

Legal and Ethical Principles for the Mass Media

Oklahoma City University
Spring 2017
MASC 4213 - 3 credit hours
10-10:50 a.m. MWF
Walker Center, Room 144

Professor:

Dr. Kenna Griffin
Office: Walker Center, Room 117
Office phone: 208-5043
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Office hours: Posted
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I have an open-door policy and am happy to discuss mass communications law or ethics with you at any opportunity. You do not have to schedule an appointment to discuss course-related matters with me. However, if you want to guarantee an uninterrupted one-on-one that will take longer than 15 minutes, I encourage you to schedule an appointment to ensure we can provide one another our undivided attention.

Required Texts & Course Materials:

Patterson, Phillip and Wilkins, Lee. (2013) *Media Ethics Issues and Cases 8th edition*. McGraw Hill Higher Education: New York.

Materials posted in the course Facebook group, which I will invite you to join.

Provided handouts, including legal cases

A 1.5-2-inch binder and dividers specifically for your legal cases

NOTE: I may add other materials during the semester.

Recommended Texts:

Good media practitioners (and citizens) are well-informed news consumers.

You should read *The Oklahoman* (www.newsok.com) daily, as it is the “paper of record” in our city. You also should read OCU campus news on MediaOCU (www.mediaocu.com) every day and weekly in *The Campus* newspaper (published on Wednesdays). I also recommend you read at least one national newspaper and watch at least one televised newscast each day.

In addition, I recommend you visit and participate in discussions on my media blog, www.profkrg.com. The site acts as a resource for students and an open forum for discussion of trends in our profession. You can sign up for weekly email newsletters on the blog, which will keep you from missing posts. You also can follow the blog on Twitter @profkrg or on Facebook (www.facebook.com/profkrg).

Responsible citizens are avid news consumers. Information is the key to a democratic society. Develop the habit of daily news consumption now if you haven’t already.

Course Description:

This course will examine the historical background and development of freedom of expression and the limitations imposed on those freedoms by statute, common law and the court’s interpretation of constitutional law. The course also will give you the foundation necessary to make ethical decisions within your profession and become a more critical thinker. The case study approach will be used, with an emphasis on the principles and philosophies that underlie the various aspects of communications law. The course aims to:

- acquaint you to the current state of the law in key areas of mass communications practice,
- prepare you to analyze and understand legal decisions so you will be able to interpret changes in legal status for media products/organizations,
- familiarize you with the structure of the court system and how law is developed,
- acquaint you to legal terminology,
- familiarize you with the role of free expression and the media in light of the U.S. Constitution, U.S. Supreme and Superior Court decisions and existing law, and
- help you understand that the law always is changing, and you must prepare yourself to constantly update your knowledge.

Grading:

I will attempt to grade all class assignments and return them to you within a week of submission. You are encouraged to visit my office to discuss any questions or concerns you have about your grades on individual assignments or in the course as a whole. You are strongly discouraged from openly discussing your grades in class. Your grade for the course will consist of grades in four categories:

- Final exam - 35 %
- Midterm exam - 30 % (65 % at midterm)
- Position papers/assignments/quizzes - 25 %
- Class attendance/participation - 10 %

NOTE: Be certain to sign the attendance sheet during every class session. It is the method I will use to track your attendance. If you will miss class for a university-sanctioned happening, I must have a notice from the appropriate university official beforehand. Failure to provide such documentation will result in your absence being counted. You are encouraged to submit due assignments before your approved absence. If you are unable to do so, you must make arrangements with me and submit any due assignment at the beginning of your return class session.

Exams:

You will take midterm and final exams in this course. The exams will cover text readings, lecture materials, handouts, and supplemental materials posted to the course Facebook group. Each essay-style exam is worth 100 points. Partial credit will be given where applicable.

The midterm exam will be given in two parts. The first five questions will be given from **10-10:50 a.m. March 6**. The second five questions will be given from **10-10:50 a.m. March 8**. I split the exam into two parts to ensure you have enough time to complete it. The midterm exam is worth 30 percent of your final grade, but is worth 65 percent at midterm.

