

# INTRO TO MEDIA LAW: AD/PR/SC

MEJO 341-002 | Spring 2024

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



## COURSE INFORMATION

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**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisite:** MEJO 153

**Class Time:** Tuesday-Thursday 12:30pm – 1:45pm

**Instructional Format:** In-Person

**Classroom Location:** Carroll Hall, Room 0033

**Course Website:** <https://uncch.instructure.com/courses/52606>

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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**Name:** Sterling Logan (she/her)

**Email Address:** [sterling\\_logan@kenan-flagler.unc.edu](mailto:sterling_logan@kenan-flagler.unc.edu)

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Office Hours Link:** Zoom section on Canvas

## COURSE CONTENT

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### Course Description

This course will explore issues related to the First Amendment. Topics include commercial speech, corporate speech, libel, privacy, regulated commercial communications, federal regulation of electronic and new media, freedom of information, intellectual property, and international issues. The general purpose of this course is to inform students of the laws governing advertising, public relations, and strategic communications fields.

### Course Objectives

1. Develop a clear understanding of the basics of media law.
2. Analyze common issues in media and understand how to practice within the bounds of the law.
3. Understand defenses designed to protect practicing media professionals.

### Course Texts & Materials

Trager's The Law of Journalism and Mass Communication 8<sup>th</sup> Edition

By: Victoria Smith Ekstrand, Caitlin Ring Carlson Erin Coyle, Susan Dente Ross, and Amy Reynolds

Available: Student Stores, Park Library (7<sup>th</sup> Edition), Amazon

### Expectations / Class Etiquette

This course covers topics in law that inevitably intersect with current events. Each student is expected to focus class contributions on legal analysis and professional application of the law in a respectful manner. I expect each student to fully engage with assigned materials prior to the start of each class. In the event any class discussions cause undue distress, students are permitted to exit class without penalty, but are responsible for any missed content. I also ask that you arrive to class on time and **refrain from browsing, online shopping, scrolling social media, etc. during class.**

## Determination of Grade

### Grading Scale:

A: 93-100  
A-: 90-92  
B+: 87-89  
B: 83-86  
B-: 80-82  
C+: 77-79  
C: 73-76  
C-: 70-72  
D: Below 70

### Grading Rubric:

Participation: 10%  
Quizzes: 20%  
Midterm: 20%  
Group Project: 20%  
Final: 30%

### EXTRA CREDIT

If an opportunity for extra credit arises – of which there is no promise or guarantee – it will be offered to the entire class. No individual extra credit opportunities are offered. Students should not ask for individual exceptions.

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS

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### Participation

There will be opportunities to participate through class discussions, in class activities and attendance. Weekly contribution is expected. Those that attend each class, submit in class assignments, and contribute to discussions in a way that clearly shows engagement with readings will receive full credit. This is 10% of your grade.

### Quizzes

There will be **9 quizzes** designed to test your understanding of weekly content. The quizzes will be made available on Canvas and are due by midnight on the date listed in the course schedule. All quizzes are open notes, open book and untimed. **You CANNOT use peer assistance on quizzes, this is an honor code violation and will be treated accordingly. You CANNOT make up missed quizzes. The lowest quiz grade will NOT be dropped at the end of the year.** This is 20% of your grade.

### Midterm Exam

The midterm exam is designed to ensure you stay on top of the content prior to the final exam. It is an in person closed book exam. Covered Topics: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, Speech Distinctions, Libel & Emotional Distress, Libel Defenses & Privileges, and Privacy. Midterm will be true false, multiple choice, hypotheticals, and short answers. Study by reviewing the quizzes, slide decks, and in class hypos/activities. This is 20% of your grade.

### Group Project

The group project is designed to allow you to apply the subject matter to modern events. Your groups are assigned and can be found in Canvas along with the requirements of the project. Class time will be allotted to completing portions of the project. This is 20% of your grade.

