

COMM 3200 MEDIA LAW AND ETHICS (3 credit hours)

Elmira College

SPRING 2025

Required Text:

1. Don R. Pember, Clay Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 22nd Edition, 2022;
 2. Roy L. Moore, Michael D. Murray, Kyu Ho Youm, *Media Law and Ethics*, 2021, Routledge;
 3. Clifford G. Christians (2000). *Media Ethics: Case and Moral Reasoning* (11th ed.). Routledge.
- Supplemental readings might be included to illustrate or expand on textbook readings.

Pre-requisites: COMM 1535 Introduction to Effective Speech

Course Description

This course explores the intersection of law and ethics within the field of media. Students will examine the rights and responsibilities of media professionals in democratic societies, focusing on the legal frameworks governing freedom of expression, defamation, privacy, intellectual property, and regulation of social media content. The course emphasizes the ethical dilemmas faced by journalists and content creators, including issues such as truth-telling, bias, and the societal impact of media practices. Students will develop the skills to critically analyze legal and ethical challenges in a rapidly evolving media landscape.

Course Objectives and Goals

- Understand the legal principles that shape media practices, including the First Amendment and global perspectives.
- Analyze landmark legal cases affecting freedom of speech, defamation, and copyright.
- Identify and address ethical dilemmas in media production and reporting.
- Evaluate the role of social media platforms in regulating content and combating misinformation.
- Apply ethical frameworks and legal knowledge to resolve real-world media challenges.

Evaluation of Performance

Your grade will be based upon your performance on exams, assignments, and participation.

4 Assignments	10%
2 Quizzes	20%
2 Group Discussions	20%
Presentation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%

Total 100%

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A 93% and above	B- 80 - 82%	D+ 67 - 69%
A- 90 - 92%	C+ 77 - 79%	D 63 - 66%
B+ 87 - 89%	C 73 - 76%	D- 60 - 62%
B 83 - 86%	C- 70 - 72%	F 59% or below

Withdrawal Policy: Please see Elmira College Bulletin for information on this policy.

Academic Honesty: Please read the section on Academic Honesty in the [Code of Conduct](#). Briefly, academic dishonesty includes: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and plagiarism. Ask if you have any questions on whether something constitutes as academic dishonesty. All work must be original and new. Past assignments from current or other courses will not be accepted. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It will result in zero on the assignment, and a report will be filed with the school. Continued practice will result in failure of the class. Institutional penalties may also apply with repeated acts of academic honesty.

Student Responsibility:

- It is your responsibility to keep track of assignments and due dates.
- You should ask questions concerning assignments and lectures, if you need any clarifications.
- If you are struggling in class, have concerns, and/or unsure about expectations, please stop by during office hours or make an appointment for another time.

Tentative Schedule of Topics

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Materials</u>	<u>Tasks & Evaluations</u>
The American Legal System	Chapter 1	
The First Amendment: The Meaning of Freedom	Chapter 2	
The First Amendment: Contemporary Problems	Chapter 3	Assignment 1
Libel: Establishing a Case	Chapter 4	
Libel: Proof of Fault	Chapter 5	
Libel: Defenses and Damages	Chapter 6	Quiz 1
Invasion of Privacy: Appropriation and Intrusion	Chapter 7	
Invasion of Privacy: Publication of Private Information and False Light	Chapter 8	
The Heart of the Matter in News Ethics	Chapter 9	Assignment 2
The Heart of the Matter in Public Relations Ethics	Chapter 10	
The Heart of the Matter in Entertainment Ethics	Chapter 11	
Public Communication	Chapter 12	Group Discussion 1
Gathering Information: Records and Meetings	Chapter 13	
Protection of News Sources/Contempt Power	Chapter 14	Midterm Exam
Free Press-Fair Trial: Trial-Level Remedies and Restrictive Orders	Chapter 15	
Free Press-Fair Trial: Closed Judicial Proceedings	Chapter 16	
Regulation of Obscene and Other Erotic Material	Chapter 17	Assignment 3

Digital and Social Media	Chapter 18	
Corporate Commercial Speech	Chapter 19	Quiz 2
Copyright	Chapter 20	
Intellectual Property	Chapter 21	Assignment 4
Regulation of Advertising	Chapter 22	
Private Issues, Public Apologies, Personal Victories	Chapter 23	
Media Scope and Depth	Chapter 24	Group Discussion 2
Reliability	Chapter 25	
Censorship	Chapter 26	
Telecommunications Regulation	Chapter 27	Presentation
International and Foreign Law	Chapter 28	Final Exam