



School of Journalism
& Broadcasting

Our Focus is your Future

BCOM 301-001 CRN 22779 Mass Communication Law and Ethics Spring 2017

T/ TH 09:35-10:55 3-Credit hours Classroom: MMTH 344

Instructor: Mrs. Jeanine Howard-Cherry Email: jeanine.cherry@wku.edu

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Office Hours: Office Hours: M/W 8:30-11:00 or appointment

Pre-requisites: PS 110 and either BCOM 201 or JOUR 201.

Catalog Description: An overview of concepts basic to the freedom of expression. Consideration through case study and attention to topical problems of limits on the freedom of expression including various means of regulation: ethics, law and other social controls. Emphasis on broadcasting applications.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Course Overview:

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees individuals with the right to free expression. However, with that right come a myriad of guidelines, stipulations, rules and regulations especially when such issues involve the media. BCOM 301 provides students with an overview of the concepts basic to the freedom of expression as well as the guidelines, restrictions, regulations, laws and policies affecting broadcasting, cable and other electronic media in the United States.

Course Objective: Students will examine the legal climate of the broadcasting industry through consideration of FCC rules and regulations, case studies and the examination of topical problems, as well as the limitations to the freedom of expression.

Core Values and Competencies:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be able to:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Foster an understanding of issues and perspectives that are inclusive in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;

Class Requirements: all dates are tentative and are subject to change

Required Text: The Law of Journalism and Mass Communication, Fifth Edition by Trager, Russomanno, Ross and Reynolds. Washington: CQ Press 2016.

Students will be required to visit the Warren County Justice Center **AND** the U.S. District Court in Bowling Green. **The class will meet in the U.S. District Court building and/or the County Justice Center, 1001 Center Street, in downtown Bowling Green on _____.**

Transportation will not be provided. Students are encouraged to carpool due to limited parking. Other options include WKU shuttle or Go BG Transit.

Please take note of the state of the art facilities for media access. Also, note any restrictions/liberties that apply to the media when covering trials and proceedings. Upon completion of the visits, each student will submit a two-three page (double spaced) paper on comparisons and contrasts of his or her observations of both facilities in reference to jurisdiction, media access and technology, and security.

The court paper is due _____.

***Please note you will be required to walk through a metal detector before entering the courtrooms.

Do not take any cell phones, weapons, (including pocket knives) or illegal substances into the buildings.

If for some reason students fail to make it to class at the courthouse, individual term papers on Kentucky's Justice system will be required -minimum five pages that must be submitted on _____ Failure to comply with the term paper requirement will result in 50-points being deducted from the final grade.

Students will be required to participate in a group project and presentation of case studies on the First Amendment and how it relates to the electronic media. **The case must be approved by the instructor.** As a group, members will research the case in question and each member will provide an element of the briefing, (See hand-out). The group projects are tentatively scheduled for **April 13th.**

The instructor will grade the projects through an individual assessment of the written material (grammar and content), a group review of each member's contributions, a peer review, and the project presentation. Due to the assessment process, class attendance during the presentations is mandatory. **Those who fail to attend the class presentation sessions without an excused absence will receive a zero on his or her group project presentation grade.** **Group Project papers will not be accepted late.** Even with an excused absence, late papers will not be accepted and the student will receive a zero on the written portion of the assignment if it is not e-mailed to the professor prior to the class session of the due date.

Students will submit a paper on their personal codes of ethics for the professions they are pursuing. The paper must be presented in essay form, typed and double spaced. The papers must include two relevant industry examples of ethical breeches. Sources must be cited. **The paper is due April 27th.** Students

will read the assigned Chapters of the text and participate in class discussions and lectures. Quizzes pertaining to the reading material will be administered. No make-up quizzes will be made available, but quizzes may be taken in advance. The lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester will be dropped.

Students will take three, non-cumulative exams (including the final) and will be prepared to address essay questions pertaining to the First Amendment.

The **First Exam** is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, February 23rd

The **Second Exam** is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 6th

The **Final Exam**: BCOM 301-001: Monday, May 8th from 1:00-3:00

Grading Scale: Tests, quizzes, group projects and written assignments will be evaluated on the following scale: 100%-90% =A, 89%-80%=B, 79%-70%=C, 69%-60%=D, and 59%-50%=F

- Three exams account for 20% each or 60% of the final grade.
- One essay discussing court jurisdiction, accessibility and security accounts for 10% of final grade.
- One group project will account for 10% of the final grade.
- Individual Code of Ethics and essay will account for 10% of the final grade.
- Written assignments and quizzes account 10% of the final grade.

Attendance: Class attendance and participation are mandatory. Due to the detailed nature and complexity of the lecture material, student attendance is essential to academic success. Class discussions will also facilitate the students' ability to learn about the specific case studies and how they apply to broadcasters and other members of the electronic media. Unless there are extreme circumstances and verifiable excuses, exams cannot be re-scheduled. If rescheduling proves necessary for an individual, the exam must be taken within one week of the original exam time; otherwise, the student will receive a zero. As per directives from the Provost and Dean's office, the final exam time and day cannot be changed and the exams cannot be made up or rescheduled. **After two unexcused class absences, ten points will be deducted from the student's total point accumulation for each unexcused absence.** Students who have perfect attendance will receive ten bonus points in their quiz grades. If a student has an excused absence, weekly written assignments must be turned in at the next regularly scheduled class. Otherwise, any late material will receive a zero. Students are responsible for contacting the instructor by phone, visiting during office hours or via e-mail for any missed assignments, projects or evaluations.

University ADA statement required for all syllabi:

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270.745.5004 [270.745.3030 V/TTY] or email at sarc@wku.edu.

Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Information for faculty on Student Disability Accommodations / Section 504 and ADA Compliance is available at <http://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/72.pdf>.

From the WKU Faculty Handbook

***Plagiarism** - To represent ideas or interpretations taken from an other source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.*

Here are additional statements on Cheating and Disposition of Offenses, p. 60 and 61.

From the 22th edition of the WKU Faculty Handbook, effective July 1, 2016.

<http://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/documents/master-wku-faculty-handbook-22nd-edition.pdf>

A Plagiarism statement required for all SJ&B syllabi:

The SJ&B faculty agreed to add a plagiarism statement. Here is a suggested plagiarism statement from the faculty handbook (p. 60).

***Plagiarism** - To represent ideas or interpretations taken from an other source as one's own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of students must be their own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.*

Here are additional statements on Cheating and Disposition of Offenses, p. 60 and 61.

***Cheating** - No student shall receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in taking an examination or in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, problem assignment, or other project that is submitted for purposes of grade determination.*

Disposition of Offenses - *Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal. The faculty member may also present the case to the University Disciplinary Committee through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for disciplinary sanctions.*

Student Withdrawal:

Grades will be recorded in the Registrar's Office as reported by the instructor. Students who drop a class within the period indicated for this purpose in the University Calendar will have no grade recorded. After the date on which students may withdraw from a class without a grade, they will be given W or F for the time during which they were in the class as reported by the instructor. In all cases, students withdrawing from classes must secure official permission. In the absence of an official withdrawal, a grade of F will be recorded regardless of the quality of work being done by the student at the time of withdrawal. January 30th is the last day to drop a course without a grade. February 14th is the last day to drop a course and receive a W or to change a credit to an audit.