

Course Syllabus
Fayetteville State University
College of arts and Sciences
Department of Performing Arts

I. LOCATOR INFORMATION

Semester: Fall 2009

Course: COMM 450-01 Tele-Communications Law, 3 credits

Instructor: R. Babatunde Oyinade, Ph.D.

Office Location: BU-268 Phone: 672-1402

E-mail: boyinade@uncfsu.edu

Office Hours: MW: 12-1:00; 3- 5:00p.m.—others by appointment only.

The following statement should appear on the first page of each course syllabus:

FSU Policy on electronic Mail: Fayetteville State University provides to each student, free of charge, an electronic mail account (username@uncfsu.edu) that is easily accessible via the Internet. The University has established FSU email as the primary mode of correspondence between university officials and enrolled students. Inquires and requests from students pertaining to academic records, grades, bills, financial aids, and other matters of a confidential nature must be submitted via FSU email. Inquiries or requests from personal email accounts are no assured a response. The university maintains open-use computer laboratories throughout the campus that can be used to access electronic mail. Rule and regulations governing the use of FSU email may be found at <http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>.

II. Course Description:

This course will acquaint you with law in general and communications law in particular. We will trace the history of the American legal system and examine how it came to be as significant as it is in our society.

We inherited the basic structure from the English. We then carved out our own approach with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and U.S. Supreme Court decisions. We'll see how that happened and continues to happen.

A significant development for America was the addition of the Bill of Rights and especially the First Amendment. First Amendment issues are by their nature controversial. They are ongoing. We will examine periods in our history and specific cases to see the evolvement of the First Amendment.

Libel - primarily in the form of seditious libel - had its beginning in England. It came to America that way, but over time evolved into civil libel. The modern law of libel began in the 1960s with a series of decisions by the Supreme Court. We will look at a great many cases and you will become something of an expert on libel.

Examination of the legal and ethical aspects of publishing and broadcasting” Emphasis on freedom of the press, copyright, libel, privacy, free press/fair trail, and obscenity. The course takes a look at the various media of mass communication in light of ethical standards, employing case studies, and text and discussion sessions.

- III. Disabled Student Services: In accordance with Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1991, if you have a disability, or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203

Official Class Description

Overview

Tele-Communications Law: COMM. 450) is an introductory course on the law that governs mass media in the United States of America. Students will have the opportunity to learn the basic principles of mass communication law and ethics, apply those concepts to specific situations communicators will encounter in the 'real world'; and anticipate the evolution of legal doctrine and ethical applications for the future. No prior knowledge of the subject matter is assumed.

You need to be familiar with many other aspects of the law, including civil and criminal procedure. We'll also look at access to public meetings and public records. Copyright is a significant concern.

We will also study various areas of ethics, including plagiarism, fabrication and ethics codes.

You will need to get these books for the class: *Four Theories of the Press* and the United States Constitution.

You are responsible for keeping up with what's going on in class. Class attendance is critical. The class will begin on time and announcements concerning the class are made at the beginning of the class. Please don't ask me to recap what happened if you were not in class. Occasionally various items will be handed out in class. If you aren't here to receive these handouts I will not be able to give them to you in subsequent class meetings.

Your grade in the course will be an average of what you make on the exams. We will have four exams. You must take the exams at the time they are scheduled. If you take an exam at any time other than when it is scheduled, you will be penalized ten points. An exception will be made for medical emergencies with a letter from a doctor.

If you must miss an exam, you must talk with me in advance and make specific arrangements on when to take the exam. You must take the exam before the next class meeting. If you fail to make arrangements you will not be able to take the exam. If you don't take an exam, you will be given a zero. That will average into your grade.

IV. Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to

- 1- Understand how judicial values are linked to the professional lives of journalists and the free-expression rights of citizens.
- 2- Understand the legal foundation for freedom of speech and press in America and the legal reasoning used for such issues.

- 3- Understand how ethical values are linked to the professional lives of journalist, broadcasters, advertisers, and public relation professionals.
- 4- Be able to read and understand a court case
- 5- be able to conduct basic legal research

V. Recommended Text:

Pember, Don R. & Calvert, Clay (2008). Mass Media Law. (2009 Edition), McGraw-Hill Publishers, Dubuque, IA.

Suggested Readings:

T. Barton Carter, Juliet Lushbough Dee; & Harvey L. Zuckman (2005). Mass Communication Law: In a Nutshell. The Practice of Social Research. (8th Edition) Wadsworth Publishing Company: Belmont, CA.

Paul Siegel (2005). Cases in Communication Law. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey.

