

Blended (Hybrid) Course:

This course is a Blended Learning course that may require additional online interaction and may have a different class schedule from a traditional section of the same course. This format may not be ideal for all learners, so please contact your advisor or the course instructor if you are unsure whether this instruction format meets your requirements, particularly if you have any special accessibility needs related to computer skills or ADA issues.

COMM 322: Communication Law and Ethics

Course Syllabus

Section 1M, 3 credit hours, January 11-March 1, 2010

Meeting time and place: Mondays, 6:30-9:45 pm, Reid 3323

Instructor and contact information:

Steven Phipps, Ph.D.

Office: 3267 ABAC (inside 3275, Faculty Commons)

Office hours: Mon., Wed., 3-4 pm, or by appointment

Email: sphipp@maryville.edu

Course website in Desire2Learn (D2L): learn.maryville.edu

Primary blog: <http://blogs.maryville.edu/sphipp/>

Course description:

Communication Law and Ethics surveys laws and legal issues pertaining to the media. In addition, the course examines ethical codes of conduct expected of professionals in media-related occupations. Course content includes regulations by the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission, opportunities and limitations afforded to media professionals by the U.S. Constitution, and current trends and issues in media law.

The course will provide information that will be of practical utility to those working in the media. The relevance of this course can be immediately demonstrated in such areas as advertising, journalism, and video production. In addition, the course will equip students to become better media consumers through familiarity with legal and regulatory processes as they apply to the media.

Course objectives:

As a result of successfully completing this course, students should

1. be familiar with basic legal principles as well as some of the most important cases in commonly-encountered areas of media law
2. be able to formulate informed strategies and policies as a media professional where legal issues are concerned
3. be able to identify areas of potential legal liability as a media professional
4. understand the basic structure of the U.S. legal system, including the court system, especially as it applies to the media
5. be able to read, understand, and properly cite primary types of legal literature
6. be able to perform basic media law research in a law library
7. be able to intelligently discuss some of the most significant ethical issues pertaining to the media and to make rational and responsible choices in areas which involve ethical conflicts
8. know how to find information on new developments in media law in order to remain

current once the course has ended

Required text:

Don R. Pember and Clay Calvert, *Mass Media Law*, 2009-2010 ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2008, ISBN 978-0-07-337882-4.

Blended (hybrid) learning nature of this course:

This section of the course will be offered in a blended (hybrid) learning format. The format is termed "blended" because the course will integrate face-to-face interaction and assignments with online interaction and assignments. As a result, we will meet face-to-face for only six of the course's seven sessions. Online work will substitute for one of the in-class sessions. You can expect the same amount of coursework as in a traditional WEC course, with the advantages of less need for driving onto campus as well as flexibility in educational approach.

During our initial class session, use of the online options in Desire2Learn (D2L) will be demonstrated for the benefit of those unfamiliar with their use. Please remember that I am available throughout the course if you have questions or concerns about using D2L.

Technical requirements:

The course's technical requirements are simple. High-speed Internet access is recommended. You will need to possess customary computer skills, including the ability to send and receive email, access and respond to interactive web pages, and copy/paste text. Depending on which part of the course materials you are accessing, you may need to make sure "cookies" are enabled in your browser.

If you are unable to access online options and materials from your home, you may wish to consider using a computer on campus or in a public library. Note that library use of the Internet may be an issue, however, when it comes to watching the required online videos.

To access the course's online options and materials, go to learn.maryville.edu (no "www") and login with your Maryville user name and password. Scroll down to the specific course. If you don't see the course listed, you may need to click on the plus sign next to the College of Arts and Sciences or Communication designation.

Once you open the course site, you will find several course options listed horizontally near the top of the page, just below the Maryville University logo. The options you can expect to use the most include CONTENT, DISCUSSIONS, QUIZZES, and GRADES. Any special announcements can be found in the NEWS box. The course syllabus and other materials can be found under the CONTENT option.

If you experience accessing online course options and materials, please contact your instructor as soon as possible at (314) 529-6838 or at sphipp@maryville.edu. You may also wish to contact the Maryville Information Technology Help Desk at (314) 529-9506 or at helpdesk@maryville.edu. For specifically D2L problems, contact (314) 529-9647 or learn@maryville.edu. You can also consult the D2L handouts provided in the "Content" section of the course's D2L website.

Tips for success in a blended learning course:

Please take your online work and online responsibilities seriously, and discipline yourself to put as much into the online components of the course as the in-class portions. Remember that your successful completion of online assignments will count toward your final course grade just as will your in-class work. Two of our eight class sessions will consist solely of online work. Although we

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will not be meeting those two evenings, these are not opportunities to go on vacation or to put off course responsibilities until some other time. You are expected to complete all assignments on time, whether in class or online.

Netiquette:

When participating in online discussions, you will not be able to see the other participants. In that context it is important to remember to be courteous to others and respectful of their opinions. In an online environment it is easy to write something that may be offensive or hurtful to others and to quickly click on "post" without considering the implications of our words. Before posting to a Discussion Board, please review your messages carefully.

