Goals and Requirements:

This survey course will provide the student with a good working knowledge of the key laws, regulations, and policy issues affecting the communications industry. The communications industry has many facets ranging from wireline and wireless telephony to broadcasting and cable/satellite television, and is in constant flux due to competitive forces, technological changes, and social expectations. We will study the different regulatory regimes affecting these industries, and explore how market and political forces are constantly leading regulators and policy makers to reevaluate these regulations. Current topics such as the promotion of broadband internet access, universal service reform, indecency over the airwaves, and the effect of the internet on communications policy, will be covered.

Textbook:

Students must purchase the textbook, *Telecommunications Law and Policy*, 4th Ed., Benjamin & Speta (2014) (Carolina Academic Press), from the bookstore. **NOTE THAT THIS IS A NEW EDITION** – old editions of this textbook cannot substitute. (If this new edition is not available in the bookstore prior to the first class, the publisher will make the first few chapters available to students online.) There is an Index/Glossary and edited Statutory Appendix at the back of the textbook. You can also find the full Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the 1996 Telecommunications Act, at [http://www.steptoe.com/assets/attachments/4157.pdf](http://www.steptoe.com/assets/attachments/4157.pdf).

Classes:

Consistent with law school policy, regular and punctual class attendance is required (and is necessary for a good understanding of the course materials). Attendance will be taken for each class. If absence is unavoidable, prior arrangements must be made with the professor. It is recommended that students bring their laptops to each class session.

Grading:

A student's grade for the course will consist of his/her performance: i) on the Take Home Midterm Exam (25%); ii) on the three hour in-class Final Exam (65%); and iii) in class participation (10%). Students should take careful note of the Law School’s plagiarism policy and Honor Code in the course of completing their exams. Students should also carefully proofread their exams before submission as the presence of a significant number of typographical and/or grammatical errors will result in a lower grade.

Methods of Instruction:

Students will read on average approximately 20-45 pages of text for each class. Class will consist of approximately 50% lecture and 50% interactive discussion. Each class session, students should be prepared to discuss and advocate a viewpoint regarding the assigned reading materials. Active class participation from all students is expected.

Professor: See Professor Sockett’s Bio on TWEN.
## DRAFT SYLLABUS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

All readings are either from: i) the textbook, Telecommunications Law and Policy, 4th Ed., Benjamin & Speta (2014), published by Carolina Academic Press; or ii) additional assigned readings, as indicated below. **Please note that the textbook is a new edition**, scheduled to be published and available in December 2014. However, if this new edition is not available in the GMU Law Bookstore prior to the first class, the publisher will make the first few chapters available to students online.**

Please note that there is a Statutory Appendix, Index, and Glossary at the back of the textbook. You can also find the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the 1996 Telecommunications Act, at [http://www.steptoe.com/assets/attachments/4157.pdf](http://www.steptoe.com/assets/attachments/4157.pdf).

Weekly reading assignments range from approximately 30-75 pages per week. Feel free to read ahead as your schedule permits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (Mon)</td>
<td>Preface (pp. xxiii-xxiv); Chapter 1: Intro to Telecommunications Regulation (pp. 3-16); Chapter 2: Institutional Perspective -- the FCC (pp. 17-37).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (Wed)</td>
<td>Chapter 3: Reasons for Regulating the Spectrum (pp. 41-68).</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 (M)</td>
<td>Chapter 4: FCC “Zoning” of the Spectrum (pp. 69-81; 85-97; 104-111; 117-123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 (W)</td>
<td>Chapter 5: Structuring and Assigning Broadcast Licenses (pp. 125-146; 167-184).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 (M)</td>
<td>NO CLASS – MLK HOLIDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 (W)</td>
<td>[The following assignments will be adjusted once the new textbook arrives.] Chapter 8: Intro to Telephone Regulation (pp. 331-341); Chapter Nine: Regulating the Telephone Monopoly Predivestiture (pp. 343-349).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 (M)</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Broadcasting Public Trustee Obligations—Fairness Doctrine: (pp. 181-201).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 (W)</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Political Broadcasting Rules (pp. 201-214); Chapter 9: Breaking Up the Bell Monopoly(pp. 349-362)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
February:

2 (M)  
*Chapter 10: Telephone Rate Regulation and University Service pre 1996 Act* (pp. 363-374).

4 (W)  
*Chapter 11: Intro to Telecom Act of 1996* (pp. 385-398).

9 (M)  
*Chapter 12: Telecom Act of 1996 Provisions* (pp. 399-403; 416-418; 427-432)

11 (W)  
*Chapter 18: Universal Service After the 1996 Act*  (pp. 737-752 & 2013 Supp. Ch. 18 pp. 59-60 Notes 1,2, & 3) (optional reading Ch. 10 pp. 374-383)

16 (M)  
*Chapter 6: Indecent Broadcasts-Origins* (pp. 220-242)

18 (W)  

23 (M)  
*Chapter 6: TV Violence & Blocking* (pp. 262-274) TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM POSTED – DUE IN CLASS ON MARCH 4.

25 (W)  
*Chapter 7: Children’s Educational Television Rules* (pp. 275-296)

March:

2 (M)  
*Chapter 6: Digital Television* (pp. 297-327)

4 (W)  
*Comparing Broadcast Indecency with Cable, Telephone & Internet Indecency --  Chapter 15: Cable Indecency* (pp. 533-534; 550-562); *Chapter 20: Telephone Indecency* (pp. 831-840) & *Internet Indecency* (pp. 841-861) MIDTERM EXAM DUE IN CLASS TODAY

9 (M)  
NO CLASS – GMU LAW SPRING BREAK

11 (W)  
NO CLASS – GMU LAW SPRING BREAK

16 (M)  
*Chapter 13 -- Cable Television: Foundations:* (pp. 435-452; 456-457; 461-469).

18 (W)  
*Chapter 14 -- Cable Television Must Carry Rules:* (pp. 497-525)

23 (M)  
*Cable, PEG, and Leased Access – Excerpts from Chapters 13, 14, 15, & 16:* (pp.457-461; 534-550); *Additional Cable Issues* (pp. 529-531; 628-633).
25 (W)  

**MVPD Shared Content & Retransmission Consent Rules – Excerpts from Chapters 14 & 6:** (pp. 479-484; 488-497; Direct Broadcast Satellite Television: (pp. 484-487; 525-528; 214-220)

30 (M)  

**TBD: Possible Guest Lecture**

April:

1 (W)  

**TBD: Possible Guest Lecture**

6 (M)  

*Chapter 19 -- Regulatory Classification of Broadband Services:* (pp. 761-780)

8 (W)  

*Chapter 19 -- FCC Authority to Regulate Broadband:* (pp. 753-761; 795-816)

13 (M)  

*Chapter 17: FCC Antitrust Authority* (pp. 704-709); *Chapter 19: FCC Authority re VOIP & CALEA* (pp. 816--830)

15 (W)  

**Media Ownership Restrictions:** Please review the Media Ownership Rules Powerpoint posted on TWEN under “Course Materials” and pp. 1-12 of the FCC’s May 25, 2010 Quadrennial Regulatory Review of its Broadcast Ownership rules (which can be found at the FCC’s website under its Headlines or at [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-10-92A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-10-92A1.pdf)). (Additional optional reading about the FCC’s media ownership rules can be found in the textbook in Chapter 16 pp. 576-605)

20 (M)  

Last Class: Review Session for Final Exam

Thurs., May 1:  

Final 3:15 Hour Open Book Final Exam Starting at 12:00 p.m.