

**STUDENT WARNING:** This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

# COMM402

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## Course Summary

**Course :** COMM402 **Title :** Media Law  
**Length of Course :** 8 **Faculty :**  
**Prerequisites :** N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

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## Description

### Course Description:

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of media law from a communication perspective. Topic covered will include First Amendment law, prior restraint, copyright, defamation, and other legal aspects communication professional encounter. Students will investigate case studies that delve into the broad depth of media law issues that both help and inhibit communication and journalism.

### Course Scope:

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## Objectives

CO1: Describe how American courts, legislative bodies, and administrative agencies function.

CO2: Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

CO5 Articulate the rights of media professionals versus avocational speakers and writers.

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## Outline

### Week 1: Introduction to Mass Communication Law - The Basics

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#### Course Objective(s)

CO1 Describe how American courts, legislative bodies and administrative agencies function.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

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Reading & Resources

Week 1 Learning Materials

Week 1 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Welcome Discussion

## **Week 2: The First Amendment**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2: Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 2 Learning Materials

Week 2 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 2 Discussion

Week 2 Case Study Analysis

## **Week 3:**

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Course Objective(s)

Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

## **Week 4: Privacy**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2 Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 4 Learning Materials

Week 4 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 4 Discussion

## **Week 5: Obscenity and Indecency**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2 Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 5 Learning Materials

Week 5 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 5 Discussion

Week 5 Case Study Analysis

## **Week 6: Access and Privilege**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2 Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 6 Learning Materials

Week 6 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 6 Discussion

Week 6 Case Study Analysis

## **Week 7: Copyright Law, Creative Property and Fair Use**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2 Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 7 Learning Materials

Week 7 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 7 Discussion

## **Week 8: Broadcast Regulation**

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Course Objective(s)

CO2 Describe historical components of significant legal decisions, which have shaped the mass communication and mass media landscape.

CO3 Explain legal terminology and key concepts in mass communication law such as prior restraint, defamation, obscenity, indecency, access and privilege.

CO4 Analyze legal reasoning, judicial tests and precedents for specific journalistic or media case law to discern legal risk under US law for potential future media activities.

Reading & Resources

Week 8 Learning Materials

Week 8 Reading & Resources

Assignment(s)

Week 8 Discussion

Applying Mass Communication Law

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## **Evaluation**

**Grading:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade %</b>
Discussions	40.00 %
Welcome Discussion	5.00 %
Week 2 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 3 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 4 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 5 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 6 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 7 Discussion	5.00 %
Week 8 Discussion	5.00 %
Assignments	60.00 %

Week 2 Case Study Analysis	9.00 %
Week 3 Case Study Analysis	9.00 %
Week 5 Case Study Analysis	9.00 %
Week 6 Case Study Analysis	9.00 %
Week 8 Applying Mass COMM Law	24.00 %

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## Materials

**Book Title:** Digital Media Law, 2nd ed. - e-book available in the APUS Online Library

**Author:** Packard, Ashley

**Publication Info:** Wiley Lib

**ISBN:** 9781118290729

**Book Title:** Cases in Communication Law, 4th ed. - e-book available in the APUS Online Library

**Author:** Siegel, Paul

**Publication Info:** Rowman & Littlefield Lib

**ISBN:** 9781442226241

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Please see the Content tab for class resources.

- Weekly learning lessons in the weekly Learning Material.

- Weekly readings in the weekly Reading & Resources.

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## Course Guidelines

### Citation and Reference Style

- Students will follow APA format as the citation and reference style for courses in the Communication program area.
- Please note that no formal citation style is graded in the Discussions--only attribution of sources (please see details regarding Discussion communication below).

### Tutoring

[Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS (only when accessed through the APUS online library). Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

### Turnitin:

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course to verify originality and detect potential plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments

area of the course when you submit your work.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

### **Disclaimer Statement**

- Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

### **Discussions:**

- All initial discussion posts are due on Thursdays by 11:55 p.m. ET throughout the course.
- All peer responses are due on Sundays by 11:55 p.m. ET throughout the course.
- Discussions are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions. The purpose of the discussions is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- “Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. A message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a follow-up question to a point made, a response to a question, an example or illustration of a key point, an inconsistency in an argument, etc.
- As a class, if we run into conflicting view points, we must respect each individual's own opinion. Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.
- You must post a response to the weekly discussion topic and post the required number of replies to other students during the week due. Please refer to the grading rubric and/or weekly discussion guidelines for specific expectations on the number of replies and word count requirements.
- Late posts to a discussion topic will be subject to the School late policy and may not be accepted without instructor approval.

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## **Communications**

### **Student Communication**

To reach the instructor, please communicate through the MyClassroom email function accessible from the Classlist of the Course Tools menu, where the instructor and students email addresses are listed, or via the Office 365 tool on the Course homepage.

- In emails to instructors, it's important to note the specific course in which you are enrolled. The name of the course is at the top center of all pages.
- Students and instructors communicate in Discussion posts and other learning activities.
- All interactions should follow APUS guidelines, as noted in the [Student Handbook](#), and maintain a professional, courteous tone.
- Students should review writing for spelling and grammar.
- [Tips on Using the Office 365 Email Tool](#)

### **Instructor Communication**

The instructor will post announcements on communications preferences involving email and Instant

Messaging and any changes in the class schedule or activities.

- Instructors will periodically post information on the expectations of students and will provide feedback on assignments, Discussion posts, quizzes, and exams.
  - Instructors will generally acknowledge student communications within 24 hours and respond within 48 hours, except in unusual circumstances (e.g., illness).
  - The APUS standard for grading of all assessments (assignments, Discussions, quizzes, exams) is five days or fewer from the due date.
  - Final course grades are submitted by faculty no later than seven days after the end date of the course or the end of the extension period.
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## University Policies

Consult the [Student Handbook](#) for processes and policies at APUS. Notable policies:

- [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Academic Dishonesty / Plagiarism](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)
- [Student Deadlines](#)
- [Video Conference Policy](#)

## Mission

The [mission of American Public University System](#) is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

## Minimum Technology Requirements

- Please consult the catalog for the minimum hardware and software required for [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) courses.
- Although students are encouraged to use the [Pulse mobile app](#) with any course, please note that not all course work can be completed via a mobile device.

## Disclaimers

- Please note that course content – and, thus, the syllabus – may change between when a student registers for a course and when the course starts.
- Course content may vary from the syllabus' schedule to meet the needs of a particular group.