Course policies:

Attendance and deadlines:

Attendance is always vital, but especially so considering that we will only be meeting six times. You will be expected to attend all class sessions, to arrive on time, and to stay for the entire class.

Since we will only meet six times, the maximum number of permissible absences is one. Missing two classes will result in a course grade of AF ("attendance failure"). Missing more than 30 minutes of any one class will result in an absence being recorded. Lack of participation in online discussion boards during the assigned time period will also result in the recording of an absence.

You can expect a brief graded assignment at the beginning of each class. If you are not present when the exercise begins, you will not be allowed to participate in the assignment and you will receive a grade of "0." You will be allowed to miss only one of these assignments without it affecting your overall course grade. Similarly, some other assignments will be completed in class. You will need to be present in order to complete those assignments.

No delayed grades will be given; you are expected to complete all course work by the end of the semester.

Grading and exams; miscellaneous policies:

Your oral in-class participation grade and your online participation grade are based on quality (not necessarily quantity) of interaction. In class, you are expected to orally communicate regarding course material. If you never speak in class, you will receive a poor participation grade. Talking to those around you during class rather than to the class as a whole, however, even if you are discussing course material, will result in a reduction of your class participation grade. Disruptive behavior can result in a lowering of your final course grade.

No extra credit projects or assignments will be available.

Please remember to keep your cell phone or any other electronic device from creating a disturbance during class.

Typing requirement:

All assignments submitted for the course and prepared outside of class must be typed. No handwritten assignments will be accepted except for work completed in class.

Plagiarism and fabrication:

Any plagiarized work as well as any work containing fabricated information represented as true will receive a grade of "0" and can result in a grade of "F" for the course. This policy pertains to both oral and written assignments. Do not assume that plagiarism or fabrication will go undetected.

For written assignments, you must (1) understand the information you have found in your own research and then (2) state that information in your own way, using your own organizational strategy and your own words, rather than someone else's. Copying the wording of another writer verbatim or nearly verbatim, except for brief attributed quotations, does not constitute original work.

In addition, you cannot submit work for a grade in another course as well as in this course. Submitting assignments for this course and for another course as well will result in a grade of "0" for the assignment.

Similarly, following someone else's original writing thought-for-thought, even if you change the wording, does not constitute original work. Please be aware that a plagiarized or fabricated paper will probably be identified as such by your instructor. Plagiarized or fabricated assignments can result in a grade of "F" for the course and possible disciplinary action by the University.

If you have any questions regarding this very important issue, please ask your instructor.

Academic accommodations:

Maryville University provides accommodations and supports for students with disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact the course instructor and/or the Director of the Academic Success Center located in the University Library (314-529-6850).

Grading parameters:

Final course grades will be calculated on the following basis:

Exams	30%
Online quizzes	20%
Online assignment and discussion	20%
Final project	20%
In-class discussion participation	10%

Final course letter grades will be determined as follows:

A	94-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-93	C	74-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-73
B	84-86	D	60-69
B-	80-83	F	0-59

Student and instructor expectations:

Students will be expected to attend each class on time and to complete all assignments on time. This syllabus contains a list of course deadlines, and students will be expected to adhere

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to those deadlines. If problems or issues arise, or if you have questions about the course, course assignments, or course policies, you are expected to contact the instructor as soon as possible.

For my part, I am committed as your instructor to responding to your questions or concerns as soon as is reasonably practical. Unless there is some sort of unavoidable situation (such as a power outage or a trip out of town), I will normally check for phone messages and emails each day that school is scheduled during the semester, and will respond that day. I will certainly check and respond within two weekdays, exclusive of holidays. You can expect ample feedback and individualized coaching regarding your written assignments.

I expect you to commit yourself to diligent and enthusiastic involvement in this course, and I commit myself to the same.

Course schedule:

Note: Textbook readings may, at times, be supplemented by handouts, online readings, or online videos.

#	Date	Meet?	Subject	Agenda and assignments
1	Jan. 11	In-class session	MODULE 1: The legal system and media law	Readings: Chs. 1, 2 Topics: The legal system and the First Amendment
-	Jan. 18	No class	Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday	No class
2	Jan. 25	In-class session	MODULE 2: Libel and invasion of privacy	Readings: Chs. 4, 7 Topics: Libel and invasion of privacy
3	Feb. 1	In-class session	MODULE 3: Law and the news	Readings: Chs. 10, 11 Topics: Freedom of Information Act, Protection of Sources, Free Press/Fair Trial
4	Feb. 8	In-class session	MODULE 4: Obscenity and copyright	Chs. 13, 14 Topics: Obscenity and indecency, copyright
5	Feb. 15	In-class session	MODULE 5: Advertising	Ch. 15 Topics: The Federal Trade Commission and the regulation of advertising
6	Feb. 22	In-class session	MODULE 6: Telecommunications Regulation	Ch. 16 Topics: The Federal Communications Commission and the regulation of telecommunications
7	Mar. 1	ONLINE only	Final project	Online assignment: Instructions for a final research project and discussion will be posted online. This assignment will be discussed in class in advance.

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.