

COMM 3310
Communication Law and Ethics
The University of Texas at Arlington
Summer I, 2017
8:00 – 10:00
M – R

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Office: FA 270
Office Hours: By appointment

Read this syllabus **CAREFULLY**. Ignorance of the policies of the class **is not** an acceptable excuse.

Textbook and Materials

(1) Communication Law; Practical Applications in the Digital Age. Dom Caristi and William Davie

(2) Additional readings will be required as the semester progresses.

Note: Material in class supersedes material in the book.

Once you have the book begin to read it. It will be hard to pass the class without regularly attending class and reading the assigned readings.

Class lectures will not cover everything in the assigned readings. You are still responsible for reading and learning the material.

Course Description/Goals

In this course you will study constitutional, statutory, and administrative regulations as applied to print media, broadcast media, the Internet, advertising, and film; rights, responsibilities, and ethics.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the American legal system, its institutions, and some of its terminology;
- Students will demonstrate a broad understanding of First Amendment principles as they relate to mass communication;
- Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of the laws that directly restrict or enhance information gathering and message dissemination in the mass media, and an understanding of the rationales behind those laws.

Attendance/Drop policy

Regular class attendance is required by the University and necessary to keep up with assigned readings, lectures and assignments. Excessive class absences, lateness and/or failure to keep up with assigned readings will result in lower grades.

Lateness (particularly when it is habitual) is disruptive to the entire class. Unexcused tardiness will be considered an absence. Students leaving class early will not be given credit for attendance unless excused in advance by the professor.

It is the student's responsibility to drop or add the class—not the faculty or staff's.

There is to be no texting or use of cell phones in any manner during class.

Exams, Legal Brief, and Grading

There will be four exams. Each exam will contain 60 multi-choice and true/false questions. Each exam is worth 100 points. There will be no make-up exams.

Each student will also write one legal brief during the semester and post to a discussion board. Instructions for these assignments will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard.

Exams: 80%

Brief and Discussion Board: 20%

There is no extra credit. The best predictor of a good grade is regular attendance in class and reading of the assigned material.

I will post grades on Blackboard following each exam/assignment. The grade scale is as follows:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

You are expected to be on time for each scheduled exam.

If you miss a class, get notes and any handouts from your classmates. Grades in this class are based solely on performance on the exams and the legal briefs.

Attendance

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I do not take regular attendance, but I encourage you to come regularly as experience shows those who attend regularly tend to do better in class than those who do not. However, while UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients.

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

It is the student's responsibility to drop or add the class—not the faculty or staff's.

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: A general rule of thumb is this: for every credit hour earned, a student should spend 3 hours per week working outside of class. So, beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 9 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

Academic Integrity: All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule*

50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)**. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364.
Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.*

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at the front of the room. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library's 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various

college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library's hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>

Library & Research Assistance: University-level research requires university-level sources. Appropriate sources include scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and credible news magazines and newspapers. The UTA Library <http://library.uta.edu/> offers a plethora of resources and subject specialists to help you select and locate appropriate sources. Find library staff at the Service Zone on the first floor of the UTA Central Library, by phone at (817) 272-3395, by text at (817) 727-8395, email at AskUs@uta.edu, or the chat widget on the library's homepage, <http://library.uta.edu/>. For a list of useful guides to help you start your research, visit: <http://libguides.uta.edu/>.

Your librarian is **Diane Shepelwich**, dianec@uta.edu. Diane is available through email, individual or group meetings, or phone appointments. If you need help getting started with your research or course assignment or have questions along the way, please contact Diane for personalized research assistance.

Tentative Schedule			
Dates		Subject	Read
June			
Mon.	4	Sources of Law and Systems of Justice The First Amendment in Principle and Practice	Chapters 1, 2
Tues.	5	Sources of Law and Systems of Justice The First Amendment in Principle and Practice	Chapters 1, 2
Wed.	6	Forums of Freedom Sedition and Censorship	Chapters 3, 4
Thurs.	7	Forums of Freedom Sedition and Censorship	Chapters 3, 4
Mon.	11	Exam One	
Tues.	12	Libel The Right to Privacy	Chapters 5, 6
Wed.	13	Libel The Right to Privacy	Chapters 5, 6
Thurs.	14	Libel The Right to Privacy Initial discussion board post due	Chapters 5, 6
Mon.	18	Exam Two	
Tues.	19	Media and the Courts	Chapter 8
Wed.	20	Media and the Courts	Chapter 8
Thurs.	21	Freedom of Access	Chapter 9
Mon.	25	Freedom of Access	Chapter 9
Tues.	26	Intellectual Property	Chapter 14
Wed.	27	Exam 3	

Thurs.	28	Regulation of Advertising Legal Brief due	Chapters 12, 13
July			
Mon.	2	Obscenity and Indecency	Chapter 7
Tues.	3	Telecommunications Regulation	Chapters 10, 11
Wed.	4	No class	
Thurs.	5	Telecommunications Regulation Discussion board responses due	Chapters 10, 11
Mon.	9	Exam 4	