead accordingly. To slightly ease the workload, you'll be working in teams on your paper and the class itself will rarely meet for the entire four-hour period.

In light of this description, and with the strong belief that your research paper should carry much more value and weight than just a regular class project, **the two primary goals of this course are:**

1) *to have your research paper accepted for presentation to the Law & Policy Division of the AEJMC at the annual conference to be held in Minneapolis on August 4 – 7, 2016; and*

2) *to convert the research paper into a law journal article suitable for publication by a relevant law review.*

In other words, you should be able to try to get two bites from the same research paper – first try to have it accepted as a refereed conference paper, and then try to have it published as a law journal article.

When the papers are submitted to the AEJMC annual conference, my name will *not* appear on them as an author **UNLESS** your group has failed to meet one or more due dates and deadlines or I deem your group to have not made consistent, substantial and significant progress during the months of January, February and March.

When the papers are converted into law journal articles, my name *will* appear as the first (“lead”) author. This will increase the chances of acceptance of the article by a law journal. That’s because, in part, many law journals do not accept articles authored by current students from other schools. In addition, many law journals like to review the vita of the lead author when considering whether to make an offer of publication.

The benefits of this course structure should be obvious: you’ll be able to build your professional resume by being able to list both a conference paper and, hopefully, a law journal article.

To help facilitate your research on the paper, *I already have drafted both the Abstract and the Introduction for each paper*. These two items will provide you with the structure and the “big picture” that will guide the remaining parts of your paper. The Introduction will include a “roadmap paragraph” that will describe to you what the four remaining parts entail (the fourth part for each paper will be a conclusion and will be shorter than the previous three parts).

### **Funding for Travel to the AEJMC Conference:**

In the event that your team’s conference paper is accepted, I encourage each member of your team to attend the conference. It is a great opportunity to see how the process works and to build your resume. In fact, it is required under AEJMC’s rules that one author show up to present the paper.

To help you in this endeavor if your team’s paper is accepted, the **Marion B. Brechner First Amendment Project** (which I direct) will reimburse each accepted-team member for up to a combined total of \$800 in hotel (lodging) and transportation costs (airfare) costs. Assuming that you are willing to split rooms (and make reservations with the conference discount rate), you shouldn’t end up paying too much in out-of-pocket expenses for lodging and transportation. If your team’s paper is not accepted, unfortunately the Project will not be able to cover any of your costs.

You will need to work closely and directly with Alex Wilkerson in the PATH facility on seeking reimbursement after your travel is completed. Be sure to save all receipts – Alex will need them if you want to be reimbursed.

## ***Advice on Conference Research Paper:***

- **Team Meetings:** You will be working as a member of a team, so you will need to plan times when all of the members of your team can meet together. I strongly advise setting aside blocks of time now on your calendars for January, February and March when you and your teammates can meet.

If you wait until later to schedule blocks of time, I have no doubt that you will not be able find sufficient time when you all can meet. Like UPS, you need to be a master logistics to pull all of this off.

When you do meet, you might: 1) conduct research together; 2) work on drafting new content; 3) edit existing content; and 4) perhaps most importantly, divvy up specific aspects of the workload among yourselves so that you all are on the same page and playing together.

- **Team Leaders:** Minch Minchin will be the leader for one team. He has gone through this process twice before. Rich Schumate will be the leader for the other team. He has gone through this process once before and has authored/presented numerous other conference papers as a Ph.D. student.

- **Read Examples of Conference Papers:** I will distribute to you on the first day of class copies of the two AEJMC conference papers I presented in August 2015 at the AEJMC annual conference in San Francisco. When you read them, try to get a sense of the style and flavor of how to write a conference paper. Some of you already have been involved in working on papers and articles with me, so you will have an idea of how they look. Others will not have had this experience – for them it will be key to see what the finished product looks like and to see the big picture. It's all about modeling the format and style.

- **Work in .doc Format with Separate Files for Each Part:** Do each part separately in its own .doc-formatted file. ***Do NOT use .docx***. The master file I will send to you will be in .doc format. After I have edited any part and email it back to you, you then can incorporate it into your master file. You won't send me the master file until the end.

- **Proof It Before You Send It:** Before sending me, for example, Part I of your conference research paper, I recommend that each team member proof reads it separately. In other words, two or three pairs of eyes should review and edit anything before it is sent to me.

- **Footnotes:** For almost every factual assertion, you will need a supporting footnote. Proper style is *The Bluebook*. You can mimic the *Bluebook* style of footnotes in my own conference papers to get a flavor for the style works.

