

COMMUNICATION

COMM 441 Mass Media Law Spring 2025

Faculty Information

Professor: Dr. Cameron A. Pace
Email: Pacec@Evangel.edu
Phone: 417.865.2815 X8413
Office Location: Trask 105
Office Hours: Contact Lisa Weir x8411
Websites: <https://courses.evangel.edu>;
<http://www.doctorpace.net>



Course Information

Credit Hours: 3
Semester: Spring 2025
Course Day/Time: Mondays & Wednesdays @ 2 PM,
Friday classes are online
Location: Trask 308

Required Textbooks

Zelenzny, J. (2011). *Communications Law: Liberties, restraints, and the modern media*, (Sixth Edition). Boston: Wadsworth Publishing.
ISBN-10: **0495794171** | ISBN-13: **978-0495794172** | Edition: **6**
(This book is available used, etc. as it has been in print for years.)

Recommended Textbooks

(none listed)

Evangel University Mission

Evangel University is a comprehensive Christian university committed to excellence in educating and equipping students to become Spirit-empowered servants of God who impact the Church and society globally.

Department Mission

The Department of Communication serves students through a study of

communication, incorporating theory, history, and application in a variety of media and non-media contexts. The Department prepares its majors to function effectively as competent professionals with a Christian worldview.

Catalog Description

This course is designed to acquaint the student with a media practitioner's rights and liabilities under mass communication law. This includes a study of the statutes and judicial opinion which are the basis for an understanding of the freedoms and controls of print, web, and broadcast media.

Students should have completed COMM 113 or have permission of the professor to take this course.

Learning Outcomes

The outcomes for this course have been aligned to the [Enter name of the accrediting organization/standards here Course Learning Outcomes (CLO), Program Learning Outcomes (PLO); and/or Evangel University Student Learning Outcomes (EU20)].

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES			
Upon completion of this course, the student will:	CLO	PLO	EU20
Come to appreciate the living, dynamic nature of "the law."	X		
Understand the terminology and process of law, especially as related to the media.	X	CS2	
Describe the court system, procedures, and appellate decision-making process.	X	CS2	
Explain the fundamental principles of mass media law as they relate to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. defamation (libel) b. privacy c. news gathering (protection of news sources, access to information) d. free press/fair trial e. regulation of obscenity f. copyright (intellectual property) g. political speech h. advertising (commercial speech) 	X	CS2	
Analyze specific factual situations and apply the law to the legal problems raised by the facts of a case.	X	CS2	E2B
Work within the legal boundaries as media practitioners.	X	CS1	
Integrate professional codes, ethics, and media law.	X	CS1	

*Objectives are in compliance with but not assessed for these outcomes.

Course Format

This course is a hybrid course involving seated days and online days. Students are to attend seated class periods on Monday and Wednesday. Fridays will be online using assignments, tests, and content learning exercises. Students typically have the weekend to complete any Friday class work.

Course Requirements

The class will include the reading of the textbooks (outside class) with follow-up assignments. All assignments will be used as a basis for the class discussion. Students will complete the following major assignments (smaller, daily work may also be assigned):

1. **Examinations:** There are four tests scheduled for the semester. See schedule below. These tests **MUST** be taken on the day scheduled or as instructed. Tests will be primarily objective: matching, multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and occasionally short listings and definitions. There may be some short case studies to which you will be asked to apply the legal precedents. Two tests are scheduled as online exams. Students are not allowed to collaborate on exams outside of studying together prior to the test. Online tests are also given with a time limit.

2. **Current Events Media Law:** The law is a living organism, changing on a regular and continuing basis. As media practitioners, you will need to keep current on what is happening in the field. Thus, I am requiring you to submit 3 brief reports on a current (since January 2021) media law issue. You can get these from newspapers, trade journals, *Media Law Reporter*, news magazines, The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press website <www.rcfp.org>, etc. For each one, copy or scan the original source, **summarize the key legal issue in a one-page summary (single spaced)** and share this with the class online. To do this, submit it online to the drop box, then post your report in the discussion board connected with that assignment. Be sure to identify the source of the clip by publication/website and date. Failure to upload and submit the report to the discussion board on the assigned date will result in lost points. There is no opportunity for make-up on this assignment. Students are then required to read three reports submitted on the discussion board and make comments by the due date.

