

Tompkins Cortland Community College
Master Course Syllabus

Course Discipline and Number: COMM 225

Year: 2024-2025

Course Title: Communication Law and Ethics

Credit Hours: 3

I. Course Description:

This course introduces students to communication law, with an emphasis on First Amendment issues, libel, privacy, confidentiality, and access to information. The ethics section is designed to help students to think critically, solve problems, and understand the consequences of what they will be doing in the "working world". Prerequisites: Prior completion of, or concurrent enrollment in, ENGL 101. 3 Cr. (3 Lec.) Spring semester.

II. Additional Course Information:

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| 1. This is a required course for students in the Communication and Media Arts: Broadcast Journalism A.S. and Broadcast Production – Radio Concentration and Television Concentration A.A.S degree programs. |
| 2. This is an upper-level critical thinking course which may appeal to anyone interested in the law, journalism, or ethics. |

III. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

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| 1. Research and analyze data to think critically, creatively, and independently to solve problems and reach conclusions. |
| 2. Explain the legal and moral implications of reporting and the duties of journalists in society by choosing to act professionally and by conducting oneself by the standards of practice outlined by the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics. |
| 3. Express themselves clearly using college-level verbal, presentation, and written skills required by the profession. |

IV. Tompkins Cortland General Education Goals & SUNY Competencies

☒ Critical thinking

Films and media projects often address social issues, and/or can cause social unrest. Students will discuss the role moving images and journalists have in society. They will be expected to participate in critical analytical discussions in the class room.

☒ Social/Global Awareness

Students are encouraged to show the diversity represented in the college community and the surrounding area. They are also encouraged to explore personal growth and re-think stereotyping through video and audio presentations produced around the world.

☒ Information Management

Students will be working with computers using basic and more advanced research to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of sources.

V. Essential Topics/Themes

1. Legal system overview
2. First Amendment
3. Protection of sources
4. Torts
5. Copyright/Trademark
6. Ethics foundations and principles
7. Truth and honesty in media communications
8. Confidentiality and the public interest
9. Morally offensive content
10. Economic pressures and social responsibility
11. Conflicts of interest
12. The media and antisocial behavior
13. Media content and juveniles

VI. Methods of Assessment/Evaluation

Method	% Course Grade
1. Mid-term and final	25 -35%
2. Final research paper	25 -35%
3. Quizzes and tests	15 -25%
4. Rough draft and weekly research assignments	15 -25%

VII. Texts: Required

1. Zelezný, John D. <i>Communications Law: Liberties, Restraints, and the Modern Media</i> . 6th ed. Wadsworth.
2. Day, Louis Alvin. <i>Ethics in Media Communications: Cases and Controversies</i> . Current edition. Wadsworth.

Editions listed are current as of date of syllabus. More recent editions may be used.

VIII. Bibliography of Supplemental Materials

1. Dodge, Diane Trister. <i>The Creative Curriculum</i> . Latest edition. Teaching Strategies, Inc., Washington D.C
3. Leslie, Larry F. <i>Mass Communication Ethics: Decision Making in Post Modern Culture</i> . 2000, Houghton Mifflin Publishers, Boston.
4. Carter, T. Barton, Franklin, Marc A. and Jay B. Wright. <i>The First Amendment and the Fourth Estate: The Law of Mass Media</i> . 12th ed., 2016.
5. Wright, Jay B. Professor. <i>COM 505: Communications Law for Journalists</i> . Fall 1997, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY.

IX. Other Learning Resources

Audiovisual None specified
Electronic None specified
Other None specified

Attendance Policy: *To maintain good grades, regular attendance in class is necessary. Absence from class is considered a serious matter and absence never excuses a student from class work. It is the responsibility of all instructors to distribute reasonable attendance policies in writing during the first week of class. Students are required to comply with the attendance policy set by each of their instructors. Students are not penalized if they are unable to attend classes or participate in exams on particular days because of religious beliefs, in accordance with Chapter 161, Section 224-a of the Education Law of the State of New York. Students who plan to be absent from classroom activity for religious reasons should discuss the absence in advance with their instructors. See college catalog for more information.*

Services for Students with Disabilities: *It is the College's policy to provide, on an individual basis, appropriate academic adjustments for students with disabilities, which may affect their ability to fully participate in program or course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Coordinator of Access and Equity Services, to discuss their particular need for accommodations. All course materials are available in alternate formats upon request.*

Academic Integrity: *Every student at Tompkins Cortland Community College is expected to act in an academically honest fashion in all aspects of his or her academic work: in writing papers and reports, in taking examinations, in performing laboratory experiments and reporting the results, in clinical and cooperative learning experiences, and in attending to paperwork such as registration forms. Any written work submitted by a student must be his or her own. If the student uses the words or ideas of someone else, he or she must cite the source by such means as a footnote. Our guiding principle is that any honest evaluation of a student's performance must be based on that student's work. Any action taken by a student that would result in misrepresentation of someone else's work or actions as the student's own — such as cheating on a test, submitting for credit a paper written by another person, or forging an advisor's signature — is intellectually dishonest and deserving of censure.*

Several degree programs offer student learning opportunities (such as internships, field work, and clinical experiences) outside the standard classroom setting. As part of the learning process, students must understand and engage in conduct that adheres to principles guiding employment within the professional workplace. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, academic integrity, accountability, reliability, respect, use of appropriate language and dress, civility, professional ethics, honesty, and trustworthiness. Disciplinary action may be initiated for inappropriate conduct occurring while participating in any course-related project or event.