

Syllabus

Quick Links

[Course Materials](#)

[Assignments](#)

[Exams](#)

[Grading](#)

[Course Duration](#)

[Getting Help](#)

Course Organization

This course is divided in two sections of six lessons each for a total of twelve lessons in the course. Speedback assignments in each section will be submitted for evaluation. You will also take two tests in this course, one at the end of each of the two sections. The tests apply only to their particular course sections, so the final test is not cumulative. Each lesson carefully explains what you should read and what you should do in order to prepare. You can also consult Independent Study materials if you have any questions about how to submit lessons or how to arrange to take exams.

Course Materials

You will need four texts:

1. *Standing for Something*, by Gordon B. Hinckley (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2000, ISBN #: 0-609-80725-0). Page numbers in lesson 12 refer to the 2000 paperback edition.
2. *The Law of Journalism and Mass Communication*, 2010 Edition (2d Edition), by Robert Trager, Joseph Russomanno, Susan Dente Ross (CQPress, 2010, ISBN # 978-0-87289-923-0)
3. *Mixed Media: Moral Distinctions in Advertising, Public Relations, and Journalism*, by Thomas Bivens (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, 2004, ISBN# 0-8058-4257-8)
4. *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*, with an introduction by J. B. Schneewind and notes and commentary by Dale E. Miller. (Modern Library Classics, 2002) (ISBN: 0-375-75918-2)

Standing for Something, written by President Gordon B. Hinckley of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, speaks on the importance of personal values and integrity in personal and professional life.

The Law of Journalism and Mass Communication, hereafter called the “Trager text,” provides an excellent overview of the most important topics in media law about which public communicators should be informed.

Mixed Media: Moral Distinctions in Advertising, Public Relations, and Journalism, hereafter called the “Bivins text,” explores basic ethical issues in public relations, advertising, and journalism. It also ties in nicely and relies on your basic understanding of media law issues. You will be required to read only four of the seven chapters in this book due to the introductory nature of this course. We highly recommend that you read the unassigned chapters, however, if you have a particular interest in media ethics.

In the book *The Basic Writings of John Stuart Mill*, you will read about the basic concepts of liberty of thought and discussion that are the basis for the First Amendment of the United States Constitution and for our society’s understanding of the values of a free press and free expression.

We recommend that you scan through the tables of contents in each of these texts to get an overview of their contents. In the Trager text, note especially the expanded table of contents, the recommended readings, the Bill of Rights, the glossary of terms, the case index and the subject index.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Assignments

Summary: For this course there are 12 computer-graded assignments. Each assignment may be resubmitted once for a fee.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Exams

Summary: 1 proctored, multiple-choice, computer-graded midcourse exam; one retake per exam is allowed, and there is a fee for each retake. 1 proctored, multiple-choice, computer-graded final exam; no retake is allowed for the final exam.

All assignments must be submitted and graded before requesting the final exam. Students must pass the final exam to pass the course.

Exam Preparation

Each exam is constructed using the same questions that appear in the Speedback assignments. To prepare for the exams you should study all of these questions carefully, together with the feedback you receive from Independent Study on your Speedback assignments. Consult Independent Study materials for how to arrange to take the tests.

Final Examination

You must pass the final exam with a score of 45% to pass the course. If you do not receive a passing grade on your first attempt, you may retake a different version of the final exam.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based upon the Speedback evaluations (see the Independent Study instructions at the front of this manual) submitted at the end of each lesson, the midcourse and final exams. Your exams will constitute 40% of your course grade, and your speedback assignments the other 60%. Each submitted speedback will have a total of twenty questions. Each test will have a total of fifty questions. Inasmuch as your grade is based upon fourteen performance items (twelve Speedback assignments and two tests), you have ample opportunities in this course to build your grade.

Assignment Distribution

Assignments or Exam	Weight %
Lesson 1	5%
Lesson 2	5%
Lesson 3	5%
Lesson 4	5%
Lesson 5	5%
Lesson 6	5%

Lesson 7	5%
Lesson 8	5%
Lesson 9	5%
Lesson 10	5%
Lesson 11	5%
Lesson 12	5%
Test #1	20%
Test #2	20%

All assignments will be computer processed. Total points earned on the assignments and exams will be calculated against the total possible points.