The final exam is **10 a.m. to noon May 1**. It is worth 35 percent of your final grade.

I will address components of the exam as they are discussed in class. I also will provide exam reviews before administering the exams.

You should plan to take the exams at the schedule time. Make-up exams will be given only in extreme emergencies. Make-up exams will be more academically rigorous than original exams.

Your exams will not be returned to you after they are graded until it is time for you to take your comprehensive exam the last semester of your senior year. However, we will review them in class. I am happy to discuss any questions you have before or after your exams.

Briefs:

You are required to maintain a binder of briefs (short summaries) of the legal case handouts from this course. They should be kept in a course binder specifically for briefs. Dividers should be used to separate the briefs by topic.

Failure to maintain a complete set of briefs likely will damage your performance on the midterm, final and comprehensive exams, as you are allowed to use your formal briefs (no notes or cases) on these exams.

I will review your briefs folder as you are taking each exam. You will receive no credit on the exam in question if you have items other than briefs in your binder.

I will not reprint briefs. You must be present when briefs are provided or find a classmate nice enough to copy them for you. You must bring your briefs folder to every class session.

All briefs I provide follow this format:

- I. Name of Case
- II. Area of Law
- III. Court Opinion
- IV. Circumstances/Background of Case
- V. Long-term Legal Importance

Ethics Fridays:

Each Friday during the course is dedicated as "Ethics Friday." On these days we will take a break from law and focus on the ethical practices/dilemmas of media. During this time you also will learn about how ethics and law combine to make a single, well-rounded mass communications discipline.

You will be required to write position papers for Ethics Fridays. Topics for the week's paper will be given on the previous Ethics Friday.

Ethics papers are due at the beginning of the class session. No position papers will be accepted after the due time/date or from any student who is late to the class session. You must be prepared to discuss the ethical case and your position during the class.

Papers must be:

- Typed; stapled,
- Two-five pages; double spaced; 10-12 point type; regular margins,
- Cited using at least five APA citations w/a reference list, and
- Submitted in hard copy in class.

Papers not submitted in this manner will receive no credit.

Ethics papers typically will be returned the following Friday.

Students should remember that position papers are not an opportunity to rant. A good position paper is a well-documented and strongly research-supported opinion. I will provide more information on position paper grading, including how to use APA citations.

Ethics papers are due:

- Ethics paper 1 - Jan. 20
- Ethics paper 2 - Jan. 27
- Ethics paper 3 - Feb. 3
- Ethics paper 4 - Feb. 10
- Ethics paper 5 - Feb. 17
- Ethics paper 6 - Feb. 24
- Ethics paper 7 - March 3
- Ethics paper 8 - March 24
- Ethics paper 9 - March 31
- Ethics paper 10 - April 7
- Ethics Paper 11 - April 14
- Ethics Paper 12 - April 21
- Ethics Paper 13 - April 28

Missed assignments:

Missed assignments cannot be made up without my approval.

I will not accept assignments sent to class with peers.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to obtain any assignments, handouts and notes that you miss.

I will not contact you regarding your absence. I also will not save copies of course materials distributed during individual class sessions.

If you need an extension on an assignment because of an absence, you must schedule a time to privately discuss it with me.

If you miss an assignment and are allowed to make it up, you must do so at the scheduled time or you will not receive credit.

Attendance:

Course attendance and participation are required and will be counted as 10 percent of your final grade. You are expected to arrive to class on time and leave when class is complete.

At this point in your academic career you should understand the concept of decisions and consequences. You are free to make your own decisions regarding your attendance. However, it's important that you are aware that lack of attendance in any class will result in you missing important material that will not be repeated. In addition, repeat absences will result in the lowering of your final grade.

