

# MMC 4200: Law of Mass Communication SUMMER C 2019 (Online) Section 12576



## Course Goals

This course introduces you to First Amendment jurisprudence, as well as to common law and statutory law as they affect journalists, the media and, more broadly, all citizens of the United States. The course covers the historical underpinnings of the First Amendment freedoms of speech and press, theories and rationales for protecting speech, and the laws of prior restraint, libel, privacy, trespass, hidden cameras, newsroom searches and other situations that journalists confront. Furthermore, the course addresses a wide-range of topics that affect everyone, including broadcast indecency, obscenity, child pornography, fighting words, incitement, threats of violence, advertising (commercial speech and FTC regulation), high school student speech rights, copyright and trademark.



**Instructor**  
Colin Kearney



**Location**  
Online (UF Canvas)



**Textbook**  
Calvert, C.,  
Kozlowski, D. V. &  
Silver, D. (2018)  
Mass Media Law,  
20th Ed. (McGraw-  
Hill). \*\*There are older  
versions of the textbook  
- but each updated  
edition has new cases  
and information

## Assignments

Exams (3): 60% (20% each)  
Quizzes (8): 16% (2% each)  
Discussions (3): 12% (4% each)  
Self-Reflections (4): 12% (4% each)

### Exams: (Weeks 4, 9, 13)

The course will consist of three *non-cumulative* exams, each covering about five weeks worth of course material. Exams will be posted on Canvas at 9:00 AM on the Monday of exam weeks and will be due by 5:00 PM on Friday evening. There will be no additional readings to complete during exam week.

### Discussions (Weeks 1, 5, 10)

Because we will meet electronically, you will be placed in small discussion groups during certain weeks. You will be given a prompt related to the topic of that week's readings. For each discussion, you will be expected to provide **one 300 word response** and at least three **100 word** reactions to your fellow discussion mates.

### Self-Reflections (3, 6, 11)

Self-Reflections will provide you an opportunity to place yourself in the middle of our topic. I will give you a prompt and ask you to provide a **500 word response** to the prompt.

### Quizzes (Weeks 1-15)

As this is a media law course, there will be a consistent carousel of current events relating to news, media, and the law during the Summer of 2019. You will complete a 10-15 question quiz at the beginning of each week. **Quizzes will be due by 11:59 PM on Thursday.**

### Extra Credit

You can get up to two (2) bonus points for MMC 4200 which will be added to your final grade. To do so, you must attend either a (1) Local School Board Meeting, (2) Local City Council Meeting or other official government meeting, and/or (3) 1 hour attending a local courtroom hearing in Gainesville or in your hometown. If you have questions about this extra credit opportunity, please let me know.

## ONLINE COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

As this is an online class, technology errors are prone to occur. Waiting until the last minute to complete and/or submit an assignment is not a valid excuse to request an extension or understanding from me. Use deadlines as a guideline, and try to submit assignments **at least two hours** before the deadline to avoid any complications.

# Canvas Information

## Modules

Starting by 10:00 AM on each Monday, the weekly course module will open. Modules will consist of a PDF class lecture, weekly current events quiz, and discussion (when applicable). During exam weeks, no PDFs or quizzes will be posted.

Modules will not be posted in advance - prepare in advance to complete the weekly readings, lectures, and assignments. There is some built-in flexibility to give you a few days to complete each assignment.



## Assignments & Expectations

There are three key assignments for this course: exams, discussions, and quizzes.

**Exams** will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions. Exams will cover the material in the PDF lectures and the readings listed in the course schedule. **EXAMS ARE CLOSED-BOOK, CLOSED-NOTES, AND YOU MUST WORK ALONE.** You will be asked to electronically sign an honor pledge noting that you did not receive any unauthorized outside assistance in completing the exams. Exams are non-cumulative and each exam is weighted equally (20%) for your final grade. The first ten students to send me their top favorite three TV shows of all-time will get three bonus points on their first exam. All exams will be due by Saturday at 5:00 PM

**Discussions and Self-Reflections** provide an opportunity to meet with each other about a current legal issue that will connect with the course material for the week or self-reflect about your stance on a topic. You will be asked to provide a response (~500 words) to the case - with direct connections to the course readings. Discussions will place you in small groups (around 5 students in each group) and you will need to include a response (~100 words) to your fellow discussion mates. **Discussions should not be a one-way street - in other words, responses such as "Great Response!" - will not receive full credit.** Consider including questions in your response to garner a fuller discussion experience (and receive more points). All initial discussion posts and self-reflections will be due by Wednesday at 5:00 PM. Discussion responses will be due by Saturday at 5:00 PM. Late posts and responses will incur a half-grade penalty.

