

MEJO 340-001 (3 credits)

Introduction to Media Law: Journalism Focus Fall 2023

Monday and Wednesday 11:00 am - 12:15 pm (hybrid) August 21 to December 8

Professor Chris Pereira

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Office: Remote

Office Hours: By appointment only. I'm happy to meet with you via phone or via Zoom, just reach out to me.

Zoom room: https://unc.zoom.us/j/2613337566

Required Text:

- D. Caristi, W.R. Davie and L.T. Lee. Communication Law: Practical Applications in the Digital Age (3rd ed.)

Additional Suggested Reading:

- Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel. The Elements of Journalism. (Three Rivers Press, 2007).
- Anthony Lewis. Make No Law. (Random House, 1991).

Online Resources

- Columbia Journalism Review Homepage: <u>www.cjr.org</u>
- Society of Professional Journalists Homepage: www.spj.org
- International Federation of Journalists Homepage: www.ifj.org

- o (not <u>www.ifj.com</u>, which is the International Fiber Journal)
- SPJ Code of Ethics: <u>www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp</u>
- Media Law Resource Center Homepage: www.medialaw.org
- FindLaw: http://www.findlaw.com/casecode/supreme.html
- Project for Excellence in Journalism Homepage: www.journalism.org
- Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press Homepage: www.rcfp.org
- First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt: www.freedomforum.org/the-first-amendment/
- First Amendment Handbook: https://www.rcfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Guide-WP-and-Twitter-Covers.png
- Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting Homepage: www.fair.org/index.php
- Legal Information Institute at Cornell University: www.law.cornell.edu
- SCOTUS Media Project: www.oyez.org
- Additional resources for reading and analyzing court cases are Westlaw.com, LexisNexis.com and Wikipedia.org

Course Description

This course analyzes media policies and practices with respect to their political and practical generation, Constitutional foundation, ethical enactment and social impact, including such topics as government regulation of the media, the influence of pressure groups, media influence, and libel and privacy laws. This is a hybrid course, but for this semester I'll be leaning into the online aspect of the hybrid style, so we will not be meeting in person at a physical location unless I specify. If I do so, I'll provide plenty of advance notice, but I'll also make sure there's a remote option so that you can still join class via Zoom. That means that unless you hear otherwise from me, each class will be via Zoom. Each week I'll have online modules posted in Canvas (NOT Sakai), which will be a combination of updates to the scheduled content from this syllabus, links to required and optional readings, periodic announcements and occasional quizzes and assignments. Please keep up to date on Canvas, as this will be the main hub of activity for Media Law this semester.

Course Goals and Objectives

This course is intended to give students a fundamental understanding of the relationship between law and communication and an appreciation for the continuing evolution of this relationship. By the end of the semester, students should have a firm grasp of the American legal system as it pertains to all aspects of media, including mass media and commercial speech. Traditionally, this class mixes lectures with Socratic discussions to encourage vigorous and spirited class

discussions and debates. Diverse and differing opinions are welcomed, and expressing dissent is encouraged to help the class see multiple angles on issues. Although we should move along through subjects in an orderly manner, I don't intend for this course to be linear, and therefore we will constantly revisit old topics to create links between the different parts of the subject matter. Initially we will begin by briefly visiting journalism, the underlying theme of this course. We will then cover the applicable sections of government and the law that will help us form a standard that we'll continue to use for the rest of the semester. From there we will jump into more complex topics, such as limits on free speech (such as libel, privacy and obscenity), and examine copyrights, commercial, and political speech.

Grading

This is a class in the School of Journalism and Media. Therefore I expect you to be able to communicate effectively about your thoughts on the subject matter we cover, both orally and in writing. Participation is required and encouraged.