If you cannot avoid missing class, you must notify me prior to the class session and submit any assignments due for my consideration at that time. Do not assume that I know you will be absent. Communicate with me regarding every necessary absence. Notification of an absence from anyone but yourself will not be considered adequate. Do not send word of your absence via another classmate. I will give excused absences on a case-by-case basis.

Remember: ***You make choices. You live with the consequences.***

Participation:

You are required to participate in class. Participation could include commenting on readings, interactive lecture, and careful and active note taking.

Classes will incorporate overviews of legal areas, outlines of specific legal regulations, lecture on general ethical principles, and overviews of important legal and ethical cases. It is essential for you to keep pace with the assigned readings to survive this course.

Because of the delicate nature of some of the class materials, it is critical that you respect the classroom as a marketplace of ideas. You must respect your classmates' rights to their opinions, even if you don't agree with them. Remember that opposing viewpoints are critical to democratic discussion.

You are encouraged to discuss legal and ethical issues in the class. However, you must always debate facts and avoid personal attacks and derogatory remarks.

Asking questions always is encouraged. Discussion of things unrelated to class is discouraged.

You are not allowed to be disruptive in any way that takes class value away from your classmates.

In addition, you must always attend class prepared for participation. This includes having paper, copied notes, writing utensils, books, briefs, etc.

Technology:

You may use a laptop to take notes during course sessions. You are not allowed to have your cell phone ringer or alert notifications on during class.

Students found texting or using computers for anything other than note taking during class will be asked to discontinue the practice or leave.

Repeated issues will result in lowering of your attendance/participation grade.

Printing:

Writing assignments must be completed outside of class. All assignments must be typed and stapled.

You will not be excused from class to print assignments. Do not come to class to discuss printing with me. It is up to you to determine if you should be late to class to print.

If you do not have access to a computer and/or printer, you are welcome to use the mass communications computer lab at the front of our department. However, the lab does not have set hours and is not always open, so plan ahead. Also, malfunctions of the equipment in the computer lab will not constitute an excuse for a late assignment.

Bonus Blog:

You may have the opportunity throughout the course to earn bonus points by responding to ongoing legal and/or ethical issues I post on my media blog, www.profkrig.com, or on other blogs I identify.

I will post bonus items sporadically as issues arise. I am not guaranteeing any specific number of bonus posts.

When I post a topic, I will link it to the class Facebook group, helping eliminate confusion regarding whether it is a bonus post.

Once posted in the Facebook group, you will have 24 hours to contribute to the discussion. Responses added after the post has been active for 24 hours will not receive credit, although you are encouraged to continue the discussion indefinitely.

Worthy contributions will receive two to 10 bonus points per opportunity. I will note how much the bonus is worth when I post it to the Facebook group. The bonus points will be added to your overall assignment grade.

A contribution worthy of bonus points would consist of:

- Elaboration of important points on the topic,
- Legal/ethical implications of points on the topic,
- Application of course knowledge beyond what is written in the original post,
- Links to outside references or the citations for such references,
- What you did not know before reading the post and your viewpoint now that you have this knowledge, **and/or**
- What you view differently as a result of having read the blog post.

It also is possible that I will ask you to address a specific question or point in an individual post. You are encouraged to use class knowledge and cases in your responses.

There is no assigned length for blog response posts. However, you will not receive credit for a response that isn't well considered and prepared. You also will not receive credit for a personal rant on any given topic.

You will not receive credit for multiple responses to the same post except in rare circumstances where your subsequent posts result in a greater understanding or a more in-depth view/discussion of the issue. I will award these bonus exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

I will not respond to every response you post. However, I will attempt to be an active participant in each overall post. I encourage you to do so as well. The blog responses are meant to be an opportunity for you to earn extra points while engaging in an exchange of ideas that results in a greater understanding of media law and ethics.