3. **Case Study:** Each student will be assigned a key media law case to research and present to the class. In many instances, the basics of the case may be found in the text. At least 5 resources should be included and cited. Expected is an in-depth study of the case including the background of the case, the path of the case through the legal system, and the significance of the decision for media practitioners. Due dates will be assigned through the semester, as the case study will be due at the time that we are covering that area in class. This should be submitted double-spaced with appropriate citations (APA or MLA) to the drop box on Canvas. An expected length would be 6 to

7 pages, not including the bibliography (which is required). The student also posts the report on the Canvas discussion board. This assignment may not be turned in late. The paper must be uploaded to the dropbox on Canvas when your deadline comes up. Once on the discussion board, other students will read and post comments as required. The author should respond to the comments with appropriate replies.

4. **Online Quizzes:** To help students receive credit for reading the text and keep up with the work, online quizzes are scheduled on Canvas each week on Wednesdays. The online quiz will be over the chapters covered during that particular week. Quizzes are objective and are given with a time limit. **These may not be taken late.** Check the Canvas schedule for specifics.

5. **Class Participation and Online Assignments:** Students receive credit for participating in class activities. Small assignments given online also contribute to the grade. See Canvas for online assignments and instructions.

5. **Periodic discussion threads** or assigned readings may be included in any of the weeks' requirements.

The Temporary Grade of Incomplete

[Incomplete Request Form](#)

Academic Integrity Policy

Any and every instance of academic dishonesty compromises the mission of Evangel University and violates the standards we hold as people of Christ and practitioners within our professional fields. Evangel expects its students to exhibit the highest level of integrity for all course work. While discussion and collaboration are encouraged as part of course interaction, **all work submitted in any course** (seated, online, or hybrid) **must be the original work of the individual student. Use of services and/or software, including AI programs, to generate student submitted work will be considered a violation of academic integrity. Therefore, students are expected to understand and avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, which includes falsification, cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Instances of integrity violations will be handled according to the procedures outlined in the University's Academic Integrity Policy.**

Please view the current Student Handbook for the complete policy.

Accommodations Statement

Evangel University is committed to equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Please view the following page or contact the Center for Student Success for more details:

[Accommodations Statement](#)

Assessment

Students will receive a semester grade based on the following scale:

Class participation/assignments	10%
Examinations (4 @ 10% each)	40%
Current Events reports (5 @ 3% each)	15%
Online quizzes (12 @ 1.25% each)	15%
<u>Case Study Paper</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total projected:	100%

GRADING SCALE

A = 92.5 – 100	A- = 89.5 – 92.4	B+ = 87.5 – 89.4
B = 82.5 – 87.4	B- = 79.5 – 82.4	C+ = 77.5 – 79.4
C = 72.5 – 77.4	C - = 69.5 – 72.4	D+ = 67.5 – 69.4
D = 62.5 – 67.4	D- = 59.5 – 62.4	F = 0 – 59.4

[How Do I View My Grades?](#)

Course Outline

(reading assignments should be completed during week shown)

(Items in *blue italics* are online lessons or assignments)

1/8 - Overview of course/requirements/schedule

1/10 – Sources and Categories of Law (online lesson) – Read pp. 1 - 13

1/13 - The Courts and Judicial Procedures – Read pp. 14 - 33

1/15 – The First Amendment – Background – Read pp. 34 - 46

1/17 – Canvas assignment – read article – post comments.

