

MCOM 3318 – Media Law and Ethics
T/Th: 9:30 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.
Online Synchronous Course – Zoom Attendance Required
Instructor: Anita Brown
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Office: CAS 223
Office Hours: MWF 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description: Media Law and Ethics includes the study of the major areas of media law, including the First Amendment, libel, privacy, regulation of broadcast media and advertising, and free press-fair trial. This course also looks at the ethical issues relating to mass media, including ethical foundations, censorship, conflict of interest, truth telling, institutional pressures, persuasion in advertising and public relations, social justice, privacy, and entertainment.

Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Competency: Analysis and Systematic Inquiry

- a. Demonstrate an understanding of and be able to apply the First Amendment and other legal principles for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- b. Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and issues for public relations/integrated communication and/or multimedia journalism.
- c. Distinguish between legal rules and ethical guidelines through readings, discussions, journal assignments, and other written assignments.
- d. Knowledgeable in the areas of law that apply to media and demonstrate this knowledge through written examinations and papers.
- e. Effectively analyze media issues for legal and ethical applications through readings, examinations, discussions, and written assignments.
- f. Apply critical thinking skills in class and group discussions and written assignments.

Important Covid-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories

Students are required to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth, and follow social distancing guidelines, at all times in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories), as specified by UT Tyler’s precautionary information and Covid guidelines. The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher-than-normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home and may join the class remotely. Students who have difficulty adhering to the Covid-19 safety policies for health

reasons are also encouraged to join the class remotely. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Course Requirements

1. Textbooks

- a. **Mass Media Law, 21st edition** – Clay Calvert, Dan V. Kozlowski, and Derigan Silver; ISBN: 9781260514513
- b. **Media Ethics, 10th edition** – Clifford G. Christians, et. Al.; ISBN: 9781260514513

2. Software/Technology

- a. **Zoom account** – utilized for class meetings.
- b. **Computer or phone with a camera and microphone:** You may use a virtual background if you desire and you can use your phone if you do not have a camera/microphone on your computer but having your camera on shows me that you are in attendance. If you do not utilize your camera during classes, you will be considered absent.

Evaluation and Grade Calculation –

Group	Percentage of Final Grade
Assignments	40%
Ethics papers (3)	30%
Exams	30%

Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

Class Policies and Expectations

1. Classroom Policies and Expectations

- A. Students, faculty, staff, and visitors are required to wear face coverings inside university buildings. (UT Tyler Reboot Policy)
 1. Accommodations are available for individuals with religious, medical, or other concerns, which will be processed through the Office of Human Resources (faculty and staff) and the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources (students).
- B. Social distancing measures must be followed in the classroom.

1. Students that are attending face-to-face meetings may not sit next to each other and must maintain appropriate distances.
- C. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.
- D. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also have to give effort outside of class.
- E. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
 1. Given the nature and content of this course, there are times that we will discuss current events and politics. There is a strong possibility that you will disagree with something someone says at some point in the semester. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with.
- F. The use of cellphones, tablets, or other device use during class times is not allowed unless the need is specified by me (i.e., during an activity). You are not allowed to use cellphones for note taking, check social media, view/work on material for another course, or simply browse the internet during class times.
 1. I understand emergencies and the need to take a call or text. If this must happen, be discreet, do not disturb others, do not let it get in the way of your learning, and DO NOT abuse this.
- G. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.
 1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.
- H. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester... getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor... talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.
- I. Hold me to the same standards and expectations that I hold you to.

