

LAW OF MASS COMMUNICATIONS



MMC 4200, Section 0738 Summer A 2015

Monday – Friday
11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Computer Sciences/Engineering Building, Room E220

Instructor: Linda Riedemann

Office: TBD

Office Hours: TBD (and by in-person or Skype appointment)

Office Phone: TBD

Email: l.riedemann@ufl.edu

Do NOT email me through Sakai

Skype Name: linda.riedemann

Prerequisites

Students must have 4JM designation (senior-status in College of Journalism and Communications). This is a required course for all Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations majors. It can also be substituted for RTV 4700 — Telecommunication Law and Regulation — required for Telecommunication majors (with department approval).

**The content and format of this syllabus were drafted with the help of Prof. Clay Calvert of the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida.*

Course Goals:

This course provides an introduction to First Amendment jurisprudence, as well as to common law and statutory law as they affect journalists, the mass media and, more broadly, everyone in 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, shield laws, newsroom searches and other situations that journalists confront. Furthermore, the course addresses a wide-range of topics that affect everyone in the nation, including broadcast indecency, obscenity, child pornography, fighting words, violent media content, advertising, student speech rights, copyright and trademark.

Book:

There is only one required textbook:

1. Mass Media Law, 19th Ed. (2014). Don R. Pember & Clay Calvert. McGraw-Hill.

In addition to the textbook, I will distribute a number of cases, articles and other handouts either during class or in Sakai. If you are not present on a day that a case, article or other handout is distributed, you are still responsible for its content and any discussion about it, and you should try to obtain a copy from a classmate or see me in office hours to pick one up. Material contained on handouts (as well as readings in the textbook) is subject to testing. *If you use an older version of the textbook, you do so at your own risk. The 19th edition includes much new material not found in older editions, and some of that new material will be tested.*

Reading Assignments:

Assignments are contained in the “**Reading Schedule & Study Suggestions**” packet for each week. It will be distributed on the first day of class and posted on Sakai for week one, and will be posted on Friday before each subsequent week on Sakai. The readings should be completed *prior* to the class day on which they are assigned. In other words, do the reading the day before class.

Attendance:

Attendance is not required (except on exam dates) but is strongly encouraged. Material covered in class that is not assigned in the readings and/or in handouts may be tested. Put differently, I will not ask for excuses from you if you miss a class, and I will not accept or tolerate excuses from you if you don't earn the grade you wish. Students who attend class after having done the readings tend to do better than those students who do not attend class and do not do the readings. ***If you miss a class, I will not re-lecture to you in office hours, and I will not give you my notes.*** Bottom line: Come to class!

Dates When Class Does Not Meet

There will be ***no class on the following dates:***

- Friday, May 22, 2015
- Monday, May 25, 2015 (Memorial Day)
- Friday, June 5, 2015
- Friday, June 12, 2016

Examinations:

1. **Number of Exams:** Four (4) Examinations
2. **Weight of Exams:** Each exam counts equally for 25% of your overall grade
3. **Non-Cumulative Exams:** Exams are not cumulative, *unless* specific areas, topics, cases, rules and/or concepts are mentioned in class as being testable from material covered on an earlier exam OR if that material is covered again in new reading and/or in class. The last exam (Exam No. 4), which is non-cumulative, is NOT a comprehensive "final" exam, but rather is narrowly focused on material assigned, discussed and/or handed out after Exam No. 3.

4. **Format of Exams:**

- a. All exams are ***closed-notes, closed-books format.*** You must ***work alone*** on exams. ***No communication with others is allowed*** during the exam. ***Giving or receiving aid during an examination is not allowed.*** No questions are allowed during examinations, with the exception of pointing out typographical errors or dropped or missing words. If you do not understand what a word means on the exam, please do the best you can with it.

b. All exams are recorded on Scantrons and consist of anywhere ***from 25 to 40 questions, including any combination of multiple-choice and true-false questions.*** It is your responsibility to bring No. 2 pencils and erasures to the exam. They will not be supplied for you.

c. All material from assigned readings, in-class discussions/lectures, overheads, Powerpoints, assigned cases and handouts distributed in class or in Sakai is subject to testing.

5. Exam Dates:

Exam No. 1:	Tuesday, May 19, 2015
Exam No. 2:	Friday, May 29, 2015
Exam No. 3:	Wednesday, June 10, 2015
Exam No. 4:	Friday, June 19, 2015

Fifty (50) minutes are allotted for the completion of all exams. All exams start at the beginning of the class period. Do not be late for exams; no extra time is given if you arrive late. ***To preserve academic integrity, you will not be allowed to enter and to start to take an exam after any one person in the class has already turned in his/her exam. Do NOT be late.***

All of these policies regarding examinations are hereby incorporated into all of the examinations in this course by this reference.

If you must miss an examination due to a religious holiday, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements 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 in question.**

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 contact details to verify the excuse.

Make-Up Exam Format

To preserve academic integrity, make-up exams are not identical to the regular exam. ***Make-up exams will involve any combination of short-essay, short-answer, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice and true-false questions.*** Make-up exams are scheduled based upon my schedule and my availability.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact me *by e-mail* at l.riedemann@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.*** Missed exams will result in a grade of zero unless all of these requirements are met.

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, distributed on the first day of class. **If you object, you should drop the class now.**

Important: No exceptions are provided for job interviews and graduate school interviews. It is ***your responsibility to schedule those interviews around this schedule, which you received on the first day of class, with all exam dates clearly noted.***

Grading:

Numerical grades in this course 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		

There is no curve. The grades fall where they may within these cut-off points. I also ***will not round grades,*** no matter how close you are to the next letter grade up. Information on the assigning of grade points (for grade-point averages) as they affect your GPA is found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Exam grades will be posted on Sakai.

Academic Integrity:

The Student Honor Code and The Honor Pledge are applicable to this class and are hereby incorporated by implication into all four examinations by this reference.

They can be found online at:

<https://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:

<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>

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://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/students/how-to-get-started/>

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

Evaluations:

You are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Thank you very much in advance for taking the time to do this!

Extra Credit:

There will occasionally be in-class extra credit opportunities. These occasions may include, but are not limited to, surveys, pop quizzes on material discussed in class, or attendance quizzes.

However, extra credit *will not* be offered upon request. In other words, do not come to me at the end of the semester if you are unhappy with the grade you have earned to ask for extra credit.

Points assigned to each extra credit opportunity will be announced at the time of the event and will vary from one (1) to three (3) points, which will be added to your overall grade.

Addenda:

The instructor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to the reading schedule, exam schedule & exam formats at any time during the semester.