1/20 – **No School** - Martin Luther King National Holiday

1/22 – The First Amendment - Media & Speech – Read pp. 47 - 85

*1/24 – Current Events Report #1 due in dropbox. Post and comment online.
Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond*

1/27 – Censorship – Limiting Speech Rights – Read pp. 86 - 98

1/29– Defamation – Background – Read pp. 99 - 115

1/31 – Exam #1 over chapters 1 thru 3 (online)
Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

2/3 – Harmful Speech – Read pp. 116 - 128

2/5 – False Accusations and Publications – Read pp. 129 - 140

2/7 – *Online lesson - Fault and Harm – Read pp. 141 - 155*

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

2/10 – Protections and Defenses against Defamation – Read pp. 156 - 164

2/12 – Libel Reform and the Internet – Read pp. 165 - 175

2/14 – *Online lesson - Privacy Law – Overview – Read pp. 176 – 189*

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

2/17 – Private and Public Disclosures – Read pp. 190 – 203

2/19 – Intrusion and Tort Law - Read pp. 204 - 217

2/21 – *Criminal Statutes and Privacy on the Internet (online lesson) – Read pp. 218 – 229*

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

2/24 – Media Access and Public Records – Read pp. 230 - 243

2/26 – Government and the Media – Read pp. 244 - 267

2/28 – Exam #2 over chapters 4, 5 & 6 online

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

3/3 – Media and the Justice System – Read pp. 268 - 283

3/5 – Court Proceedings and Trials – Read pp. 284 - 299 **Current Events Report #2 due in dropbox.**

3/7 – Finish the discussion board for current events.

Media Secrets and Shield Laws (online lesson) – Read pp. 300 – 317

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

3/10 – Copyright Law – Read pp. 318 - 345

3/12 – Fair Use – Read pp. 347 - 354

3/14 – *Digital Media and Copyright (online lesson) – Read pp. 355 – 376*

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

3/17 – 3/21 – Spring Break

3/24 – The FCC and Broadcast Regulations – Read pp. 377 - 390

3/26 – Station Licensing and Responsibilities – Read pp. 391 - 413

3/28 – *Online lesson - Broadcast Rules and Procedures – Read pp. 429 – 445*

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

3/31 – Exam #3 over chapters 7 – 9 – in class (seated)

4/2 – Broadcasting and Politics – Read pp. 414 – 428

4/4 – **Current Events Report #3 due in dropbox. Post and comment online.**

Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond

4/7 – NAB Trip – online assignment or lesson

4/9 – NAB Trip – online assignment or lesson

4/11 – **Case Study Discussion Board – read and respond**

4/14 – Obscenity and Free Speech – Read pp. 446 - 459

4/16 – Indecency: Is that Speech? – Read 460 - 488

4/18 – *Good Friday – no online assignment (Happy Easter!)*

4/21 – Commercial Speech and Advertising Regulation – Read pp. 489 - 523

4/23 – State Regulations and Online Marketing – Read pp. 542 - 534

4/25 – *No online assignment – review for exam #4*

Final Exam in class – Wednesday, April 30 at 2 PM. Exam #4 over chapters 10 – 12 (seated)

University Resources

Canvas Course Commons

[Canvas Course Commons at Evangel University](#)

The Center for Student Success

[The Center for Student Success](#)

EU Libraries

[EU Libraries](#)

The Write Place

[The Write Place](#)

Special Notes and Policies:

TESTS

Online tests should not be shared or discussed between individuals. The tests allow for the use of books and notes from class materials and lectures. No collusion is allowed on tests.

CANVAS ASSIGNMENTS AND QUIZZES

This course incorporates the Canvas classroom software system as the basis of its curriculum. Students

are required to login to Canvas regularly to watch lectures, locate documents, take quizzes, and upload assignments. Students are advised to use a reliable computer with good Internet access whenever possible. Problems with Canvas due to incompatibility with the student's own computer or failure of Internet access to a student's computer is not cause for retaking a quiz or receiving extra time. Take quizzes early enough that if something goes wrong, you can contact me in time to advise you about a fix. If you are experiencing significant computer issues during this course, please advise me of that immediately. Don't wait until you are way behind.

