

Office hours: To be announced. You are urged, however, to make an appointment to ensure that I'm in.

Course Approach: This course is designed to provide you with an the intricacies 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.

Grading: The above objectives will be assessed through five tests administered throughout the semester. You will not be tested over the facts of cases presented in class, but you must have an understanding of the case and how it affected the law. Tests will be based on a 100-point scale each.

Attendance: As per the policy of Angelo State University, attendance will be taken each day. If you do not miss any classes, three points will be added to your final grade. Other points will be awarded as follows: one absence, two points; two absences, one point. Roll will be taken by a roll sheet passed out during each class period. If you come late or, for some reason, miss the roll sheet, please see me AFTER class to sign. Please do not interrupt class to find and sign the roll sheet.

Examinations will not be made up unless you let me know at least one class period ahead of time. The only absences that will be "excused" are school-related trips. You must notify me ahead of time to be "excused."

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 URL:

www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook_2007_2008.pdf

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 that 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, Mass Media or Theatre 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 <http://www.angelo.edu/opmanual/>

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

EXAMINATION

IV. Libel

A. Historical development

B. Fault

C. Defenses and damages

EXAMINATION

V. Privacy

VI. Gathering information

- Freedom of Information Act

- Meetings and records

- Restrictions on access

- Protecting sources

EXAMINATION

VII. Free Press/Fair Trial

A. Trial-level remedies

B. Closed judicial proceedings

VIII. Obscenity

IX. Copyright

EXAMINATION

X. Regulating Advertising

XI. Regulating Telecommunications

FINAL EXAMINATION: Thursday, May 12, at 9 a.m.

END