

The mission of the School of Communication and the Arts is to impart knowledge and understanding of the human communication process within the context of a Judeo-Christian world view and to help students to develop advanced critical thinking and communication skills.

Media Law & Ethics
JRNU 403 - Campus

Fall 2008

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9-12 and 1-3

Meets

Mondays, 1:30 – 4:30 PM, COM 102

Course Description

Examination of the legal and ethical issues involved in creating mediated content for public consumption. Explores traditional and interactive media.

Course Objectives and Goals

The objectives of this course are:

1. To develop critical and analytical skills regarding human communication and Christian faith.
2. To become acquainted with basic theoretical and theological concepts pertaining to communication ethics.
3. Demonstrate knowledge about and ability to describe current legal and ethical issues in the field of communication law.
4. To be conversant (able to provide free recall and discuss particulars) about some of the more prominent views of communication media law.

Course Structure

- One who creates mediated content—News, Information, Entertainment (NIE)—is a Producer.

- ALL content creation goes through a logical progression of necessary steps from concept to receipt by the consumer.
- The relationship between producer, society, government, culture and the consumer varies according to the process and channels (PTP, MSM, IC) utilized to arrive at a ready-to-release NIE product to the world.
- It is the quest of this course to prepare you as a knowledgeable producer for both current and future channels of communication; a strong foundation of contemporary law and ethics in conjunction with a clear vision of a world marketplace served by interactive communication.

The focus within this course is the process of creating mediated content, consisting of

- Setup: The initial idea for article, movie, news stand up, and product that begins in "the mind's eye" of the producer
- Acquisition: News gathering, agents, scripts, localization, interviews, initial ATL personnel
- Processing: Story outline, the initial elements to move ahead
- Production: Reporter in the field; the production company on-location
- Packaging: Editing and final composition of content for release
- Distribution: From the producer to the consumer
- Repurposing: New ideas for old content

Texts Required

Miller, Philip H. (2003) *Media Law for Producers*. Boston: Focal Press

Course Assignments

- Discussions: Will take place within Blackboard on a variety of issues pertaining to the topic of the week. Grading will be 40% by your peers, and 60% by faculty.
- Exercises: These are topic-specific assignments in which the student must research, analyze and present legal and ethical-based solutions.
- Project Paper: An in-depth approach to the role of producing mediated content for an interactive communication marketplace.

Grading

Discussions 7 @ 4 %	28 %
Exercises 11 @ 5 %	55 %
Project Paper 1 @ 17 %	17 %
	100 %

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 01 – Mon, Aug 25

The Basis for Law & Ethics

- Historical, Contemporary, and Emerging Trends
- Criminal vs Civil law
- The court system

Legal and ethical issues in MediaToday

Blackboard

- Discussion Forum 1
- Exercise 1

Assigned for Next Class:

- Read: Textbook Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Regent University is closed for Monday, September 1, Labor Day

Week 02 – Mon, Sep 8

Setup:

- Law and ethics as applied to the producer: do you know your rights and obligations?
- Primary historical cases and incidents
- Legal Basics applied to print, broadcast, exhibition, and the Internet
- Status today of the producer of mediated content
- Upcoming challenges and opportunities

Blackboard

- Exercise 2

Assigned for Next Class:

- Read: Textbook Chapter 4

Week 03 – Mon, Sep 15

Acquisition:

- Story leads, ideas, scripts, and permissions
- Witnesses, fact checking, taking pix and/or audio, video
- When contracts are written and broken

Blackboard

- Discussion Forum 2
- Exercise 3

Assigned for Next Class:

Read: Textbook Chapters 5 and 6

Week 04 – Mon, Sep 22**Processing:**

- Rewrites, editing, libel, slander
- contracts, sources, backgrounders
- licensing content
- Fair use vs Public Domain
- Moral rights

Blackboard

Exercise 4

Assigned for Next Class:

Read: Textbook Chapter 7

Week 05 – Mon, Sep 29**Production:**

- Talent, unions, government rules and regs
- Becoming a signatory
- Negotiations, contracts, finding yourself in a strange land
- Permits, E&O, liability bonds

Blackboard

Discussion Forum 3

Exercise 5

Assigned for Next Class:

Read: Textbook Chapter 8

Week 06 – Mon, Oct 6**Packaging:**

- Copyright and Creative Commons, artwork, post
- First Amendment and Parody
- Adding music (for-hire, libraries, agencies)

Blackboard

Exercise 6

Assigned for Next Class:

Read: Textbook Chapter 9

Week 07 – Mon, Oct 13**Distribution:**

- Contracts and channels
- Retailers and consumers
- Issues with print, broadcast and retail (CD, DVD)
- Using the Net
- Children's Online Privacy Act

Blackboard

- Discussion Forum 4
- Exercise 7

Modular Week: Mon Oct 20 – 26 – No Classes

Week 08 – Mon, Oct 27**Repurposing:**

- What rights are valid and for what applications?
- Reuse of likenesses
- Private citizen or public figure
- Reuse fees and residuals
- The mashup
- Blogging, Bzzz Marketing and the Social Network

Blackboard

- Exercise 8

Week 09 – Mon, Nov 3**International Law:**

- Moving beyond US law and standards of ethics
- Contracts, agreements, and enforcement
- Today, it's all about the IP

Blackboard

- Discussion Forum 5

Week 10 – Mon, Nov 10**Now that the Consumer is Gatekeeper**

- Working with citizen journalists

- The unexpected anonymous upload
- Producing content in the YouTube age
- It's no longer about "content control," but rather "sharing"

Project Papers Due

Week 11 – Mon, Nov 17

MSM / IC Law & Ethics for the Journalist

- A firsthand report from those who have worked in the field

Blackboard

Discussion Forum 6

Week 12 – Mon, Nov 24

Freedom of the Press

- Privacy
- Right-to-Know
- First Amendment Rights
- Parody
- Documentaries

Blackboard

Exercise 9

-----Thanksgiving Break-----

Week 13 – Mon, Dec 1

Reporting and Vetting Event data

- Privacy vs the public's right-to-know
- What if it's wrong
- Trauma-based reporting
- The embed

Blackboard

Exercise 10

Week 14 – Mon, Dec 8

Government, Culture & Society

- Your rights in a public venue
- FOIA

- First Amendment Rights
- Cultural considerations and bias

Blackboard

- Discussion Forum 7
- Exercise 11

Week 15 – Mon, Dec 15

Journalism in the Age of the Semantic Web

- Websites, podcasts, and search engines of Web 2.0
- YouTube, CrowdSourcing, BTs, Social Networks, db-consumer behavior of Web 3.0
- What will define journalism and the journalist in 2012

Incomplete Grades

It is University policy that incomplete grades are to be given only for legitimate deficiencies due to severe illness or emergencies or other significant reasons acceptable to the professor and not because of neglect on the student's part. I cannot deviate from this policy. Please consult the Regent University Academic Catalogue for a more complete statement of university policy. If any of your assignments are late for any reason I may grade your work but I will not be responsible for providing extensive feedback on late assignments.

Academic Honesty

As should be expected, particularly at a Christian university, students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism, defined as the uses of written and oral words of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker's or writer's indebtedness to that person. This also applies to the use of papers and other materials previously submitted to instructors of other classes, either at Regent University or other institutions. Any violation of this policy will normally result in failure of the course.

Student Feedback

You will be given the opportunity to provide me, as well as the college administration, with written feedback and to evaluate the course structure and its conduct. However, you should feel free to bring any concerns to my attention at any time during the semester. I welcome your input, feedback and constructive criticism on this course.
