

University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information & Media Studies
Winter 2019 -- MJCOM 9105
Information & Media Law

Instructor: Dr. Samuel E. Trosow strosow@uwo.ca
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Class Meets: Monday 9:30am-12:20 pm, Jan 7 through April 8, no class Feb 18th

Office Hours: [tba] & by appointment

Class e-mail list: fims-mmjc-9105@uwo.ca

Description: This course introduces students to the legal and policy environment affecting the fields of journalism, communications and the media with an emphasis on the legal rights and obligations of journalists and others engaged in the information/ communications fields. After a general introduction to the Canadian legal system; selected legal topics will be examined including freedom of expression, defamation, privacy, copyright, broadcasting & telecommunications regulation, and other emerging issues.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this course, students will:

1. Understand the fundamental components of the Canadian legal system including the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, federal and provincial legislation and case law;
2. Become familiar with the vocabulary, structure and logic of judicial decisions, statutes and other legal documents;
3. Develop an understanding of selected areas of the law that are relevant to the field of journalism and communications, including copyright, privacy, defamation, freedom of expression, and broadcasting & telecommunication regulation;
4. Be prepared to write critically and with authority about emerging legal issues and information/communication policy developments;
5. Understand the relationship between technological developments and changes in the legal/regulatory environment;
6. Understand the legal rights and obligations of journalists, media organizations, consumers and other stakeholders.

Readings: There is no set textbook for this course. The main readings will be cases and statutes (online at <http://canlii.org>). Other supplemental readings will be on reserve at the GRC, available online, or distributed in class. *Canadian Copyright: A Citizen's Guide* (2nd ed, 2013 by Laura Murray and Samuel Trosow, on reserve at the GRC) is recommended for the Copyright segment.

Assessment:**Case Review (10%)**

You will be assigned a judicial decision from a Canadian Court and asked to write a review/analysis of the case (approx. 4-5 pages). This assignment will be completed early in the term; further details and specifications will be provided.

Analytical Essays (45%)

You will be asked to write two formal essays (approx 10-12 pages each) on questions/topics to be circulated. The first essay (20%) will be due midway through the term, the second (25%) will be due at the end of the term. Further details and specifications will be provided.

Quizzes (3 @ 10%)

You will take 4 quizzes during the term (the lowest grade will be dropped - make-ups will not be held, if you miss a quiz it will count as your lowest grade that will be dropped).

Class Participation 15%

Attendance is mandatory and the active participation of every student is critical. The flow of the class discussion will be student-centered and you are encouraged to engage in your own research about current topics and bring materials to the attention of the class. You can also use the class e-mail list to share information. If you are unable to attend class, you must let the instructor know in advance. It is your responsibility to catch up on any work missed, and to obtain handouts and notes from a classmate.

Announcements about upcoming readings and assignments, etc. will be made during class time.

Please limit your use of electronic devices to purposes directly related to the class discussion. Please turn off your cell phones ringers and refrain from checking e-mails and texts while class is in session.

Late assignments

Due dates for all assignments will be strictly enforced. Unless an extension has been authorized by the instructor in writing PRIOR to the due date, assignments will be subject to a penalty of 5 points for each day (or portion of a day). Students who have obtained academic accommodation must still inform the instructor of the need for any extension.

MMJC Grading Scale

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mmjc/grading_scale.html

Other Course Policies:

Statement on Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

FIMS Code of Conduct

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/policiesprocedures/code_of_conduct.html

Academic Appeals

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/policiesprocedures/academic_appeals.html

Class Attendance: The FIMS class attendance policy will be strictly enforced.

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mmjc/attendance_requirements.html

Course Incompletes: See policy at

http://intranet.fims.uwo.ca/graduate/academic_programs/mmjc/incompletes.html

Support Services: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a list of options about how to obtain help.

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. <http://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>
See Academic Calendar.

Medical Accommodation For University policy on accommodation for medical illness, see: www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf
Student Medical Certificate (SMC): studentservices.uwo.ca under the Medical Documentation heading
Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. It will be the Dean's Office that will determine if accommodation is warranted. For work worth less than 10% of the final grade, the instructor will consider requests for academic accommodation on medical grounds made in a timely manner in writing or by appointment in office hours. Such requests need not be accompanied by documentation. The instructor may, however, decide to require documentation be submitted to the appropriate Academic Counselling office. Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons. All documentation must be

submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty. Please note, you should not send confidential medical information to the Instructor.

Compassionate Accommodation Academic accommodation may be given to students on compassionate grounds. The situations for which compassionate accommodation can be given must be serious, including significant events such as death in the immediate family, trauma (fire, robbery, harassment, muggings, car accidents, etc.) or emergency situations. Documentation is required. If a member of your immediate family is seriously ill, obtain a medical certificate from the family member's physician and submit the documentation to your Academic Counsellor. If you have been involved in a severe accident, fire or some other exceptional crises, obtain a copy of the police report or be prepared to provide the necessary documentation upon request.

Bereavement Generally, for deaths within a student's immediate family (parents, guardians, caregivers, siblings, spouses), bereavement leave is granted, upon provision of documentation. For deaths within a student's extended family, academic accommodation is given for one to three days, upon provision of documentation. Students seeking additional bereavement leave for other reasons should contact their Academic Counsellors, and provide valid documentation.