

CMGT 566 SYLLABUS: SPRING 2008

Communications Law and New Technologies

Professor Tracy Westen, Classroom VKC 255

Classes: Tues., 6:30—9:20 PM; Jan. 15 – May 6, 2008

TW ANSC Office: ANSC 332-E (Tues. 5-6:00 PM, call first for appt.)

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Overview: “Communications Law and New Technologies” (Com 566) will study, discuss and debate the laws and policies shaping the new communications media, including cable television (CATV), Satellite Master Antenna Television (SMATV), Digital Television (DTV), Multiple Multipoint Distribution Service (MMDS or “wireless cable”), direct broadcast satellites (DBS), video over optical fiber, copyright, First Amendment and a rapidly expanding series of new issues involving the Internet (obscenity/indecency, libel, privacy, wireless access, file sharing, network neutrality, etc.). The course will give students an understanding of new communications technologies, the legal, policy and regulatory constraints under which these media have evolved and ways to think through and resolve future policy problems.

Readings: All formally assigned reading materials are contained in a two-volume course reader. Volume 1 of the Course Materials for Com 566 (“Communications Law and New Technologies”) will be available at the USC bookstore at the beginning of the course. Volume 2 will be made available midway through the course. Additional current reading material will be distributed at the beginning of each class.

Course Requirements: Class attendance, an optional take-home midterm and a final take-home exam.

Grading: If a student’s final exam grade is higher than that student’s midterm grade, then the midterm grade will not be counted, and the student will receive the final exam grade as the student’s final course grade. Otherwise, the midterm will count for one-third of the final grade, and the final exam will count for two-thirds of the final grade.

Schedule and Exams: Classes meet Tuesday evenings from 6:30 to 9:20 PM. The midterm is a take-home essay (approximately 5 pages), with a choice of questions. Students will have a week to complete this midterm. The final exam is a two-and-a-half hour in-class blue book exam, in which students will be asked to answer three (out of five or six) essay questions. Students will be given at several “potential final exam questions” a week before the exam. The final exam is open book and materials.

Attendance: Class attendance is necessary to complete this course successfully. The professor should be notified if it is necessary for a student to miss a class.

Office Hours: Generally 5-6:00 PM, Tuesdays; or otherwise by arrangement.

ASC Academic Integrity Policy: The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and may be dismissed from ASC.