MASS MEDIA LAW—COMMUNICATION 386  
SPRING—2008  
DR. KIRK STONE  

OFFICE HOURS:  
10-11:30 MONDAY, WEDNESDAY  
3-4 THURSDAY  
By appointment  
72 GEORGE STREET  

Phone: 953-5644  

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
Students need to understand the basics of mass media law in order to function successfully as communication professionals, citizens, and scholars. A solid understanding of the importance of freedom of expression is also an important part of a student's overall liberal arts education.  

By integrating readings, lectures and class discussions, the course explores the key cases and concepts in mass media law. Communication professionals, however, do not make decisions solely on the basis of law. Ethical considerations and good judgment also come into play. This course focuses on mass media law in this larger context.  

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
--To help students develop a sound appreciation of the meaning of the First Amendment right of freedom of the press and the important responsibilities that accompany that freedom  

--To help students develop the ability to analyze legal arguments and defend their own positions effectively  

--To give students a strong liberal arts learning experience that helps them apply knowledge from other fields to media law  

--To help students learn that the law evolves, so they must hone the skills needed to keep up to date on the inevitable changes that will occur after they graduate  

--To help students learn that the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press is no excuse for inaccuracy or insensitivity  

--To help students learn how to minimize the chance of expensive, time-consuming litigation  

OFFICE HOURS/STUDENT INTERACTION  
I want to get to know you. The best way is through regular office hours. If, however, these hours are inconvenient, I will be happy to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.
GRADING

500 total points:
-- Final grades will be based on 5 exams, each valued at 100 points. The final exam is not cumulative. Please do not miss class on exam days because it is difficult to give make up exams. Your make up grade will be reduced up to 30 points if you miss an exam without an extremely good reason. Make up exams often are much more difficult than those taken on the scheduled date.

Grades for the course will be based on the following breakdown:
94 and above: A
90-93: A-
88-89: B+
83-87: B
80-82: B-
78-79: C+
70-77: C
65-69: C-
63-64: D+
58-62: D
55-57: D-
Below 55: F

Disabilities accommodation: Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements should contact me soon to discuss his or her situation. Some students, for example, want to take their exams through the Disability Services office. Students hoping to take exams in that office must get the form to me at least 5 days before the exam date. Thanks for your help.

Courtesy: Please turn off cell phones before entering the classroom. Do not send text messages during class. Such behavior is distracting and disrupts the class. Please be courteous.

Honor Code: Rules outlined in the College of Charleston Code of Civil and Honorable Conduct will be enforced.

Possible changes: This syllabus is change without notice.

BOOKS
Trager, The Law of Journalism and Mass Communication
Isenberg, Giga Law

Daily Assignments Schedule
January 10: Introduction
Trager, Chapter 1, "The Rule of Law: Law in a Changing Communication Environment"
January 15, 17: Prior Restraint
Trager, Chapter 2, "First Amendment
Isenberg, part V, "Free Speech and First Amendment"

January 22: Controlling "Dangerous" Speech
Trager, Chapter 3, "Disruptive Speech: Threats to Stability, Safety, and Education"

January 24: Exam 1

January 29, 31, February 5: Libel
Trager, Chapter 4, "Libel: The Plaintiff’s Case," Chapter 5, "Libel: Defense Issues and Strategies"

February 7, 12: Privacy
Trager, Chapter 6, "Protecting Privacy: Limiting Journalists' Access to Personal Information and Places"

Isenberg, part 4, "Privacy Law"

February 14: Emotional Distress
Trager, Chapter 7, "Emotional Distress and Physical Harm: When Words and Pictures Hurt"

February 19: Exam 2

February 21, 26: Free Press and Fair Trial
Trager, Chapter 8, "Media and the Courts: Preserving Public Trials and Preventing Prejudice"

February 28: Access to Information
Trager, Chapter 9, "Newsgathering: Pitfalls and Protections"

March 11, 13: Confidential News Sources
Trager, Chapter 10, "Reporter’s Privilege: Protecting the Watchdogs"

March 18: Exam 3

March 20, 25, 27: Regulating Broadcasting and Other Media
Trager, Chapter 11, "Electronic Media Regulation"

April 1: Obscenity and Related Problems
Trager, Chapter 12, "Obscenity, Indecency and Pornography"

April 3: Exam 4

April 8, 10: Intellectual Property
Trager, Chapter 13, "Intellectual Property: Protecting and Using Intangible Creations"

April 15: Corporate Speech

April 17, 22: Advertising
   Trager, Chapter 14, "When Speech and Commerce Converge"
   Isenberg, part VI, "Co
   VII, "Employment Law"

Final Exam