Ten percent (10 %) of your grade will be based on class participation. Even though our classes will be online, I welcome discussion and participation! I've taught this class 100% in person, 100% online asynchronous (meaning everything was just recorded and put online and we never met face to face, even digitally), and I've done the hybrid version before. I get that in person classes are the best for engagement, and that online lectures, even when you can see my face, digitally 'raise your hand' and come off mute, can seem very impersonal. Nevertheless, we can make our digital classes rich collaborative environments where we learn from each other and have productive discussions. That starts with me, but I can't do it without each of you. While I'd like students to voluntarily participate, I will call on you. Each student should consider themselves 'on-call' every single class. If I call on you, you can 'pass,' but please at least venture an attempt to answer the question. If you repeatedly pass when called on, it will impact your participation score. If you participate voluntarily (and often), you'll be less likely to be called on. I take notes on who is participating and who isn't, so if you haven't been speaking up, expect to be call on.

I will be recording lectures and discussions and posting them onto Canvas. Everyone is responsible for watching the lectures, even if you have to miss a class. Everyone is responsible for keeping up with the reading assignments. Class sessions will be focused on discussions of the material from the readings as well as real world scenarios and events that are pertinent to Media Law.

Additionally, students will be required to submit four (4) reflections on what they've learned throughout the semester. Each reflection paper should be at least 350 words in length and no more than 500 words, and should be written as if being submitted for professional submission. Students may submit an optional fifth reflection paper for extra credit, though the extra credit reflection paper will only count up to an extra 10% of a student's reflection paper grade. Students are only responsible for the four required reflections. Each reflection should only encompass a

subject from that week's reading or class sessions. Reflection papers are each worth one percent of your semester grade, for a total of four percent (4 %).

Throughout the semester, I'll post up to eight quizzes in Canvas testing you on the material that you should have most recently read for class. The quizzes will be timed, and while they're open book, they're not collaborative assignments, so please don't work with anyone else on them. Each quiz will be worth up to two percent of your semester grade, for a total of sixteen percent (16 %).

There will be two Midterm Examinations, on September 20 and October 25. Each Midterm will count for twenty percent (20 %) of students' semester grade, for a total of forty percent (40 %). Each Midterm Examination will test material covered over a roughly five (5) week period of class, so our first midterm is scheduled for the end of Week 5, and the second is scheduled at the end of Week 10. Each Midterm may consist of a mix of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay questions.

The Final Examination will be during the regularly scheduled exam for our class time, which is Friday, December 15 at 12:00 pm. You will have until 2:30 pm to finish the exam. This will count for thirty percent (30 %) of students' semester grade. The Final Examination will test mostly material from Week 10 until the end of the semester, but may have material from earlier weeks that is particularly critical for students to have learned in this course, and will consist of a mix of multiple choice, true/false, short answer and essay questions.

Participation	10
Reflection Papers	4
Quizzes	16
Midterm 1	20
Midterm 2	20
Final Exam	30
Total	100
Total	100

The grading scale I will use for this class is as follows:

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A = 465-500 points (93-100%)

A- = 450-464 points (90-92.9%)

B+ = 435-449 points (87-89.9%)

B = 415-434 points (83-86.9%)

B- = 400-414 points (80-82.9%)

C+ = 385-399 points (77-79.9%)

C = 365-384 points (73-76.9%)

C- = 350-364 points (70-72.9%)

D+ = 335-349 points (67-69.9%)

D = 300-334 points (60-66.9%)

F = 299 points or fewer (less than 60%)
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Media Law is a required course for students enrolled in the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, meaning students must pass the course with a minimum grade of C to graduate.

Attendance

Although this is going to be mostly a virtual class, attendance each class is required. It's difficult to participate when you're not present. The attendance policy I adhere to is the University attendance policy, which requires attendance except for University Approved Absences, which include Authorized University activities, Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office. I therefore expect you at every class. If you need to be absent due to one of the above University Approved Absences, please communicate with me as soon as possible. Students with three (3) consecutive unexplained absences are required to be reported to the Dean's Office for safety reasons.

Regarding COVID, students are expected to be in class unless they have tested positive for COVID-19, are showing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or are told by the university or a medical professional they need to isolate (since this class is virtual, unless you're feeling too unwell from your symptoms to attend, I still expect you to be present at our virtual sessions).