Because of the delicate nature of some of the class materials, it is critical that you respect the blog as an extension of the classroom in the marketplace of ideas. You must respect others' rights to their opinions, even if you don't agree with them. Remember that opposing viewpoints are critical to democratic discussion. You are encouraged to discuss legal and ethical issues, but

you must always debate facts and avoid personal attacks and derogatory remarks, especially those that may create legal concerns. Discussion unrelated to the topic is discouraged. Private or “inside” jokes also are discouraged.

I reserve the right to remove any response from my blog for any reason. If I remove your response, you will not receive credit for having posted. Repeated inappropriate responses will result in all of your bonus points being forfeited. Remember that websites are public. My blog serves as a resource for media students, faculty, scholars, and industry professionals. They have a variety of backgrounds, values and ideals. Some of them also are potential employers. The blog also is promoted through social media and search engines. As always, do not put anything on the Internet that you don't want the world to see.

NOTE: Other bonus opportunities may be provided during the course, but are not guaranteed. I will provide you a handout for each such opportunity, if presented.

Course schedule:

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Readings should be completed before the class session where they're listed. I will move ahead in the lecture if we complete a subject early.

WEEK 1:

Monday, Jan. 9

- Course introduction

Wednesday, Jan. 11

- Lecture: *Why study Mass Comm law?*

Friday, Jan. 13 - Ethics Friday

- Ethics Friday Lecture: *Ethical Theories and Frameworks*
- Read Media Ethics Chapter 1 - *An Introduction to Ethical Decision Making* and Media Ethics Chapter 11 - *Becoming a Moral Adult*
- Ethics paper 1 assignment

WEEK 2:

Monday, Jan. 16 - MLK Day. No Class

Wednesday, Jan. 18

- Lecture: *First Amendment*

Friday, Jan. 20 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 2 - *Information Ethics: A Profession Seeks the Truth*
- Ethics paper 1 due
- Ethics paper 2 assignment

WEEK 3:

Monday, Jan. 23

- Lecture: *First Amendment*

Wednesday, Jan. 25

- Lecture: *First Amendment*

Friday, Jan. 27 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 7 - *Media Economics: The Deadline Meets the Bottom Line*
- Ethics paper 2 due
- Ethics paper 3 assignment

WEEK 4:

Monday, Jan. 30

- Lecture: *Forum*

Wednesday, Feb. 1

- Lecture: *Forum*

Friday, Feb. 3 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 8 - *Picture This: The Ethics of Photo and Video Journalism*
- Ethics paper 3 due
- Ethics paper 4 assignment

WEEK 5:

Monday, Feb. 6

- Lecture: *Prior Restraint*

Wednesday, Feb. 8

- Lecture: *Prior Restraint*

Friday, Feb. 10 - Ethics Friday

- Ethics paper 4 due
- Ethics paper 5 assignment

WEEK 6:

Monday, Feb. 13

- Lecture: *War*

Wednesday, Feb. 15

- Lecture: *Schools*

Friday, Feb. 17 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 4 - *Loyalty: Choosing Between Competing Allegiances*
- Ethics paper 5 due
- Ethics paper 6 assignment

WEEK 7:

Monday, Feb. 20

- Lecture: *Libel*

Wednesday, Feb. 22

- Lecture: *Libel*

Friday, Feb. 24 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 3 - *Strategic Communication: Does Client Advocate Mean Consumer Adversary?*
- Ethics paper 6 due
- Ethics paper 7 assignment

WEEK 8:

Monday, Feb. 27

- Lecture: *Libel*

Wednesday, March 1

- Lecture: *Libel*
- Midterm Review

Friday, March 3

- Ethics paper 7 due
- Ethics paper 8 assignment
- Midterm Review

WEEK 9:

Monday, March 6 - Midterm Exam, Part 1

Wednesday, March 8 - Midterm Exam, Part 2

Friday, March 10

- Review Midterm

Monday, March 13 - Friday, March 17 - Spring Break. No Class!