2. Attendance Policy

- A. Students are expected to attend class and participate. Consistently missing classes can often result in lowered grades on assignments and tests due to students missing important information during class times. This is an online course, but there are still synchronous lectures that will take place and you are expected to attend each lecture. Additionally, lectures do not just simply restate what the text says – it goes beyond that and provides important information and insight into the material from the professor and classmates. For this course, you have **three days**

that you can miss without explanation. **Each unexcused absence after this will result in your final grade being lowered by 5% for each absence.**

- i. Exceptions to this policy include illness supported by a doctor's note, a school sponsored event that the student is required to attend and has given prior notice for, religious observances that the student has given prior notice for, active military service, a death in your family, or an emergency that can be documented. Additional exceptions will be handled on a case-by-case basis and must be discussed with me. For school sponsored events and religious observations, notice must be given by the second week of classes.
 - ii. Attendance will be taken during each meeting.
 - iii. Work IS NOT an excusable reason to miss class. You should ensure that your employer knows when you need to be in class.**
 - iv. All lectures will be recorded via Zoom and will only be made available to students who were in attendance and need the recording to study or for those students that have an exception listed above.
 - v. If you consistently arrive 15 or more minutes late or leave 15 or more minutes early, you will begin to be considered absent each occurrence. You will be alerted if you are close to beginning to obtain absences due to late arrival or early departure.
- B. See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. Be familiar with the university's drop policy. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by the second course meeting.

3. Assignment Policies

- A. Assignments will be given throughout the semester. Students are responsible for all course materials, including, but not limited to, class lectures, handouts, links, and reading assignments.
- B. Assignments do have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. You will need to submit each assignment before the due date and time.
- C. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. Spelling, grammar, and neatness count and you will lose points on assignments if your submissions are not edited.
- F. You are required to utilize APA format for any assignment that requires the utilization of outside sources.
- G. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC or .DOCX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.

- H. For many assignments, **not all**, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a point per day deduction. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions.
- I. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule and an assignment list, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, and each due date will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.
- J. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker’s or writer’s indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail the assignment, risk failing the course, and be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

University Policies

Course Withdrawal: The last date to withdraw from classes without penalty is **March 29, 2021**.

A. UT Tyler Honor Code:

- 1. Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:
<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

B. Campus Carry:

- 1. We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

C. UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University:

- 1. All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all

members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

D. Academic Honesty Policy: Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker’s or writer’s indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail this class and be subject to academic and disciplinary action. (See next section for University Policy)

E. Student Standards of Academic Conduct

1. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

a) “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) copying from another student’s test paper;
- (2) using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- (3) failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- (4) possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- (5) using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- (6) collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;

- (7) discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 - (8) divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
 - (9) substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - (10) paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - (11) falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - (12) taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - (13) misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- b) “Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the submission of it as one’s own academic work offered for credit.
 - c) “Collusion” includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
 - d) All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.
- F. The U-T Tyler Writing Center provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: BUS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

G. Recording of Class Sessions

1. Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

H. Disability/Accessibility Services:

1. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application.
2. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices> , the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.
3. The University of Texas at Tyler has a continuing commitment to providing reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Like so many things this Fall, the need for accommodations and the process for arranging them may be altered by the COVID-19 changes we are experiencing and the safety protocols currently in place. Students with disabilities who may need accommodation(s) in order to fully participate in this class are urged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources Office (SAR) as soon as possible, to explore what arrangements need to be made to ensure access. During the Fall 2020 semester, SAR will be conducting all appointments via ZOOM. If you have a disability, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student Application. For more information, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices> or call 903.566.7079.

I. Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:

1. Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the Census Date is Jan. 25th) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at

<http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

2. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.
3. The Census Date (Jan. 25th) is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:
 - a) Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
 - b) Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
 - c) Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
 - d) Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
 - e) Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

J. State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:

1. Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).
2. Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

K. Student Absence due to Religious Observance:

1. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

L. Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities:

1. If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the

date of the planned absence. At that time, the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

M. Social Security and FERPA Statement:

1. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

N. Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

1. Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

O. UT Tyler Resources for Students:

1. UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu, CAS 212
2. UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu, LIB 401
3. UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resources (903.566.7079), saroffice@uttyler.edu, UC 3150
4. UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.5746)
5. University Health Clinic (903.939.7870)
6. The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.

