

COMM 4454-02: Media Law

Monday & Wednesday 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

Humanities Room 312

Spring 2020

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Patrick D. Hadley, Ph.D.

Office: Humanities Room 214

Physical Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 10:00 am - 11:00 am; 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Virtual Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:00 am - 11:00 am; 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

(CourseDen email; Google Voice call/text)

(Other times or communication media, e.g., WhatsApp, can be arranged by appointment)

Google Voice Phone/Text: (404) 919-7349

Office Telephone: (678) 839-4931

E-mail: phadley@westga.edu (for use only if CourseDen email is unavailable)

[Direct Access to CourseDen](#)

Important Note: Read this entire course syllabus **carefully**. You are responsible for all the information contained herein. Ignorance of the policies of the class will not be an acceptable excuse.

OFFICE HOURS

I am available to address matters of concern during my office hours. If those hours are not convenient, please schedule an appointment with me or send me an email through CourseDen D2L. If you visit my office at other times, I may not be available because of other duties I must attend to.

If you have problems in the class, **it is YOUR responsibility** to initiate contact with me. I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me. Let me know of any problems **early** in the semester.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

For this course you will purchase access to McGraw-Hill's Connect, rather than buying a physical textbook (although a physical textbook option is available as a supplement through McGraw-Hill Connect). Here is the Connect access code that you will purchase:

- Access Card For Calvert, Kozlowski, & Silver, Mass Media Law (21st Edition). ISBN10: 1260838714 | ISBN13: 9781260838718.

Here's how to purchase the access code/card:

Option 1: Purchase from Connect integrated in CourseDen

You can purchase Connect access through your CourseDen account. Login into CourseDen, click on this course (COMM 4454-02), and then click on the McGraw-Hill Connect link, which will take you to the Connect registration page where you can follow the prompts.

At that time, you will need to do one of the following:

- Enter your access code (if you have purchased one for this book already)
- Purchase access code from McGraw Hill through CourseDen
- Begin your **14-day Courtesy Access** period (which starts after 3 students have

Courtesy Access Expiration: Once three students have registered into the course through Connect, the courtesy access sign-up link remains open for 14 more days from that point. After that, the link disappears and courtesy access is no longer available. The assumption is that all students will have had an opportunity to register for courtesy access by that time. Thus, if you wait 3 weeks into the semester and attempt to register for Courtesy Access, the link probably will no longer be available. My recommendation is that if you need Courtesy Access, sign up for it during the first week of class.

Note: After you register, you will have the option to purchase a low-cost print version of the text through Connect. This print book is not required. If you choose to purchase a copy, a full-color, loose-leaf version will be shipped to you. You also will have the option through Connect to rent a bound version of the book.

Option 2: Purchase access card from the UWG bookstore, then access Connect through CourseDen

Purchase a Connect access card at the UWG bookstore. Use the access code that you are provided to register and enter your Connect access code through CourseDen.

Important: Please be aware that even if you purchase or rent the physical version of this textbook, you **MUST** purchase Connect access to complete assignments related to each chapter. (ALERT: Access codes purchased from third party companies -- companies other than McGraw-Hill or UWG Bookstore -- may have been used previously and, if so, will not operate properly.) **Failure to purchase Connect access due to financial or other considerations is not a justification for failing to complete SmartBook assignments, nor is it a justification for late submission or extended deadlines for assignments.**

All SmartBook chapters assigned for the semester will be open at the start of the semester. The expectation is that you will purchase Connect access and complete each SmartBook assignment as we get to that chapter in the semester. You have the option to complete all SmartBook chapters early in the semester, even during the 14-day Courtesy Access period. However, to optimize your learning, it is best to complete the SmartBook assignments close to the time we will discuss that chapter in class.

Additional content from other resources also will be assigned throughout the semester.

****KEY:** It is not possible to successfully complete the requirements of COMM 4454 without reading the eBook/textbook and additional materials. Online presentation slides are provided to highlight certain textbook content and help guide discussion. They are not a replacement for reading the content in the textbook.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please carefully review the [student rights and responsibilities](#) content. This site contains important material pertaining to your rights and responsibilities in this class, including accessibility guidelines and the university honor code. Because these statements are updated as federal, state, and accreditation standards change, you should review the information each semester.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

You should have access to a computer-compatible **microphone**: In this course, you will need the ability to record audio (for a final project that involves creating an animated video with narration). Most laptops have integrated microphones that will work adequately. Alternatively, a basic LCD microphone should work fine as well. If you do not have access to a microphone, please contact the instructor to discuss alternative options.

