

CMN228

Media Law and Ethics

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to unisc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

New information technologies continually spawn legal risks and present ethical challenges to professional communicators. A legal mistake - even if accidental - could cost millions of dollars. This course centres on developing an essential understanding of the laws affecting professional communicators, including defamation, contempt, copyright and privacy. The ethical frameworks that guide best professional practice are also thoroughly explored and tested. An understanding of both the legal and ethical areas equips future professional communicators to work more expertly and confidently.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	12 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 1	12 times

1.3. Course Topics

Ethical frameworks in communications professions, Australian legal system, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, freedoms and limitations, intellectual property, discrimination and censorship.

1.4. Mature Content

Adult themes

2. What level is this course?

200 Level (Developing)

Building on and expanding the scope of introductory knowledge and skills, developing breadth or depth and applying knowledge and skills in a new context. May require pre-requisites where discipline specific introductory knowledge or skills is necessary. Normally, undertaken in the second or third full-time year of an undergraduate programs.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Research an ethical problem affecting communications professionals and present decision based on ethical considerations.	Knowledgeable Ethical
2 Explain the legal system elements, structures and parameters as they apply to writing and publishing.	Knowledgeable Creative and critical thinker
3 Discuss, reflect on and apply lessons of significant relevant cases and legislation.	Knowledgeable Ethical
4 Demonstrate how to produce professional products that are legally sound.	Knowledgeable Empowered

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Principles and concepts of disciplines as laid out in the introductory creative industry courses.

5.5. Microcredential Information

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Formative online quizzes are part of the weekly content from Week 1.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Essay	Individual	25%	1000 words	Week 4	Online Assignment Submission with plagiarism check
All	2	Oral and Written Piece	Group	35%	10 minutes	Week 10	In Class
All	3	Examination - not Centrally Scheduled	Individual	40%	75 minutes	Week 12	Online Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Essay

GOAL:	Academic format. To reflect basic legal concepts and understanding of key principles as they apply to professional communicators.																
PRODUCT:	Essay																
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:																	
FORMAT:	You will write an essay on a provided topic developed from course content and directed research.																
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>demonstrated understanding of relevant legal issues;</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>correct selection of appropriate information;</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>clarity of expression;</td> <td>1 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>demonstration of correct essay style, punctuation, spelling and grammar.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	demonstrated understanding of relevant legal issues;	2	2	correct selection of appropriate information;	2	3	clarity of expression;	1 2	4	demonstration of correct essay style, punctuation, spelling and grammar.	4	
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2	correct selection of appropriate information;	2															
3	clarity of expression;	1 2															
4	demonstration of correct essay style, punctuation, spelling and grammar.	4															
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Information literacy																

All - Assessment Task 2: Oral ethics presentation

GOAL:	To enable you to demonstrate your understanding and apply ethics in professions that deal in public communications.										
PRODUCT:	Oral and Written Piece										
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:											
FORMAT:	Professional/industry format. In groups, you will give a presentation on an ethical scenario selected from a list. You will submit supporting written materials.										
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>No.</th> <th></th> <th>Learning Outcome assessed</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Research and apply professional ethics to workplace situations</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Demonstrate understanding of relevance of philosophy in professional decision-making</td> <td>3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Research and apply professional ethics to workplace situations	1	2	Demonstrate understanding of relevance of philosophy in professional decision-making	3	
No.		Learning Outcome assessed									
1	Research and apply professional ethics to workplace situations	1									
2	Demonstrate understanding of relevance of philosophy in professional decision-making	3									
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Collaboration, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy										

All - Assessment Task 3: Exam

GOAL:	To demonstrate your understanding of the content explored in this course.															
PRODUCT:	Examination - not Centrally Scheduled															
AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT:																
FORMAT:	Academic format. Questions will be drawn from all areas of the course.															
CRITERIA:	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>No.</th><th></th><th>Learning Outcome assessed</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>1</td><td>Reflect on laws that affect publication</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>Demonstrate understanding of parameters around privacy and publication</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>Demonstrate knowledge of key cases relevant to public communications</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>Correct selection of appropriate information and demonstrated understanding of legal issues</td><td>2</td></tr></tbody></table>	No.		Learning Outcome assessed	1	Reflect on laws that affect publication	2	2	Demonstrate understanding of parameters around privacy and publication	4	3	Demonstrate knowledge of key cases relevant to public communications	3	4	Correct selection of appropriate information and demonstrated understanding of legal issues	2
No.		Learning Outcome assessed														
1	Reflect on laws that affect publication	2														
2	Demonstrate understanding of parameters around privacy and publication	4														
3	Demonstrate knowledge of key cases relevant to public communications	3														
4	Correct selection of appropriate information and demonstrated understanding of legal issues	2														
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Problem solving, Organisation, Applying technologies, Information literacy															

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

Nil

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Health and safety risks for this course have been assessed as low. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.5. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.6. General Enquiries

For course-specific questions, contact your teaching staff or Course Coordinator.

For other enquiries or to access support, please contact Student Central:

- [UniSC Student Central](#)
- [UniSC Adelaide Student Central](#)