Course Description: In the Obama Administration’s first term, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) addressed the future of media in the 21st century by, among other things, producing a National Broadband Plan and new “Open Internet” rules. In the second term, the FCC is continuing to make the expansion of wireline and wireless broadband a priority by updating universal service policies, implementing “incentive” auctions to free up spectrum, and holding public workshops to analyze the transition to IP networks. This course will review the FCC’s major proceedings in these areas and debate the various policy proposals that are being offered by the FCC and others as solutions. Students will be graded based on class participation, assigned oral presentations, and several written essays due over the course of the semester.

Class Type and Prerequisites: This is a two credit writing course. There are no prerequisites required.

Class Format: Typically, class format will consist of a presentation by the professor combined with an interactive class discussion regarding the assigned reading materials for the class. Active class participation from all students is expected.

Class Attendance: Consistent with law school policy, regular and punctual attendance is required. Attendance will be taken for each class. If absence is unavoidable, prior arrangements must be made with the professor. Students should bring their laptops to each class session.

Readings: Most of the readings for this course will come from public documents available on the Internet. Reading assignments may range from 30-70 pages per class on average and will be posted on-line.

Written and Oral Assignments: Students will be required to submit two written essays on communications subjects of the students’ choice, based on materials covered in class and on outside research. Students will also be asked to prepare a PowerPoint presentation describing a communications topic of interest to share with the class. Students may choose different topics for their written and oral assignments, or different aspects of the same topic. A student’s overall grade will be based on the quality of the written essays and the PowerPoint presentation, as well as the thoughtfulness of the student's comments during class discussions. Class participation will count 10%; the oral presentation 20%; the first essay due mid-semester 30%; and the final essay due at the end of the semester 40%.

Honor Code: Students should take careful note of the Law School’s plagiarism policy and Honor Code in the course of preparing their assignments for this class. Students should also carefully proofread their essays and PowerPoint presentations before submission/presentation, as the presence of a significant number of typographical and/or grammatical errors will result in a lower grade.