Overbeck, Wayne (2008). Major principles of Media Law. Thomson Wadsworth Publishers, United States

Rubric: What you will be graded on in this course

Evaluation

Criteria for passing the course		Possible Points	Points Earned
Quiz 1	1	100	
Quiz 2	1	200	
Research proposal	1	100	
Research Paper	1	200	
Case Studies	1	100	
Final Exam	1	200	
Class Participation		100	
Total	6	1000	

Rubric: Distribution of grades

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Average	Needs Work	Poor
920-1000	A				
830-910		B			
730-820			C		
640-720				D	
0-630					F

Research Project

Each student will be required to write a formal research paper focusing on important contemporary issues in mass communication law. The paper must be 15 pages long **not including references** and foot notes, 1.5 space, with one line margin on all sides, using 12-point Times or Arial font. Students will choose their own respective topics, as approved in advance by Dr. Oyinate. A topic statement setting forth what topic will be explored is due on November 25, 2009. All assignments are due at the beginning of session.. Students will be expected to conduct a thorough research and describe information accurately and analyze short and long-term impact on media law generally.

Forma: All written work must be typed and presented in a form which is appropriate for the assignment. Written work will be evaluated on grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance.

Class Preparation/Participation: All students are expected to read assigned chapters prior to class, and are expected to participate in the class discussion. Dr. Oyinate reserve the right to raise or lower your grade by one third grade level (such as from B-B+ o, or from B – B_ based upon such intangibles as how well prepared you are for class, the amount of productive discussion you contribute to class, attendance, etc. Dr. Oyinate also reserves the right to not accept late assignments, or to accept late assignments with reduced credit.

Attendance Policy: Since this course is required of all mass communications majors, regular attendance is required. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period; being tardy or absent may result in a deduction from the points you have earned in the course. If you are unable to attend due to illness or emergency, you must contact Dr. Oyinate in **advance** either by the phone or through email address listed above in order to receive credit for assignments due that class period and to avoid losing points.

Individual Research Project: A 15 page paper will be due on November 25, 2009. No Late paper will be accepted after the due date.

VI. Schedule of Readings

Date	Topic	Required Reading in Pember et al	Recommended Readings (Chapters)
Jan. 7	The American Legal System	Chapter 1	Pember/Calvert
Jan. 14	The First Amendment: The Meaning of Freedom	Chapter 2-3	
Jan. 21	Libel (QUIZ 1)	Chapters4-6	Bid
Jan. 28	Invasion of Privacy	Chapter 7	
Feb. 1-4	Invasion of Privacy	Chapter 8	

Feb. 11	Gathering Information: Records and Meetings (QUIZ 2)	Chapter 9	
Feb. 18	Protection of News sources	Chapter 10	Bid
Feb. 25	Free Press/Fair Trial	Chapter 11-12	
Mar. 3	Midterm Examination		
Mar. 10	Regulation of Obscene and Other Erotic Material	Chapter 13	
Mar. 17	Copyright (QUIZ 3)	Chapter 14	
Mar. 24	Regulation of Advertising	Chapter 15	
Mar. 13- Apr. 1	Telecommunication Regulation	Chapter 16	
Apr. 7	Freedom of the Student Press		
Apr. 14	Modern Prior Restraints		
Apr. 21-28	Reviews & Finals		

VII. Additional Scheduling Comments

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. The instructor may find it necessary to make and announce deviations to the schedule.

While attendance will not be monitored formally, students are expected to attend class, to take notes, and to participate in the class discussions.

Make-up exams will be given only in circumstances where, due to the student's ill health or to death in the immediate family, it is impossible for the student to attend the regular session.

University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

Students should be familiar with the Academic Honesty Policy (A Culture of Honesty): Preamble, available at www.uncfsu.edu

All academic work for this class must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible to inform him or herself about those standards before performing any academic work for this class.

This means that you must do the interviews for the survey project with the assigned person, you must do your own work in writing the research report, and you must properly credit materials taken from other sources.

VIII. References:

T. Barton Carter, Juliet Lushbough Dee; & Harvey L. Zuckman (2005). *Mass Communication Law: In a Nutshell.* (8th Edition) Wadsworth Publishing Company: Belmont, CA.

Paul Siegel (2005). *Cases in Communication Law.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, Hillsdale, New Jersey.

Overbeck, Wayne (2008). *Major principles of Media Law.* Thomson Wadsworth Publishers, United States

Zelesky, John D.(2007). *Cases in Communications Law: Liberties, Restraints, and the Modern Media.* (5th ed.) Thomson/Wadsworth Publishing, United States.

Good Luck: **Remember that, “The mind is like a pool of water, it must be constantly fed with new sources, or else, it will be stagnant.”**