ABOUT THE COURSE

COMM 4454 is an examination of the legal context regulating print, telecommunication, and electronic media as well as advertising and public relations industries. Emphasis is placed on libel, privacy, copyright, free press, fair trial, and obscenity law. Furthermore, COMM 4454 is a Discipline-Specific Writing (DSW) course and will require “Writing To Learn” and “Writing To Communicate” assignments to develop your communication skills.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the United States, 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
(*ACEJMC SLO1*)

- a. In addition to freedom of speech and press, students will apply practical guides to coping with legal problems likely to confront communicators in the areas of libel, invasion of privacy, fair trials, obscenity, indecency, and copyright.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity (*ACEJMC SLO6*)

Mass Communications Program Learning Outcomes

ACEJMC Professional Values and Competencies: As a unit seeking accreditation from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC), the Department of Mass Communications is committed to preparing students with the requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the media and communications industries after graduation. The Department has adopted as its degree program learning outcomes ACEJMC's 12 professional values and competencies that all graduates of an ACEJMC accredited program should be aware of and able to demonstrate as scholars and professionals in the discipline. These include the six (6) values and six (6) competencies listed below. For the detailed list of the ACEJMC professional values and competencies, see the [UWG Undergraduate Catalog](#) or [ACEJMC - Standard 2. Curriculum and Instruction](#).

Values:

1. Freedom of Speech
2. History
3. Diversity
4. Global Impact
5. Theory
6. Ethics

Competencies:

1. Think Critically & Creatively
2. Research & Evaluate
3. Write Effectively
4. Self-Evaluate
5. Apply Numbers & Statistics
6. Apply Technology



GRADING POLICY

Grades **earned** in this class are based solely on the following:

SmartBook Study Assignments (1 percent/chapter x 12 chapters) = **12 percent**

Test #1 = **20 percent**

Test #2 = **20 percent**

Test #3 = **18 percent**

Case Brief (Writing to Learn) = **6 percent**

Participation regarding Assigned Case = **4 percent**

Draft Analysis/Storyboard for Final Project (Writing to Learn) = **10 percent**

Final Project (Writing to Communicate) = **10 percent**

Total = 100%

Grading Scale:

Points needed to receive grade:

A=90% - 100%

B=80% - 89%

C= 70% - 79%

D= 60% - 69%

F= 59% and below

*Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify the assignments and in an effort to meet the objectives of the course. Ample notice will be provided if such changes are made.

ASSIGNMENTS

SmartBook Study Assignments - For each assigned chapter, you will complete a SmartBook assignment before we begin class discussion on that chapter. SmartBook is described as follows on the McGraw-Hill Higher Education website:

SmartBook is an interactive study tool that adaptively assesses students' skill and knowledge levels to track which topics students have mastered and which require further instruction and practice. Based upon student progress, it then adjusts the learning content based on their knowledge strengths and weaknesses, as well as their confidence level around that knowledge.

[As an] online study tool that maximizes time spent with your course textbook or eBook, SmartBook® tests your knowledge of key concepts and pinpoints the topics on which you need to focus your study time.”

There are several tutorials available in Connect as well to assist you in getting familiar with this educational resource. Each SmartBook assignment is worth 1 percent of your grade, for a total of **12 percent** of your final grade over 12 chapters.

Deadlines for completion of each chapter's questions will be posted in SmartBook and in the Course Schedule. SmartBook deadlines will not be extended without documented excuse of ongoing circumstances outside your control that prohibited you from being able to work on the assignment. A last-minute obstacle will not be considered justification for an extended deadline

Tests - Three (3) tests will be administered in class during the semester. The three tests are worth a total of **58 percent** of your final grade. There is **A LOT** of reading in this course. Begin reading the chapters immediately so you do not fall behind.

Early or make-up exams will be permitted only in cases of unavoidable situations outside the student's control, substantiated with documentation. Requests for early exams must be made at least 48 hours prior to the exam. Requests for makeup exams must be communicated to me no later than the start of the exam in question, barring some form of unexpected incapacitation.

Case Brief – You will randomly be assigned one case from a list of cases to be provided, all of which are found in various chapters in our textbook. (You are free to trade cases with a classmate after you receive your assigned case, but you are required to inform the instructor of your switch at least a week in advance of the presentations.) Some cases are major turning points in case law and others are important because of the presence of a specific factual issue or development. Your initial information should come from the textbook, but for full credit your case brief should examine the full case using the Lexis/Nexis Academic database available through the UWG Library website.

Submission format: You will post your case brief in the Discussions area of CourseDen, using the name of your case as the title of your message. Cut and paste the text of your brief into the body of the message field in the Discussions area. If you wish, you also may submit your brief as an attachment to the Discussion message. However, to have the opportunity to earn full credit you must paste the text of the brief into the body of the message field in the Discussion area.

