

Syllabus for
MMC 321—Mass Media Law
3 Credit Hours
Spring 2009

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A historical examination of the development of legal casework affecting journalists and media communicators. Uses a case study approach involving copyright, freedom of press, freedom of speech, libel, defamation, right of privacy, and obscenity.

Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing in Mass Media Communication.

II. COURSE GOALS

This study is designed to outline the law as it pertains to the mass media in America. The course will enable the student to do the following:

- A. Study the laws that pertain to mass media.
- B. Focus exclusively upon the substance of mass media law.
- C. Learn how mass media law affects them as journalists, broadcasters, public relations practitioners, or advertising copy writers.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUT COMES FOR THIS COURSE

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- A. Discuss and explain American communication law and the American legal system.
- B. Analyze a broad range of freedom of expression issues.
- C. Research significant court decisions involving libel as noted in textbook.
- D. Determine findings of recent attempts to regulate pornography, rather than the more explicitly defined obscenity.
- E. Analyze media law and ethics from a biblical point-of-view.

IV. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

Required Materials

Textbooks

- Trager, R. et al. (2007). The law of journalism and mass communication. Boston: McGraw Hill.
Patterson, P. & Wilkins, L. (2004). Media ethics: Issues & cases. Boston: McGraw Hill.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. University policies and Procedures

Last revision: Spring 2009

- 1. Attendance at each class or laboratory is mandatory at Oral Roberts University. Excessive absences can reduce a student's grade or deny credit for the course.

2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence will be charged a late exam fee.
3. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print, video, multimedia, or computer software. By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means.
4. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
5. Students are to be in compliance with University, school, and departmental policies regarding ePortfolio requirements. Students should consult the ePortfolio handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' majors.
 - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting an ePortfolio artifact is a zero for that assignment.
 - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

1. **Attendance**—At Oral Roberts University, students are expected to attend all classes. Understanding that there are sometimes unavoidable circumstances that prevent perfect attendance, each student is allowed to miss class the number of times per week a class meets. This allowance is for illness, personal business, and personal emergency. Students may consider these personal days or sick leave. If a student has absences in excess of this number, the earned grade for the course will be reduced one letter grade for each hour's absence above those allowed. A student missing class due to illness must take an unexcused absence. Extended illnesses are handled on an individual basis and require a doctor's excuse.
2. **Administratively Excused Absences**—Students who must miss class for University sponsored activities must follow these procedures:
 - a. inform the professor before the event.
 - b. arrange to complete missed work within one week.
 - c. not commit to class performances (oral reports, speeches, television tapings, group presentations, etc.) on a date the student will be gone. Makeup work is not permitted if the student voluntarily commits to a performance on the date of an administratively excused absence.
 - d. present an excuse, signed by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the day the student returns.
3. **Tardies**—Tardies are an inconvenience to the other class members and the professor, and they prevent the late student from obtaining maximum value from the class. Therefore, tardies are calculated in the attendance provision for this course. Three tardies equal one absence and are included in the absences when determining the course grade. It is to the student's advantage to make sure that the professor is informed immediately following the close of the class that the student was tardy and not absent. It is not the professor's responsibility to stop the class to mark the student late; the student is the one responsible to convey that information following that class. Students should not expect to be credible the following class session concerning a late arrival on a previous day.

4. **Late Work**—The student is responsible for obtaining class assignments and material covered during an absence. All work must be completed as scheduled. An absence is not an excuse for turning in late work or for being unprepared with assignments for the class following the absence. If late work is accepted, a substantial penalty will be assessed.
 5. **Literacy**—The Communication Arts Department does not accept for credit any written assignment that contains more than an average of three grammatical and/or typographical errors per page.
 6. **ePortfolio**—Refer to the Communication Arts ePortfolio handbook for ePortfolio policies at (<http://oru.edu>), click on **Academics**, then **ePortfolio**, then **Department Resources**, then **Communication Arts Handbook HTML**.
- C. Course policies and Procedures
1. Evaluation Procedures
 - a. Forty percent of the grade is based on daily grades and group assignments.
 - b. Forty percent of the grade is based on exams.
 - c. Twenty percent of the grade is based on a comprehensive term paper covering one of five topics to be announced in class.
 2. ePortfolio Requirements: None

VI. COURSE CALENDAR

Weeks	Topic/Reading Assignment
1	The American Legal System

2	First Amendment
3	Libel
4	Libel
5	Invasion of Privacy
6	Invasion of Privacy
7	Gathering of Information
8	Protection of News Sources
9	Free Press
10	Regulation of Obscene Material
11	Copyright
12	Regulation of Advertising
13	Telecommunications Regulation
14	Review
15	FINAL PAPER/EVALUATION REPORT

Course Inventory for ORU's Student Learning Outcomes

MMC 321—Mass Media Law Spring 2009

This course contributes to the ORU student learning outcomes as indicated below:

Significant Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

Moderate Contribution – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

Minimal Contribution – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

No Contribution – Does not address the outcome.

The Student Learning Glossary at <http://ir.oru.edu/doc/glossary.pdf> defines each outcome and each of the proficiencies/capacities.

OUTCOMES & Proficiencies/Capacities		Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution	No Contribution
1	Outcome #1 – Spiritually Alive Proficiencies/Capacities				
1A	Biblical knowledge		X		
1B	Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit		X		
1C	Evangelistic capability			X	
1D	Ethical behavior	X			
2	Outcome #2 – Intellectually Alert Proficiencies/Capacities				
2A	Critical thinking	X			
2B	Information literacy	X			
2C	Global & historical perspectives		X		
2D	Aesthetic appreciation			X	
2E	Intellectual creativity		X		
3	Outcome #3 – Physically Disciplined Proficiencies/Capacities				
3A	Healthy lifestyle				X
3B	Physically disciplined lifestyle				X
4	Outcome #4 – Socially Adept Proficiencies/Capacities				
4A	Communication skills	X			
4B	Interpersonal skills		X		
4C	Appreciation of cultural & linguistic differences			X	
4D	Responsible citizenship	X			
4E	Leadership capacity		X		