Students who miss class due to the above COVID conditions will not be penalized for their absence and will not be asked to provide formal documentation from a healthcare provider.

If you are unable to attend your in-person or synchronous online class due to the above conditions, take the following steps:

- Notify me in advance of the absence or inability to participate, if possible.
- Participate in class activities online and submit assignments electronically, to the extent possible.
- Reach out to me if illness will require late submission of academic coursework or other modifications to deadlines.
- If remaining in a class and fulfilling the necessary requirements becomes impossible due to illness or other COVID-related circumstances, contact me to discuss other options.

Make Up Policy / Late Work

Students are expected to be prompt with all assignments. Deadlines are provided within this syllabus. Any late submissions will automatically receive no more than 50% credit. *Submissions more than one week after the due date will not be accepted.* Late submissions due to medical reasons will be accepted at full credit provided an authenticated doctor's note is provided.

The Honor Code

The Honor Code, which permeates all phases of university life, is the foundation for much of the rich pedagogical climate at Carolina. The Code is self-governing, which not only means that you are your own police (and that of your peers), it means that you won't hear me refer to the Code very much, if at all. Contrary to the idea of 'out of sight, out of mind,' the Honor Code is always in mind: this is because your admission to the University presupposed your dedication to this ideal, and as I teach this course I presuppose for each of you a continued dedication and adherence to it. The Code is only as strong as we make it. So, just like on the subway or at a sporting event, if you see something, say something.

The Instrument of Student Judicial Governance (https://studentconduct.unc.edu/about-us/forms-documents/instrument/) contains the Honor Code provisions, which state that students will 1) obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code; 2) refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing; 3) conduct themselves so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community; and 4) refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University.

The Instrument discusses plagiarism as well. One thing that it doesn't mention with regards to plagiarism is ChatGPT and similar AI programs that simulate writing. I don't mind if you use ChatGPT for legitimate purposes in this class. But don't use it to generate written content that it's clear that I expect you to have written yourself. While not plagiarism, I consider it a violation of the Honor Code. Part of my job is to assess your performance in this class. As such, turning in an assignment that was generated by an AI program as your own impairs me from doing that job. It's also cheating yourself. So don't do it. If you aren't sure what a 'legitimate purpose' for using an AI program in this class is, ask me.

Freedom of Expression

Free discussion, inquiry, and expression should be encouraged in the classroom and in conferences. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course for which they are enrolled. Students should be treated in a respectful manner at all times, and should never be made the object of humiliation or ridicule.

Accessibility Accommodations

If you are a student with a documented disability or a student with a unique personal situation (e.g. a terminally ill family member or you struggle with depression, etc.), please contact me and let me know within the first two weeks of class so that we can work out an arrangement to ensure that you can still thrive in this class. Students who need academic accommodations and additional resources (such as extended testing time) must contact the Department of Accessibility

Resources and Service (ARS) in a timely manner to determine whether and to what extent such accommodations or resources are necessary for this course. Only ARS can make this determination for you. It is the goal of UNC to "ensure that all programs and facilities of the University are accessible to all members of the University community." If you think this may apply to you, please contact ARS as soon as possible either by telephone at 962-8300 or visiting the ARS website at http://accessibility.unc.edu/about-us.

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Their website is https://caps.unc.edu and their facilities are on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building.

Accreditation Values

The accrediting body for the Hussman School of Journalism and Media is The Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC). You can find out more about the accreditation body itself and the values expected of accredited schools at http://hussman.unc.edu/accreditation. The Hussman School is one of the six professional schools at UNC, and as such you are training to be a member of the profession. We'll treat each other like professionals in this course, and I will do my best to help you prepare to be a professional. One of those ways is becoming familiar with the values laid out by the AEJMC and trying to embody those values in everything that you do in this class. The basics that we will try to focus on in this class are understanding and applying the principles of freedom of speech and press, understanding the dynamics around freedom of expression, the monitoring role of the press in balancing governmental power, and the philosophies that underlie these privileges that we enjoy as rights.