[Posting dates to be announced in updated Course Schedule]

You will complete one case brief, worth up to **6 percent of your grade**.

Late postings: Case briefs generally must be posted on CourseDen **by 9:00 am** on the deadline date. Grades for late case brief postings will be reduced by 50 percent if posted after the deadline on the same day, but before 11:59 pm. You must submit written documentation to the

instructor for review within 24 hours of the deadline if you believe that circumstances outside your control (e.g, your unexpected hospitalization, other emergency) justify acceptance of late work.

In-class Discussion Leadership Assigned Case: Although you will not be delivering a formal presentation of your assigned case with visual resources such as PowerPoint, you should be prepared on the day we are discussing your case to respond to questions about your case, share key facts and background on the case, and be able to explain the court's holding and rationale in the case. You are the expert for your case. Prepare to be questioned in detail.

Draft Legal Analysis/Storyboard for Final Project: This is an individual or team project (up to 3 team members) that is a preliminary step in preparing your final project. More detail on the process will be provided later in the semester (worth up to **10 percent** of final grade). [**Deadline in separate Weekly Schedule**]

Final Project: More detail will be provided later in the semester (worth up to **10 percent** of final grade). [**Deadline in separate Weekly Schedule.**]

ATTENDANCE

Attendance does not count directly toward your grade (except on exam and designated participation dates) but is highly encouraged. Supplemental material highlighted in class that is not assigned in the readings and/or in handouts may be included on exams. While attendance does not count separately toward your grade, completion of the readings and the corresponding SmartBook assignments, along with regular class attendance, should give you the best opportunity for success in the course. I will take daily attendance for university administrative purposes, but absences will not count against your grade (although, as stated above, attendance is expected on all exam and presentation dates.)

CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION

Preparation: When you are in class, I expect you to come to be prepared. The course syllabus shows your reading and SmartBook assignments. Adhere to that reading/SmartBook schedule and you should be prepared for class discussions. You may be called on at random to contribute to class discussions. Of course, on the day of we discuss your assigned case in class, you are expected to be exceptionally well prepared to lead the class discussion regarding your case.

Class Communication: It will be necessary to keep in contact with one another using either your myUWG email account or using the CourseDen mail tool. In addition, you will be responsible for checking our course site on CourseDen on a regular basis for class announcements, assignments, and discussion topics. If you do not use your UWG email account,

make certain to have your myUWG emails forwarded to your personal email account so that you do not miss any important class announcements or information that might be delivered through that network.

BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

You do not need me to tell you how to behave in a classroom environment. However, I want you to know what I expect from you in order to avoid embarrassing situations.

- You are expected to participate in class discussions. None of us will have answers to all of the issues that are raised in this course. Some of the issues are very difficult to resolve. Even the courts disagree. There will – hopefully - be a lot of debate and conflict. Feel free to speak your mind during class, no matter how outrageous your comments may be. I expect, however, that you show respect to your classmates. If you disagree with their point of view, please express that disagreement in a way that is not offensive. When one person is talking, everyone else should listen. The same goes for discussions via CourseDen.
- I will frequently add material to that contained in your text and discuss topics that are not covered in your text. Keep up with your reading so that you can make an informed response when you are asked questions.
- Do not ever hesitate to state your opinion on issues even when it may differ from the opinion of others. We will frequently play “devil’s advocate” with you so be prepared to defend your views.
- Throughout the semester I will cross-examine individuals in class over material you should know.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated. It will result in failure on assignment(s) as well as possible disciplinary sanction(s) as stipulated by university rules. University of West Georgia Student Conduct Code defines academic dishonesty as cheating, fabrication, plagiarism and facilitating or allowing academic dishonesty in any academic exercise.

Cheating: using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids

Fabrication: falsification or unauthorized invention of any information or citation

Plagiarism: representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.

Academic dishonesty in any form compromises your grade and lowers the quality of your diploma. A fellow student who cheats may actually lower your grade, sometimes causing unfair and inflated grading scales. I hope each of you values your college education enough to protect

yourself from dishonest classmates. If you are aware of cheating taking place, please contact Dr. Bradford Yates, interim chair of the Department of Mass Communications or me and proper action will be taken. If you are not certain of the definition of plagiarism in practice, please inform the instructor **before** submitting your written work.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The [weekly class schedule and assignments](#) are **subject to change** in order to accommodate guest speakers, reinforce course material, and maintain some flexibility with assignments.

Additional reading, listening, and viewing assignments will be made throughout the semester. You are responsible for all material assigned.

[END OF SYLLABUS]