

MASS MEDIA LAW

Professor Pielemeier

FALL 2008

INITIAL SYLLABUS

This Initial Syllabus contains introductory information on this course, the assignments for the first two classes, a mandatory TWEN assignment, to be completed by September 10, and a table of contents for the material in the course.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

The required materials for this course have been assembled by your professor. You should purchase a set from the SBA Bookstore. They will be photocopied materials, punched for a three ring binder. You should consider using one or two such binders to keep the material organized.

TWEN. Signing up for this course on TWEN is mandatory. You will need your Westlaw password to do so. Go to <http://lawschool.westlaw.com>, click on TWEN and after signing in, click on Drop/Add a course. You will see this course listed and you should add it.

OFFICE HOURS AND AVAILABILITY

My office hours are posted on my office door, and I will normally be in my office at those times. If I am not, and no note is posted on my door, please try again in five to ten minutes. I am frequently in my office during other hours and, except for the hour preceding one of my classes, you are welcome to stop by during those times as well. My office telephone number is 651-523-2910. You can also reach me by E-Mail at: Jpielemeier@gw.hamline.edu

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The basic goals and objectives of this course include the development of an understanding of the legal issues, rules, and policies that have a strong impact on the “mass media,” which includes entities such as radio and television stations, newspapers, producers of books and entertainment, and others. The general topics to be covered are reflected in the table of contents below. Focus will also be on continuing to develop your proficiency in legal methodology and analysis.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

You are expected to be prepared for discussion of the materials assigned for each day. If you are called upon and are not well-prepared, this will result in a waste of your classmates' time as well as your own. Thus, if for any legitimate reason, you are not well-prepared, please let me know *before* class begins, and you will not be called upon during that class period.

As the Academic Rules and Attendance Policy provide, regular and punctual class attendance and preparation are required. As a general rule, I consider absences in excess of five 50 minute classes per semester to be excessive. Since this class will meet two days a week for 75 minutes each, I will consider absences in excess of three classes to be excessive. If the permitted number of absences is exceeded, opportunities to pursue "make-up work," as opposed to being withdrawn from the course, will not be granted absent a strong justification for the excessive absence, such as incapacitating illness or injury, death in the family, childbirth, or analogous circumstances. Such make-up work, if permitted, will ordinarily be in the form of a required short written paper.

At my discretion, lateness to class may be deemed an absence. Please be on time (subject to snow emergencies) and remain in the classroom during the entire class period unless illness requires that you leave.

Technology Policy

You may use laptop computers or other electronic devices in class to take notes and access course related materials. 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.

GRADES

Subject to the next two paragraphs, your grade in the course will be based on a written final exam. That exam will be a three hour, closed book, self-scheduled exam.

However, grades may be adjusted upwards by one grade increment (e.g., from a C+ to a B-) for significant contributions to classroom discussion. These entail contributions beyond mere apparent good preparation. To warrant consideration for upwards adjustment, such contributions must reflect significant thought about the assigned materials. Extensive contributions are not the equivalent of significant contributions (and can on occasion be the opposite).

The right is also reserved to reduce a student's final grade by one grade increment (e.g., from a B- to a C+) for repetitious apparent lack of preparation for classroom recitation and discussion. Failure to complete the mandatory TWEN exercise, noted below, may also warrant such a reduction.

MANDATORY TWEN ASSIGNMENT

I will be using TWEN ("The West Education Network") as part of the course. To assure that everyone has at least some experience with TWEN (and for another purpose that will become evident later in the course), I will require, during the three weeks of the semester (that is, by September 10), that each class member post on TWEN a one or two paragraph review of a recent movie or television program, a book recently read, or of a restaurant you have recently visited (or anything else you deem "reviewable").

ASSIGNMENTS

For our first class on August 20, read and prepare to discuss the materials in Chapter 1, and all of the material before *Kansas v. Alston* in Chapter 2.A. (Pages 1-22 of the materials). I anticipate that the assignment for Monday, August 25 will be the materials up to Chapter 2.C. (Through page 52 of the materials). Subsequent assignments will be made at the end of each class, and will also be posted on TWEN.

Below is a table of contents for the course materials.

CASES AND MATERIALS ON MASS MEDIA LAW
JAMES R. PIELEMEIER
HAMLIN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW
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