Chatham House Rule

I mentioned elsewhere in this syllabus that frank and open discussion is welcome. However, I understand that our society is ever-evolving, particularly with regards to technology and its role in facilitating outrage. As such, we'll be observing the Chatham House Rule in this class. The rule is simply "[In class], participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed." As riveting as our class discussions may be, I'm not sure how many of you will be rushing away from class to tell your friends all about the excitement of Media Law. But Cancel Culture does exist, and sometimes when we hear things that we don't like or that we don't agree with, it's gradually become a norm to want to report it to 'others.' Practically speaking, the Rule states that you can do that, but that you can't identify the person who said it or anyone else who participated in that discussion. The logical conclusion of that is that you can't identify that the discussion took place in your Media Law class (because then people could possibly know other participants), so just be smart about how you convey the material of in-class discussions. This

includes screenshots, etc. We'll talk about memes this semester, but in the meantime, let's try not to create any with each other as the subjects.

Important Dates:

August 21 – Classes begin

September 4 – Labor Day (no class)

September 25 - Well-being Day (no class)

- Midterm Exam #1

October 12 - University Day

October 19-20 – Fall Break

November 22-24 – Thanksgiving Holiday

December 6 – Last class for Media Law

December 7 & 13 – Reading Days

December 8-15 – Final Exams (The Final Exam for this class is December 15 from 12-2:30)

December 17 - Fall Commencement

Class Schedule

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
1	The Mission of Journalism	August 21	Reading: • Course syllabus	
		August 23	Reading: • Communication Law, Chapter 1, "Sources of Law and Systems of Justice."	
2	The First Amendment	August 28	Reading:Communication Law,Chapter 2, "First Amendment in Principle and Practice."	
		August 30	Reading: • https://www.nytimes.com/ 2017/12/20/us/pentagon- papers-post.html by Niraj Chokshi, The New York Times, Dec. 20, 2017	
3	The Role of Government I	September 4		No class due to Labor Day

Week	Topic	Date	Assignment	Notes
		September 6	 Communication Law, Chapter 3, "Sedition and Censorship" "It's Not Just Trump: US Media Freedom Fraying At the Edges" https://www.indexoncensorship.org/not-just-trump-us-media-freedom-fraying-edges/ "Do Social Media Companies Censor Us?" https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/08/19/most-americans-think-social-media-sites-censor-political-viewpoints/ "Do Social Media Companies Have the Right to Censor Us?" <a and="" broadcasting="" href="https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2021/01/11/do-social-media-companies-have-the-right-to-silence-the-massesand-is-this-censoring-the-government/?sh=50510d9748e2 </td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>The Role of
Government II</td><td>September 11</td><td>Reading:Communication Law,Chapter 8, " li="" telecommunications."<="">	

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
		September 13	Reading: • News vs. Commentary: https:// www.americanpressinstitute. org/publications/reports/ survey-research/confusion- about-whats-news-and- whats-opinion-is-a-big- problem-but-journalists-can- help-solve-it/	Reflection #1 due by Friday September 15
5	Obscenity & Indecency	September 18	Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 10, "Obscenity and Indecency." "How George Carlin Changed History." https://www.biography.com/legal-figures/george-carlin-seven-words-supreme-court	
		September 20		Mid Term #1
6	Freedom of Speech	September 25		No class due to Well-being Day

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
		September 27	Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 4, "Forums of Freedom." "Go Daddy Joins the Resistance." https:// slate.com/technology/ 2017/08/the-one-big- problem-with-godaddy- dropping-the-daily- stormer.html The Citizens United decision and why it matters. https:// publicintegrity.org/politics/ the-citizens-united-decision- and-why-it-matters/ The First and Fourteenth Amendments www.usconstitution.net/ const.html#Am1 "Debate on Patriot Act and First Amendment Continues" David L. Hudson Jr. http:// www.firstamendmentcenter.o rg/debate-on-patriot-act-and- first-amendment-continues	
7	Libel	October 2	Reading:Communication Law, Chapter 5, "Libel."	