WEEK 10:

Monday, March 20

- Lecture: *Invasion of Privacy*

Wednesday, March 22

- Lecture: *Invasion of Privacy*

Friday, March 24 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 5 – *Privacy: Looking for Solitude in the Global Village*
- Ethics paper 8 due
- Ethics paper 9 assignment

WEEK 11:

Monday, March 27

- Lecture: *Freedom of Information*

Wednesday, March 29

- Lecture: *Freedom of Information*

Friday, March 31 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 6 – *Mass Media in a Democratic Society: Keeping a Promise*
- Ethics paper 9 due
- Ethics paper 10 assignment

WEEK 12:

Monday, April 3

- Lecture: *Obscenity*

Wednesday, April 5

- Lecture: *Advertising*

Friday, April 7

- Ethics paper 10 due
- Ethics paper 11 assignment

WEEK 13:

Monday, April 10

- Lecture: *Copyright/Trademark*

Wednesday, April 12

- Lecture: *Copyright/Trademark*

Friday, April 14 - Ethics Friday

- Ethics paper 11 due
- Ethics paper 12 assignment

WEEK 14:

Monday, April 17

- Lecture: *Broadcast/Internet Regulation*

Wednesday, April 19

- Lecture: *Broadcast/Internet Regulation*

Friday, April 21 - Ethics Friday

- Read Media Ethics Chapter 9 - *New Media: Continuing Questions and New Roles*
- Ethics paper 12 due
- Ethics paper 13 assignment

WEEK 15:

Monday, April 24

- Review for Final exam

Wednesday, April 26

- Review for Final exam

Friday, April 28

- Ethics paper 13 due

Wednesday, May 3 from 10 a.m. to noon - Final Exam

Petree College of Arts & Sciences Mission

The historic mission of the Petree College of Arts and Sciences has been and continues to be centered on providing the essential liberal arts and sciences foundation for Oklahoma City University. The faculty of the Petree College is committed to offering career-focused undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs that build on a reputation for academic excellence, emphasizing the intellectual and moral development of our students in a nurturing environment that assures the maximum development of each student's unique potential. The Petree College accepts as central to its mission responsibility for providing the foundation in critical reading, writing, and thinking skills; developing aesthetic sensitivity and moral awareness; and implementing the service-learning components of the general education program for all undergraduate students across the university.

Mass Communications Departmental Policies

LATE WORK:

- No late work will be accepted for full credit without prior arrangement with the instructor.
- Work is due at the beginning of the class session.

EXAMINATIONS:

- No makeup examinations will be given unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.

- NO FINAL EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN EARLIER THAN ANNOUNCED BY THE INSTRUCTOR. NO EXCEPTIONS. Students who make travel plans without confirming the scheduled finals date for this class do so at their own risk. Students who travel prior to the scheduled final exam will be unable to take the examination and must accept a zero test score.

INCOMPLETE:

Incomplete grades are not a student option except under extreme circumstances. Students seeking an incomplete must submit a written request supported by documentation verifying the need for this extension. The student must be performing at a passing level and have a legitimate reason to receive an "I." Students cannot be assigned an "I" because they have excessive unexcused absences or because they are failing the course. If an incomplete is given, the instructor will submit information which specifies what work must be done to remove the "I" and the grade to be assigned if the work is not complete. The student is responsible for submitting the work by the deadline assigned by the instructor. Incompletes are given for a limited period of time, not exceeding one year.

TARDINESS/ATTENDANCE:

Students are expected to be in class on time. Entering the classroom late is unprofessional and disruptive. Repeated tardiness is unacceptable. Students should be punctual and prepared, since these are the qualities expected by the business community. Attendance will be taken at each class session. Students are expected to attend all class sessions.

