



HAMLINE UNIVERSITY
School of Law
COURSE SYLLABUS

Faculty: Professor James Pielemeier

Course: Seminar: First Amendment and the Media

Meeting Schedule: Fridays, 10:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Room: Law 6

Required Course Materials: All substantive course materials for the first few class sessions will be posted and available on the TWEN page for this course under “Course Materials.” You may print them out at your own expense and/or download them to your computer. Be sure to obtain and read the course material for “Class One” before our first class meeting on Friday, August 26.

In addition, be sure that you have your own individual access to a copy of The Bluebook. In drafting your paper for the course, you may use either the nineteenth edition (2010) or the eighteenth edition (2005).

Course Description and Learning Outcomes: This seminar will enable students to develop an understanding of the intersection of the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution and the mass media. The first few classes will entail discussion of some fairly broad subjects in this area, such as first amendment limitations on liability for harm caused by the media, as well as first amendment limitations on permissible governmental regulation. Students will write a substantial draft and final seminar paper on a topic of their choice, subject to approval of the instructor. Students will make a classroom presentation on their paper topics during roughly the second half of the course. In addition, all students in the seminar will be required to submit a one to two page constructive critique of each other student’s first draft. (Drafts will be posted on TWEN for access.)

For purposes of selecting paper topics, the “mass media” can be broadly defined as any form of media that has the potential of reaching a large audience. This can include traditional media such as newspapers, broadcasters, and movies, but can also include newer forms of digital media. Some potential topics may be applicable to several types of mass media. In addition, this seminar will enable students to have experience with several competencies important to practicing attorneys, including research and writing, editing, listening, and persuasion.

HUSL Policies on attendance, lateness and preparation

The program of instruction at the School of Law is based on an active and informed exchange between instructor and student and between student and student. Regular, prepared class attendance helps develop skills essential to the competent practice of law. A student who violates the attendance policy, including the instructor's specification of class expectation described below, may lose his or her right to take the exam in the course, to receive course credit or may receive other penalties described below and in Academic Rule 108. Persistent or frequent lateness or unpreparedness may also be the basis for reduction of the grade awarded in a course. See Academic Rule 108 for further details.

Attendance Policies in this Course: Absent extremely extenuating circumstances, I am inclined to consider absence from more than two seminar sessions to be excessive for purposes of the attendance policy.

Policy on Laptop Use in Class: You may use laptop computers or other electronic devices in class to take notes, access course related materials, and to use in making your classroom presentation. You should not use your laptop or electronic devices for other purposes.

In addition to the usual courtesies due to your classmates, refrain from text-messaging and email, using cell phones, pagers, or any other communication device. Refrain also from displaying wallpaper, screen savers, or other material on your computer screen that can reasonably be expected to distract your classmates.

Presentation Dates: Our final eight seminar sessions will be devoted to two student presentations of their paper topics. At our first seminar session, we will have a lottery to determine the presentation date for each student. Within one week after that lottery, a student may trade their presentation date with that of another student. However, nothing of value may be exchanged in connection with any trade.