



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY  
THURGOOD MARSHALL SCHOOL *of* LAW

# COMMUNICATIONS LAW

LAW 714 – SECTION 1

FALL 2017

PROFESSOR

**ELSA RANSOM**

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## **THE PROFESSOR**

**NAME:** Elsa Ransom

**TELEPHONE:** 713-313-1047

**EMAIL:** eransom@tmslaw.tsu.edu

**LOCATION:** 231L

**OFFICE HOURS:** MWF  
1:00-2:00 PM  
(All other times by appointment only)

**NOTE FROM THE PROFESSOR:**

Appointments may be arranged by calling the office number listed above

## COURSE BOOKS & MATERIAL

Required Text: Marc A. Franklin, David A. Anderson and Lyrissa B. Lidsky, Amy Gajda. *Media Law: Cases and Materials*. 9th ed., Foundation Press (2016).

Supplemental reading including cases to be assigned by the instructor.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVE

### DESCRIPTION:

This class will examine tort liability arising from communications, especially mass media and other public communications. This includes “communications” torts, such as defamation, invasion of privacy, infringement of the right of publicity and the application to communications of economic torts, negligence and other theories of tort liability.

### OBJECTIVE:

To assist the student in developing an understanding of the fundamental principles of Media Law through study and analysis of cases, regulations and other relevant materials as well as through problem-solving exercises

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, the student should have gained (1) knowledge of the principal issues of the field and how the courts have addressed them and (2) the ability to employ recognized analytical strategies for resolving legal issues at the center of both traditional and new media.

## GRADING

**Grading Criteria:** Mid-semester Examination, 30%; Final Examination, 70%. Excessive absences may impact grade in accordance with the law school’s Rules of Matriculation.



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## ACCOMMODATIONS

If you require special accommodations, please fill out the necessary forms with the Dean's office. Your application and documentation will remain confidential. Your prompt attention will allow the law school to accommodate you, as soon as it has been made aware of your situation.

Please see:

[http://www.tsulaw.edu/student\\_affairs/docs/2011-2012AccommodationsHandbook.pdf](http://www.tsulaw.edu/student_affairs/docs/2011-2012AccommodationsHandbook.pdf)

## PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE & PROFESSIONALISM

### ATTENDANCE:

#### Course Requirements:

- a. Class attendance in accordance with the law school's Rules of Matriculation.
- b. Class preparation, i.e., completion of specified reading and any other assignments prior to each class meeting.
- c. Class participation in discussion of assigned reading and problems.
- d. Mid-semester examination.
- e. Final examination, date and time TBA.



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ACADEMIC CALENDAR 2017 – 2018

**FALL SEMESTER 2016 (SEVENTY DAYS OF CLASSES)**

Orientation	Monday-Friday	August 14-18, 2017
<b>First Day of Class</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>August 21, 2017</b>
Last Day to ADD/DROP	Friday	August 25, 2017
<b>Labor Day (NO CLASSES)</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>September 4, 2017</b>
<i>Purge of all unpaid course selections</i>	Thursday	September 20, 2017
Mid Term Examinations	Mon – Fri	October 16-20, 2017
<b>VETERANS DAY (NO CLASSES)</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>November 10, 2017 (tentative)</b>
<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	<b>Thurs – Fri</b>	<b>November 23-24, 2017</b>
Last Day of Classes	Thursday	November 30, 2017
Last Day to Drop a Class	Thursday	November 30, 2017
First Year Professors' Grades due	Thursday	November 30, 2017
Reading Period (NO CLASS)	Friday - Sunday	December 1-3, 2017
Final Examinations	Mon –Fri	December 4 -Dec. 15, 2017
Commencement	Saturday	December 16, 2017

**SPRING SEMESTER 2018 (SEVENTY DAYS OF CLASSES)**

School Opens	Tuesday	January 2, 2018
First Day of Class	Monday	January 8, 2018
Last Day to ADD/DROP	Friday	January 12, 2018
<b>M L K Holiday (No Classes)</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>January 15, 2018</b>
<i>Purge of all unpaid course selections</i>	Wednesday	February 7, 2018
President's Day Holiday (No Classes)	Monday	February 19, 2018
Mid Term Examinations	Mon – Fri	March 5– 9, 2018
Spring Break	Mon – Fri	March 12 – 16, 2018
<b>Good Friday (No Classes)</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>March 30, 2018</b>
Last Day of Classes	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
Last Day to Drop a Class	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
First Year Professors' Grades due	Wednesday	April 25, 2018
Reading Period ( <b>No Classes</b> )	Thur. – Sun	April 26 - 29, 2018
Final Examinations	Mon- Fri	April 30 – May 11, 2018
Hooping Ceremony	Friday	May 11, 2018
Commencement	Saturday	May 12, 2018

Please note that the calendar events and /or dates are subject to change.

TMSLAW REGISTRAR  
Approved 5/31/2017



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**POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Please reference the Thurgood Marshall School of Law [Student Rules and Regulations Handbook](#).

## READING ASSIGNMENTS

**Reading Schedule** (Franklin/Anderson casebook reading assignments for the weeks noted).

<u>Week of:</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Casebook Chapter(s)</u>
8-20	Course Overview/The Foundations of Media Law/First Amendment Principles	1-2
8-27	Different Rules for Some Media	3
9-3 thru 9-10	Defamation Via Media	4
9-17 thru 9-24	Privacy Invasion Via Media	5
10-1	Liability for Emotional, Economic and Physical Harm	6
10-8 thru 10-15	Newsgathering Torts	8
10-22	Subpoenas and Searches	9
10-2 thru 11-5	Access to Information	10
11-12	Access to Judicial Proceedings	11
11-19	Recent/Current Developments in Media Law	Handout Materials
11-26	Review	

**Important Dates:**

**Mid-semester Examination: Monday, October 23, 2017**

**Final Examination: TBA**