

LAW OF MASS COMMUNICATION

MMC 4200

CLASS NUMBER 17861, SPRING 2020

SPRING 2020 / 3 CREDIT HOURS

TUESDAY Period 8 - 9 (3:00 PM - 4:55 PM) WEIMER 1064

THURSDAY Period 9 (4:05 PM - 4:55 PM) WEIMER 1064

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Frank LoMonte
3208 Weimer Hall
flomonte@ufl.edu
(352) 392-2273

OFFICE HOURS: Official office hours are **Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 12 noon** and **Wednesdays 1 to 4 p.m.**, but I'm in the office (almost) every weekday and flexible about scheduling in-person or online consults, including after-hours or weekends.

COURSE WEBSITE: Access via <http://elearning.ufl.edu>

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS: Please use either the Mail tool within Canvas or my direct email for any questions relating to the curriculum or course mechanics – if the question has broader usefulness, I'll post an update for everyone in Canvas.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK: *Mass Media Law*, 21st Edition, ISBN: 9781260838619 by Clay Calvert, Dan V. Kozlowski and Derigan Silver.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The law influences many of the choices that go into the media you read, hear and see. This course will make you a more educated creator and consumer of information. You will learn the full range of legal concepts relating to how news is gathered and distributed across all platforms, from the First Amendment to the reporter's privilege to freedom-of-information laws to FCC regulation of broadcasting. The most important takeaway from the course is not to memorize legal trivia but to understand how, and why, legal concepts are applied to modern-day situations that you'll encounter in any profession that involves creating or distributing content.

COURSE GOALS AND/OR OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, students will be able to spot opportunities, and anticipate problems, in which the law may affect the ability to gather and share information, in all forms and across all mediums.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS: This course is taught through a combination of assigned textbook readings, lectures hitting highlights from the assigned readings, and periodic assignments that will gauge how well you understand those materials. My approach is to test your reasoning and thinking skills more than your “trivia memorization” skills – do you understand how the law works and why it works that way?

COURSE POLICIES

COURSE TECHNOLOGY: Any supplemental reading/viewing materials will be posted to the course site on Canvas. If you have any difficulty with Canvas, please contact UF’s IT Helpdesk:

- <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- Walk-in: HUB 132

If you experience any trouble getting an assignment to upload to Canvas, always use email as your fallback, flomonte@ufl.edu, and don’t just assume “technical difficulties” will excuse lateness.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION: Your feedback helps make this a better course (and I really do read it and care about it). Toward the end of the term, you’ll be asked to complete an evaluation at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

UF POLICIES

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “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." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

GETTING HELP

A variety of resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course, please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

If there is anything interfering with your ability to get the most out of your UF experience, I want to know about it and help make it right. If I'm not the person to help, resources are available through the *U Matter, We Care* program that you should never be shy about using. You can ask for confidential help by emailing umatter@ufl.edu, by calling 352- 294-2273 or by visiting the Care Area on the third floor of Peabody Hall. There are crisis counselors available, even on nights and weekends, at **352-392-1575**.

GRADING

Grading will be based on **four standardized tests** (multiple choice/true-false format), each counting for 25 percent of your grade. each lasting 50 minutes. The first three will be given during the Thursday sessions of class (dates on the syllabus) and the last will be given during the scheduled final exam period, **April 28 at 12:30 p.m.** The final exam is the same length and format as the other tests and NOT cumulative – it will cover only the last one-fourth of the course. Exams are “closed book” and everyone must do their own work.

If you anticipate needing a make-up exam (for example, intercollegiate athletic travel commitment), please arrange that with me as soon as possible in advance and alternative arrangements will be made. I do not accept “conflicting plans” as a reason to reschedule an exam, so if you’ve gotten overcommitted on vacation plans, club activities, etc., don’t even ask. If you have an unanticipated medical or family bereavement reason for needing to miss an exam, please let me know as soon as possible – NOT after the exam has already been administered to the rest of the class.

GRADING SCALE:

The standard UF College of Journalism and Communications grading scale applies.

| | SCORE | | SCORE | | SCORE | | SCORE |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|----------|
| A | 100-94 | B | 86-83 | C | 74-70 | D | 63-60 |
| A- | 93-90 | B- | 82-80 | C- | 69-67 | D- | 50-55 |
| B+ | 89-87 | C+ | 79-75 | D+ | 66-63 | F | Below 55 |

ATTENDANCE

Since this is a large auditorium class, I do not take attendance, so your attendance is “on your honor.” I test heavily out of my lectures – if something’s really important, I’m going to mention it – so while it’s possible to pass the course just by reading the textbook and showing up on test days, you’re not likely to do *really well* that day. I welcome visitors during office hours and scheduled appointments, but I cannot “re-run the entire lecture” for everyone who misses class and wants a do-over, so if possible, buddy up with someone and get the lecture notes. Which, by the way, *take lecture notes*.

The week-by-week assignment syllabus follows. I intend to stick closely to it, but news events may cause some readings to fall onto, or off of, our list, so please do keep checking your email and the Canvas page regularly for any updates.



MMC 4200 SYLLABUS LAW OF MASS COMMUNICATION
Prof. Frank LoMonte Spring 2020

WEEK 1 (week of Jan. 6)

INTRODUCTION TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 1

WEEK 2 (week of Jan. 13) FIRST AMENDMENT HISTORY / PRINCIPLES

Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 2

WEEK 3 (week of Jan. 20) FIRST AMENDMENT IN ACTION

Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 3

EXAM 1: JAN. 23

WEEK 4 (week of Jan. 27) DEFAMATION PRINCIPLES

Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

WEEK 5 (week of Feb. 3) DEFAMATION / DEFENSES & DAMAGES

Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 6

WEEK 6 (week of Feb. 10) PRIVACY-APPROPRIATION & INTRUSION Textbook readings:

Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 7

WEEK 7 (week of Feb. 17) PRIVACY-FALSE LIGHT/PRIVATE FACTS Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 8

EXAM 2: FEB. 20

WEEK 8 (week of Feb. 24) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & ACCESS
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 9
Chapter 12, p. 455-464 (open/closed trials)

SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS WEEK OF MARCH 2

WEEK 9 (week of March 9) PROTECTING SOURCES
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 10

WEEK 10 (week of March 16) FREE PRESS-FAIR TRIAL
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 11, 12

EXAM 3: MARCH 19

WEEK 11 (week of March 23) INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 14

WEEK 12 (week of March 30) COMMERCIAL SPEECH
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 15

WEEK 13 (week of April 6) OBSCENITY / INDECENCY
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 13

WEEK 14 (week of April 13) BROADCASTING / ONLINE
Textbook readings:
Calvert/Kozlowski/Silver, Chapter 16

WEEK 15 (week of April 20) SOCIAL MEDIA
Handout readings only, no new textbook assignment

FINAL EXAM: TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.