Grading Scale

Final course grades will be assigned based upon the following scale or percentage equivalent for letter grades. Students must receive at least a D- to pass the course.

Grading Scale	
A	100–95%
A-	94–90%
B+	89–85%
B	84–80%
B-	79–75%
C+	74–70%
C	69–65%
C-	64–60%
D+	59–55%
D	54–50%
D-	49–45%
E (fail)	44–0%

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Course Duration

Students have 12 months from the date and time of registration to complete this course. One extension is allowed for a fee.

Course Outcomes

Students will be able to:

1. Practice communication within legal boundaries by employing appropriate use of others' work (in attribution, copyright, trademarks, etc.).
2. Practice communication within legal boundaries by demonstrating an ability to identify legal constraints and defenses that shape mass media messages.
3. Practice communication within legal boundaries by constructing messages that meet the laws and statutes applied to free speech.
4. Demonstrate they value freedom of speech in the marketplace of ideas by knowing how First Amendment rights extend to press and speech.
5. Demonstrate they value freedom of speech in the marketplace of ideas by understanding the historical development of free speech.
6. Demonstrate they value freedom of speech in the marketplace of ideas by recognizing the legal and moral limits of free speech.
7. Demonstrate they value freedom of speech in the marketplace of ideas by applying the concepts underlying this principle to current issues.
8. Demonstrate they value freedom of speech in the marketplace of ideas by by showing a commitment to preserving freedom of speech, even when it may be contrary to majority views, opinions, or values.
9. Demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical issues of their practice by becoming familiar with prominent cases that demonstrate ethical issues in the communication industries.
10. Demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical issues of their practice by identifying professional values that contribute to ethical behavior.
11. Demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical issues of their practice by discerning possible ethical complications in professional practice.
12. Demonstrate sensitivity to the ethical issues of their practice by defining a communications situation that addresses the ethical

- concerns of alternative actions or decisions.
13. Exercise moral reasoning when faced with ethical dilemmas by articulating the values that underline their ethical framework.
 14. Exercise moral reasoning when faced with ethical dilemmas by applying principles and theories of ethics to current issues.
 15. Exercise moral reasoning when faced with ethical dilemmas by resolving ethical dilemmas using moral reasoning based on Gospel-centered values.

Course Objectives

Each student will be able to discuss knowledgeably, and to think critically and analytically about complex issues including:

1. the social role and value of freedom of speech and of the press in American society;
2. the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, its history, and its application in practice to mass media professions;
3. the American legal system, and the laws and legal principles that guide professional practice;
4. personal ethics and professional norms; societal limitations imposed by law, and self-limitations imposed by moral standards and ethical reasoning;
5. the balance between freedom and the ethical and legal responsibilities of professional communicators; and
6. the moral responsibility of professional communicators to make a positive difference within their sphere of influence.

Topics Not Covered in This Course

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the basics of media law and ethics, with which they will be confronted as they begin their internships or employment as public communications professionals. The course will therefore not cover several chapters in the Trager text, including chapter 7 on emotional distress and chapter 12 on regulating pornography. The chapters skipped by this course are important, however, and students are advised to peruse the chapters not covered so they will have a rudimentary overview of these areas of media law.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Getting Help

Please use the help menu in this course to contact Independent Study or your instructor. You can find a list of free tutors available to BYU Independent Study students on the [Free Tutoring Services](http://is.byu.edu/site/support/tutors.cfm) (<http://is.byu.edu/site/support/tutors.cfm>) website.

[\(Back to top\)](#)

Inappropriate Use of Course Content

All course materials (e.g., outlines, handouts, syllabi, exams, quizzes, media, lecture content, audio and video recordings, etc.) are proprietary. Students are prohibited from posting or selling any such course materials without the express written permission of BYU Independent Study. To do so is a violation of the Brigham Young University Honor Code.