

# COMM 2024 MEDIA LAW AND ETHICS

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 101928

**Coordinator** Roger Dawkins (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Roger.Dawkins/>)

**Description** Media Law and Ethics focuses on the media and communication industries of public relations, journalism, advertising and media production, and examines issues including: the legal framework in which these creative communication industries operate, the role of ethics in decision-making in these industries, and the impact of regulation. It considers these issues in relation to their historical and philosophical contexts, and in terms of the contemporary context of digital networked media. This subject provides a foundation for professional practice in the Communication and Creative Industries key programs.

**School** Humanities & Comm Arts

**Discipline** Journalism

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 2 subject

**Equivalent Subjects** COMM 2010 - Communication Law and Ethics

## Restrictions

Successful completion of 60 credit points at Level 1 in currently enrolled program.

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. apply a thorough understanding of the legal framework in which the communication industries operate and the ethical context of decision-making in the media professions
2. explain the Australian legal system as it specifically relates to the key fields of professional communication practice
3. articulate historical and philosophical contexts to contemporary practices involving ethical judgments and decision-making
4. explain the impact of regulatory procedures upon the range of communication practice, and industry-specific solutions to legal and ethical concerns within media contexts
5. apply key research skills to legal and ethical issues in a media context

## Subject Content

1. Defamation, contempt and privacy laws
2. Fairness in research and reporting, including developing an awareness of anti-discrimination laws and other media guidelines as they apply to minority and/or vulnerable groups such as children and indigenous people
3. An overview of free speech issues, including the Freedom of Information Act
4. Understanding creators' rights, including copyright laws as they apply to the media professions

5. Contextualising journalism, advertising, public relations and media production pressures in contemporaneous terms
6. The legal framework for electronic communication such as the internet and email
7. Issues in the regulation and control of print, broadcast and electronic media
8. The professional codes of ethics that apply in all fields of communication practice

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Annotated Bibliography	600 words	15	N	Individual	N
Applied Project	Pitch: 500 words; Article: 700 words	30	N	Individual	N
Report	500 words	10	N	Individual	N
Professional Task	Product: 5 min/1500 words; Presentation	45	N	Group/ Individual	N
			5 min		

## Prescribed Texts

- Pearson, M. (2024). *The Communicator's Guide to Media Law and Ethics: A Handbook for Australian Professionals*. (1st ed.). England: Routledge.[https://uws.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/61UWSTSYD\\_INST/pcuckd/alma9928036070701571](https://uws.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/61UWSTSYD_INST/pcuckd/alma9928036070701571)

## Teaching Periods

### Autumn (2025)

#### Parramatta - Victoria Rd

##### On-site

**Subject Contact** Roger Dawkins (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Roger.Dawkins/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=COMM2024\\_25-AUT\\_PS\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=COMM2024_25-AUT_PS_1#subjects))

### Vietnam Session 2 (2025)

#### Vietnam

##### On-site

**Subject Contact** Roger Dawkins (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Roger.Dawkins/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=COMM2024\\_25-UT2\\_UE\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=COMM2024_25-UT2_UE_1#subjects))

### Sydney City Campus - Term 2 (2025)

#### Sydney City

##### On-site

**Subject Contact** Ming Diao (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Ming.Diao/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=COMM2024\\_25-SC2\\_SC\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=COMM2024_25-SC2_SC_1#subjects))

## **Sydney City Campus - Term 3 (2025)**

### **Sydney City**

#### **On-site**

**Subject Contact** Ming Diao (<https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Ming Diao/>)

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=COMM2024\\_25-SC3\\_SC\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=COMM2024_25-SC3_SC_1#subjects))