BEFORE THE CLASS STARTS:

Students who have academically registered will have access to CANVAS and this course seven (7) days before the official beginning of the semester. Students have until seven (7) days after the semester begins to complete financial registration. If financial registration is not completed by the seventh day, CANVAS access will be revoked and all submitted work will be lost. When financial registration is then completed, CANVAS access will be granted, again. Make-up work for items lost will be at the discretion of the professor. Please contact the Registrar's office with questions about your registration status: (417) 865-2815 x7203.

CANVAS DEFINITIONS AND ASSIGNMENT TERMS

Discussion Forum. The public area or meeting place to hold a dialogue/discussion. You will create messages to post in a discussion board in order to dialogue with your classmates and the professor. Equate a discussion board to an in-class discussion.

Dialogue. A conversation between two or more people. It may also be thought of as an exchange of ideas or opinions on a particular issue. Dialogues exist to help you understand the material presented and apply concepts in your organization. You should use dialogues to test your understanding of every concept with your classmates and professor. Dialogue gives you the opportunity to pose questions, demonstrate your understanding of the material, and apply relevant concepts.

Post. A message that is sent to a group. Your posts substitute for in-class verbal contributions. Those who participate during the whole time will receive higher grades than those who "show up" only at the beginning or end of a class and make a few interjections. Those who contribute meaningful insights will receive higher grades than those who post trivial reflection. Initial posts are the first required student posts answering specific questions or presenting research as per assignment directions. Response posts are student responses to colleague posts (initial or other response posts).

As you read the material, you should highlight insights, "ah-has", and record any questions. This serves as good content to help you compose your posts. As organizational leaders, learning to write in a concise manner is a skill to gain. This means the quality of each posted message must be excellent. The forum is an academic learning environment therefore you must fully support and reference your statements. Remember the demonstrated learning and scholarship consists of supported conclusions, not just personal opinions. Extend the ideas presented by your classmates. You can expect your

professor will comment in the discussion as needed, to help guide individuals and groups toward desired learning outcomes.

The quality of your posts will be measured by several factors: (a) demonstrated comprehension of the material, (b) appropriate research material beyond the assigned readings, and (c) demonstration of critical thinking skills in applying concepts to separate personal opinion from reasoned conclusion.

Discussion post specific instructions:

1. All discussion posts should be in complete sentences.
2. Use proper grammar and punctuation.
3. Remember the Golden Rule, "Do unto others..." In other words, be nice!

Pace's Acamania Website

To get the latest in seminar information on a 24/7 basis, connect to Dr. Pace's Web site regularly. Forms, handouts, and other information can be found there for your convenience. Type the following URL address in your browser while on the Internet:
<http://www.doctorpace.net>

Policy On Incomplete Work

All assignments given during this course must be completed by the end of the course. Once the semester ends, a student will receive an F if any major assignment is missing. All late assignments may be penalized up to 40% off the grade the assignment has earned. Students receiving an F due to incomplete work should repeat the course. Extended illness and other legitimate reasons for late work will be considered on an individual basis.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please follow the guidelines below to **maximize your class participation grade** and help make the classroom environment friendly and respectful of others:

1. Sit within the prescribed areas of the classroom as designated by the professor.
2. Come on time to class – earlier is preferred. Repeated tardies will be charged as an absence.
3. If you come in late, please come in quietly and quickly move to your seat.
4. Do not leave the classroom prior to dismissal of the class. If you become ill, then you may leave quietly, but you are not expected to return. You may receive an absence for the class depending on when you had left.
5. If you need to leave class early for an appointment that could not be avoided, please tell the professor prior to class.

6. If you need to come late to class due to an appointment that could not be avoided, you should inform the professor prior to the class. However, if that was not possible, please stay afterward to explain the situation.
7. Keep your cell phones in your pocket or purse. Having them out and using them during class is a distraction to the professor and others around you.
8. Laptops and tablets are acceptable provided students use them for class purposes and are not a distraction to the student or others.
9. Food and drink may not be allowed in certain places or times during class. Talk to the professor about your situation concerning your need to bring food into the room.
10. Please do not put your feet up on tables or other furniture not designated for that.
11. Do ask questions in class and make appropriate comments. Your interaction in class is part of your learning, and contributes to everyone else's experience.