**Due Dates and Deadlines:** The following are the due dates and deadlines for all of the assignments in the course.

- **January 13:** Complete all research for Part I. Bring hard copies of all research materials to me at the start of class and make sure each member of your team has had copies with them at class as well. Be ready to explain how each of the materials you have gathered is relevant and how you anticipate using it. In addition, explain if there are any other materials you want to find but that you have not yet tracked down.
- **January 20:** Part I due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **January 27:** Revised and finalized Part I due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **February 10:** Part II due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. We will NOT meet this day, but Part II is still due.
- **February 17:** Revised and finalized Part II due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **March 9:** Part III due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **March 16:** Revised and finalized Part III due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **March 23:** Part IV (Conclusion) due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **March 30:** Complete and finalized paper due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.
- **April 6:** Op-ed due by email to me not later than 9:00 a.m. Bring hard copies to class for everyone, including people on the other team.

**Grades and Grading:** Half of your overall grade will be based on team performance and half will be based on individual performance, as described below.

**50 PERCENT TEAM GRADES:**

- 50 percent of your overall grade will be based on your team’s performance on researching and writing (and working together) on multiple parts of your team’s paper. You will be evaluated based on: 1) meeting (or failing to meet) deadlines; 2) the quality and depth of your research; 3) the quality, clarity, persuasiveness and logic of your writing; 4) your ability (or lack thereof) to have all footnotes completed correctly in Bluebook style; and 5) your ability (or lack thereof) to follow the instructions given to you in class.

**50 PERCENT INDIVIDUAL GRADES:**

- 30 percent of your overall grade will be based on your individual performance on researching and writing one section of your team’s paper that you will be assigned during the semester. You will be evaluated based on: 1) meeting (or failing to meet) deadlines; 2) the quality and depth of your research; 3) the quality, clarity, persuasiveness and logic of your writing; 4) your ability (or lack thereof) to have all footnotes completed correctly in Bluebook style; and 5) your ability to follow the instructions given to you in class regarding your section.

- 10 percent of your overall grade will be based on your individual performance on the Op-Ed. You will be evaluated based on the quality, clarity, persuasiveness and logic of your writing, the strength of your arguments, and your ability to follow the instructions given to you in class regarding the op-ed.

- 10 percent of your grade will be based on an evaluation by your peers of the quality of your work.

***Grading:*** Numerical grades translate to the following letter grades:

A	93 – 100	C+	77 – 79	D-	60 – 62
A-	90 – 92	C	73 – 76	E	50 – 59
B+	87 – 89	C-	70 – 72		
B	83 – 86	D+	67 – 69		
B-	80 – 82	D	63 – 66		

***Required Book:*** There is one required book, *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (20th ed.). I expect you to use it carefully and accurately. The index at the back of the book is excellent, you can find out how to cite anything. In addition, you can use the two conference papers that I will distribute on the first day of class to see how things are cited.

***Attendance:*** Attendance is required and taken, as this course meets only once each week and there are three days, as described below, when we will not meet. Thus, missing more than one (1) class without an excused medical illness or immediate-family emergency will result in your overall course grade being lowered by half a mark. For instance, an A Minus (A-) would be lowered to a B Plus (B+), and B would be lowered to a B Minus (B-). I must receive notice via email at least 24 hours in advance of any class that you foresee missing. You must email me at [ccalvert@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:ccalvert@jou.ufl.edu).

***If you are more than ten (10) minutes late to the start of class, it will count as an unexcused absence. Please do not be late.***

We will *not* meet on the following dates: Feb. 3 and Feb. 10.

***Academic Integrity:***

The Student Honor Code and The Honor Pledge are fully applicable to this course and are hereby incorporated by this reference into any and all assignments in this course.

The Student Honor Code and The Honor Pledge are found online at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>

Among others, key provisions are The Honor Pledge:

***“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.”***

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

***“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”***

### ***Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:***

Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should immediately contact the Disability Resource Center Office for complete information at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/current.php>

All support services provided to and for University of Florida students are individualized to meet the needs of students with disabilities. To obtain individual support services, each student must meet with one of the support service coordinators at the Disability Resource Center and collaboratively develop appropriate support strategies. Appropriate documentation regarding the student's disability is necessary to obtain any reasonable accommodation or support service. Procedures for obtaining accommodations are set forth at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/getstarted.php>

Please notify me on the first day of class if you require special accommodations.

### ***Online Course Evaluation:***

You are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### ***No Extra Credit:***

There are no extra credit projects, papers or exams.

### ***Addenda:***

The professor reserves the right to make reasonable changes regarding the readings, assignments, grading structure and/or conference research paper at any time during the semester.