### Final Exam

The final is an in-person, closed book, cumulative exam. It mirrors the midterm and is 30% of your grade.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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**Week 1: Introductions, Getting Ready to Study Law**

Jan. 11 READ: Syllabus  
READ: Trager et al., Chapter 1

**Week 2: Basic First Amendment & Prior Restraint**

Jan. 16 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 2

Jan. 18 **Due: Quiz 1 - 11:59pm**

**Week 3: Speech Distinctions**

Jan. 23 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 3

Jan. 25 **Due: Quiz 2 - 11:59pm**

**Week 4: Libel & Emotional Distress**

Jan. 29 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 4

Feb. 1 **Due: Quiz 3 - 11:59pm**

**Week 5: Libel Defenses & Privileges**

Feb. 5 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 5

Feb. 8 **Due: Quiz 4 - 11:59pm**

**Week 6: Privacy**

Feb. 13 **Wellness Day: NO CLASS**

Feb. 15 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 6  
**No quiz this week**

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**Week 7: Privacy / Midterm Review**

Feb. 20 READ: none, privacy continued.

Feb. 22 **Information Gathering:**

READ: Trager et al., Chapter 7

**Due: Quiz 5 - 11:59pm** (covers privacy and information gathering)

**Week 8: Midterm**

Feb. 27 Midterm Review Session, come to class with questions.  
Covered Topics: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment, Speech Distinctions, Libel & Emotional Distress, Libel Defenses & Privileges, Privacy. Midterm will be true false, multiple choice, hypotheticals, and short answers. Study by reviewing the quizzes, slide decks, and in class hypos/activities.

Feb. 29 **Midterm**

**Week 9: NO CLASS**

March 5 **NO CLASS**

March 7 **NO CLASS**

**Week 10: Spring Break**

March 12 **Spring Break: NO CLASS**

March 14 **Spring Break: NO CLASS**

**Week 11: Electronic Media Regulation**  
March 19 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 9 (covering chapter 8 later!)

March 21 In class presentation workshop – time permitting  
**Due: Quiz 6 - 11:59pm**  
**Due: submit presentation topic on Canvas – 11:59pm**

**Week 12: Obscenity & Indecency**  
March 26 READ: Trager et al., Chapter 10 pg. 473 – 505

March 28 **Wellness Day: NO CLASS**

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**Week 13: Intellectual Property: Copyright**  
April 2 READ: Trager et al. Chapter 11 pg. 521 – 549

April 4 **Intellectual Property: Trademark**  
READ: Trager et al. Chapter 11 pg. 549 – 561  
**Due: Quiz 7 - 11:59pm** (covers obscenity, indecency, and intellectual property)

**Week 14: Commercial Speech**  
April 9 READ: Trager et al. Chapter 12 pg. 583 – 628

April 11 In class presentation workshop – attendance mandatory  
**Due: Quiz 8 - 11:59pm**

**Week 15: Presentations Workshops**  
April 16 In class presentation workshop – attendance mandatory

April 18 In class presentation workshop – attendance mandatory

**Week 16: Presentation Week**  
April 23 Group 1 - 4

April 25 Group 5 - 8  
**Due: Quiz 9 - 11:59pm** (what did you learn from each presentation)

**Week 17: Exam Review**  
April 30 LDOC. Come to class with questions

May 2 **Reading Day**

**Finals Week:**  
May 6 **The cumulative final exam is on Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.**

*\*\*Subject to change: Final exam times are based on the University final exam schedule. Exams are scheduled according to the day and start time of the first meeting of the course each week and held in the regularly assigned meeting room unless the instructor is otherwise notified. This exam is scheduled at the same time as Econ 101. **If you are also enrolled in Econ 101, please notify the professor.***

# POLICY STATEMENTS

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## Attendance Policy

In compliance with the [university attendance policy](#) each student is permitted 3 absences; any subsequent missed classes will impact your grade. In the event you are ill or unable to attend for a verifiable reason please email me as soon as possible to discuss alternative attendance methods, including participating through Zoom. In the event that courses return remote, this class will operate through zoom.

## Honor Code:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that the University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Julie Dixon-Green, or speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

## Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

I am committed to each students success, please reach out if you are in need of assistance. If you are struggling with an issue stemming from mental health UNC-CH offers professional assistance through the office of Counseling and Psychological Services, <https://caps.unc.edu/>. Hussman School of Journalism also has an embedded counselor for non-emergency-based counseling services. <http://hussman.unc.edu/directory/staff/carolyn-ebeling>.

## Diversity:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

## Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>.

## Accreditation:

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: <http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet points under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.