Office hours Office Hours: I will be available by email, although I may not be able to respond immediately. Because I will not be able to be vaccinated until later in the semester, I will not be holding on-campus office hours. If you MUST see me in person, we can make arrangements.

Course Approach: This course is designed to provide you with an understanding of mass communication law. Class format will usually be devoted to the background of landmark cases, and discussion of the implications. It will take a case study approach and involve discussion and critical thinking. The purpose of this class is to give those entering mass communications an understanding of law and regulation and how to avoid lawsuits in the practice of journalism, regardless of area.

Text & Reading: Mass Media Law, Pember & Calvert.

Course Objectives: By the end of the course, it is hoped you will have:
- Gained factual knowledge of the law and its effect on mass media and society.
- Learned how to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view.
- Gained factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends).
- Learned to apply course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions).

Departmental Learning Goals: Mass Media Learning Goal 3 says that students should be able to recognize and understand key legal and ethical implications of synthesizing and producing information for transmission to the public through media channels. We will reach this goal together by studying, asking questions and applying concepts learned in class to the real world. Throughout the semester, we will use assignments to help meet the goals.

Evaluation: The departmental learning goals listed above will be assessed through the average of several assignments given throughout the semester. Primarily the class will consist of reading assignments followed by responses to short-answer questions. The responses will be judged on their use of examples, citations from the book and the application of that material to the answers. In other words, SHOW, DON'T TELL. Each assignment will be worth a possible 10 points. Late assignments – for whatever reason – cannot earn more than seven points. If your answer lacks sufficient citation, your answers cannot earn more than five points.

Attendance: Obviously, attendance will consist of your staying current in your coursework. The assignments generally will be given each week and will be due on the same day each week. Late assignments will be docked (see above).

Academic Honesty Code: Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both the print and web versions for the Student Handbook. The current student handbook is found on the ASU web site under publications at the https://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/

Americans with Disabilities: Persons with disabilities which may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any accommodations being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Academic Advising: The College of Arts and Sciences and the Department of Communication, Mass Media and Theatre require that students meet with a faculty adviser as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Faculty Adviser will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, faculty Adviser, and the department chair. Communication or Mass Media majors who have questions about advising or declaring a major in the department, can call 942-2031.
Grade Appeal Process. As stated in Angelo State University Operating Policy and Procedure (OP 10.03 Student Grade Grievances), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see Operating Procedure 10.03 at https://www.angelo.edu/content/files/14196-op-1003-grade-grievance

Title IX at Angelo State University:
Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. This is done in order to connect students with resources and options in addressing the allegations reported. As a student, are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Title IX Coordinator. You may do so by contacting:
  Michelle Miller, J.D.
  Title IX Coordinator
  Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
  325-942-2022
  michelle.miller@angelo.edu
You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.
If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic at 325-942-2171, Counseling Services at 325-942-2371 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.
The Office of Title IX Compliance also provides accommodations related to pregnancy (such as communicating with your professors regarding medically necessary absences, modifications required because of pregnancy, etc.). If you are pregnant and need assistance or accommodations, please contact the Office of Title IX Compliance utilizing the information above.
For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.
Course Outline (subject to change)

I. The American Legal System
   A. Sources of the law
   B. The judicial system

II. The First Amendment
   A. Historical development
   B. Meaning of the First Amendment
   C. Prior Restraint

III. Contemporary First Amendment Problems
   A. Wartime constraints
   B. Expression in schools
   C. Time, place and manner restrictions
   D. Hate speech
   E. The Internet

IV. Libel
   A. Historical development
   B. Fault
   C. Defenses and damages

V. Privacy

VI. Gathering information
   • Freedom of Information Act
   • Meetings and records
   • Restrictions on access
   • Protecting sources

VII. Free Press/Fair Trial
   A. Trial-level remedies
   B. Closed judicial proceedings

VIII. Obscenity

IX. Copyright

X. Regulating Advertising

XI. Regulating Telecommunications