GRADING SCALE:

93.0 - 100	=	A	
90.0 - 92.99	=	A-	
87.5 - 89.99	=	B+	
82.5 - 87.49	=	B	
80.0 - 82.49	=	B-	
77.5 - 79.99	=	C+	
72.5 - 77.49	=	C	
70.0 - 72.49	=	C-	
67.5 - 69.99	=	D+	
62.5 - 67.49	=	D	
60.0 - 62.49	=	D-	
Below 60.0	=	F	Not I or W

CHEATING/PLAGIARISM:

STANDARD OF RESPONSIBILITY

Oklahoma City University was founded upon strong values and high standards. Honesty in academics is a priority. Students should be advised that cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. The Academic Honesty Policy can be found online at <http://starport.okcu.edu/ad/aa>

Cheating is defined as using, or supplying information that is not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or completing any other assignment. Cheating also includes turning in another's work and representing it as being your own.

Plagiarism is defined as a unique form of cheating where persons turn in another's work and represent it as being their own. This would include: 1) purchasing term papers and turning them in as if they are original work; 2) using a paper that has previously been turned in; 3) copying passages verbatim from books, articles, etc.; 4) submitting material for grades in which the student has not done the work required; 5) collusion - the unauthorized collaboration with another person; 6) misrepresentation of actions and 7) falsifying information.

Every student is expected to observe the highest standards of conduct, both on and off the campus. The University cannot accept the responsibility for the education of any student who is not in sympathy with the purposes and the regulations of the University.

Mass Communications students should be aware that this department considers the above-described conduct to be dishonorable and dishonest. Students found cheating or plagiarizing will receive a grade of "0", which is an "F", on the involved examination, project or paper and, at the professor's discretion, may receive a failing grade for the entire course.

EXAMINATION EQUIPMENT:

Students are not permitted to use or access the following items during an examination:

- Dictionaries
- Electronic spellers, translators, dictionaries or calculators
- Computers
- Class notes, books

Once any examination has begun, if a student wishes to leave the room they must be prepared to turn in their examination paper and/or blue book. And, it will not be returned to them for additional work.

DISABILITY STATEMENT:

If you believe that you need accommodations for a documented physical, psychiatric, or learning disability, please contact the Disabilities Services Coordinator at (405) 208-5895 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.

The Disabilities Services Coordinator is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with a documented Letter of Accommodation, as appropriate.

Since accommodations may require early planning and are not provided retroactively, please contact the Disabilities Services Coordinator as soon as possible.

Students with approved accommodations should meet with me during my office hours so that we can discuss how to meet your needs this semester. Additionally, I am available during my office hours to speak with students about other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated. My office location and hours are at the top of the syllabus.

SEX AND GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION:

Under Title IX, you have the right to an education free of sex or gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence. Issues addressed by Title IX include acts of discrimination, pregnant or parenting status, sexual harassment, sexual violence, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, and sex or gender-based hate crimes. Title IX applies to students, faculty, staff, guests, and anyone accessing OCU programs and services.

As OCU employees, all faculty members are required to report form of discrimination, harassment, or violence addressed by Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator within 24 hours. After receiving a report, you will be contacted by one of OCU's Title IX administrators to discuss your report, the support the university can provide, and your options for pursuing a resolution to the issue through the university.

If you would like to make a report or learn more, please contact OCU's Title IX Coordinator by calling (405) 208-5075 or visit <http://www.okcu.edu/admin/hr/titleIX/index>. That website also contains links to other local resources, OCU's non-discrimination policies and procedures, and contact information for the University's Title IX administrators.

For emergencies, you can contact OCU's police department at (405) 208-5911. For free and confidential support on campus, you can contact University Counseling by calling (405) 208-7901. For medical issues, you can contact the Campus Health Center at (405) 208-5090. They are confidential as well.

EVACUATION POLICY:

The evacuation plan for Walker Center is as follows: Everyone on the first floor proceeds out the north doors to the north parking lot. Everyone on the second floor must exit down the north stairway, out the north doors to the parking lot. The shelter locations for Walker Center are as follows: WC 143, WC 144, and the men's and women's restrooms on the first floor. These rooms are on the east side of the first floor.

POLICY STATEMENT

I have read the above stated policies for the Spring 2017 semester for the Mass Communications Department.

I understand the policies and agree to abide by them.

Name

B#

Date

Course Name and Number