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
		October 4	 Truth as a defense to libel. https:// www.washingtonpost.com/ news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/ 2016/06/28/alexander- hamilton-the-truth-and- freedom-of-the-press/ Should an 'inflammatory statement' exception to the 1st amendment exist? https:// www.washingtonpost.com/ news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/ 2016/06/26/chief-idaho- federal-prosecutor-warns-the- spread-of-false-information- or-inflammatory-or- threatening-statements-may- violate-federal-law/ 	Reflection #2 due by Friday October 6
8	Intellectual Property	October 9	Reading: • Communication Law, Chapter 7, "Intellectual Property."	
		October 11		
9	Privacy	October 16	Reading: • Communication Law, Chapter 6, "Privacy."	
		October 18	Reading: Can you have privacy in public? https:// money.cnn.com/2016/07/15/ news/companies/starbucks- mcdonalds-wifi-porn/ index.html "Would You Doxx A Nazi?" https://www.theatlantic.com/ technology/archive/2017/08/ would-you-doxx-a-nazi/ 537522	

Week	Topic	Date	Assignment	Notes
10	New Standards for New Media	October 23	 Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 9, "Digital Online Media." "Trump Can't Block Critics from his Twitter page." https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/09/us/politics/trump-twitter-first-amendment.html "Does Twitter Threaten https://wan-ifra.org/2010/07/06/does-twitter-threaten-ethicaljournalism Context Collapse. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Context_collapse "Social Media and the Effects of Context Collapse" "Social Media and the Effects of Context Collapse" understanding-context-collapse-and-the-restoration-of-our-walled-gardens-1325bf527cf 	
		October 25		Mid Term #2
11	Advertising Law and the FTC	October 30	Reading: • Communication Law, Chapter 11, "Advertising Law."	

Week	Topic	Date	Assignment	Notes
		November 1	 Net Neutrality. https:// en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Net_neutrality "What is Net Neutrality? https://www.aclu.org/issues/ free-speech/internet-speech/ what-net-neutrality "What the End of Net Neutrality Actually Means." https:// knowledge.wharton.upenn.ed u/article/the-end-of-net-neutrality/ "The Net Neutrality Fanatics Were Wrong." https:// financialpost.com/opinion/ the-net-neutrality-fanatics- 	Reflection #3 due by Friday November 3
12	Media and Business	November 6	were-wrong Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 12, "Media Business Law."	
		November 8	Reading: "Computers and Robots Don't Count." https://slate.com/technology/2016/08/in-copyright-law-computers-and-robots-dont-count.html	
13	Media and Business	November 13	Reading: • Jason Linkins, "The Supreme Court's Citizens United Decision is Terrifying." http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ 2010/01/21/the-supreme-courtscitize_n_432127.html	

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
		November 15	Reading: • James Taranto, "The Media and Corporate Free Speech" (interview with Floyd Abrams) http://online.wsj.com/article/SB100014240527487040943 04575029791336276632.htm 1 • Kathleen Sullivan, Two Concepts of Free Speech: http://www.harvardlawreview.org/issues/124/november10/Comment Comment 7328.php	Reflection #4 due by Friday November 17
14	Media and Courts	November 20	 Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 13, "Media and the Courts." Clarence Thomas & Actual Malice: https://amp.cnn.com/cnn/2022/06/27/politics/supreme-court-new-york-times-sullivan/index.html Two Justices Call for Revisiting Actual Malice standard: https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/02/us/supreme-court-libel.amp.html 	
		November 22		No class due to Thanksgiving

Week	Торіс	Date	Assignment	Notes
15	Journalism as a Responsible Partnership with Society	November 27	 Reading: Communication Law, Chapter 14, "Freedom of Access." Edward Snowden case: https://www.brookings.edu/articles/edward-snowden-in-moscow-a-case-study-in-diplomatic-mismanagement/ 	
		November 29		
16	Watchdog Role of Media	December 4		
		December 6		

Friday, December 15: Final Examination 12:00 – 2:30

^{***}Syllabus subject to change.