**Quizzes** are weekly checks to ensure you are completing the weekly readings as well as keeping up with current events in news, media, and law. Quizzes will take place on Canvas and consist of 10-15 questions. Unlike exams, quizzes are open-book, open-notes, and open-Google. **Once you open the quiz, you must complete it in one sitting and have only one opportunity to complete it.** All quizzes will be due by Thursday at 5:00 PM. Late quizzes will incur a half-grade penalty.

## Make-up Assignments

For this online course, there are no definitive days and times which you must be present to complete an assignment. However, life happens, and if you must miss an examination or other assignment due to a serious family emergency, or your participation in an official University activity such as an athletic event, you must notify me by e-mail at least 48 hours in advance of the exam week. Make-up exams without such prior notification will only be allowed due to clearly documented medical excuses or a death in your immediate family (spouse, sibling, parent, child, or grandparent). You will need to provide me with clear documentation and details to verify the excuse. It your responsibility to contact me by e-mail at [ckearney1@ufl.edu](mailto:ckearney1@ufl.edu) no later than 24 hours following the time of a missed exam. You will not be allowed to take a make-up exam if I do not receive an email from you within 24 hours following the time of a missed exam. Otherwise, missed exams will result in a grade of zero. As previously noted, take note of technology issues and do not plan to submit your exams and other assignments at the last minute! You are hereby advised that, among other things, job interviews, internship interviews, graduate school interviews, weddings, projects or exams in other classes, oversleeping, power outages, vacation plans, internships, jobs, airplane tickets, bus tickets, and other reservations are not sufficient reasons for taking make-up and/or early exams. This serves as your notice of this policy. If you object, you should drop the class now.

### OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE ALERT

This class largely is about freedom of expression. You will be reading about (and discussing in groups) cases involving language that may offend some of you. This language will be used in class to the extent that it is germane to the subject matter. The First Amendment, as you'll discover from reading *Cohen v. California* protects a vast amount of speech that some people find offensive. The U.S. Supreme Court must (and does) address cases involving offensive speech, and so will we.

## Evaluations

Voluntary feedback on the quality of instruction in this course is very important and can be completed online at the end of the semester at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Your feedback is very important to me, as it not only goes to my department head for year-end evaluations, but also allows me to improve the course. Thank you very much in advance for taking the time to do this!

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should immediately contact the Disability Resource Center Office for complete information at: <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu>

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: <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/accommodated-testing/accommodated-testing-request/>

Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for students regarding testing services are found at: <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/accommodated-testing/accommodated-testing-request/testingfaq-students/> Please notify me on the first day of class if you require special accommodations. I will need to complete a testing contract and you, in turn, will need to complete an Accommodated Testing Request (ATR).

# Course Schedule

	<b>Topic(s)</b>	<b>Reading(s)</b>	<b>Assignment(s)</b>
<b>Week 1 (May 12-18)</b>	Syllabus; Introduction	SYLLABUS	Discussion #1
<b>Week 2 (May 19-25)</b>	The American Judicial System	1-44	Quiz #1
<b>Week 3 (May 26-Jun 1)</b>	First Amendment	45-60	Self-Reflection #1 Quiz #2
<b>Week 4 (June 2-8)</b>	First Amendment Hate Speech	61-75 127-136	EXAM #1
<b>Week 5 (June 9-15)</b>	Free Speech in High Schools	86-99	Discussion #2 Quiz #3
<b>Week 6 (June 16-22)</b>	Defamation, Part I	146-175	Self-Reflection #2 Quiz #4
<b>Week 7 (June 23-29)</b>	SUMMER BREAK: NO CLASS		
<b>Week 8 (June 30-July 6)</b>	Defamation, Part II Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress	198-212	Quiz #5
<b>Week 9 (July 7-13)</b>	Free Press/Fair Trial Public Disclosure of Private Facts	325-342 295-313 435-437	EXAM #2
<b>Week 10 (July 14-20)</b>	Sexually Explicit Expression Telecom Regulation	485-508 619-652	Discussion #3 Quiz #6
<b>Week 11 (July 21-27)</b>	Appropriation & Right of Publicity	256-279	Self-Reflection #3 Quiz #7
<b>Week 12 (July 28-Aug 2)</b>	Intellectual Property	510-558	Quiz #8
<b>Week 13 (August 3-9)</b>	FINAL EXAM WEEK		EXAM #3