



LAWS8097

Media Law and Culture

Session 1, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2025

Macquarie Law School

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Disclaimer

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Adjunct Fellow

Harry Melkonian

Contact via iLearn

see iLearn

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to LLM or (Admission to JD and LAWS600 or LAWS8001)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

What principles should guide government policy towards the media? Given the pivotal role the media play in cultural production, should we favour tight regulation of media ownership and content, or are these better left to market forces? What meaning should we give to concepts such as freedom of expression, especially when it comes to issues such as hate speech and pornography? What role should the media play in a democracy, and how should we balance the rights and interests of the media against those of individuals, corporations and other institutions anxious to safeguard their privacy and reputation? This unit takes an international and comparative perspective on media law, asking how these questions have been and should be answered not only in Australia but also overseas. From fundamental principles to day-to-day legal restrictions on what people in different countries see and hear in their media, we examine how media law shapes and reflects national culture.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

ULO1: Demonstrate an advanced and integrated understanding of how Australia regulates important aspects of the media.

ULO2: Apply key and relevant aspects of Australian media regulation to resolve real or

hypothetical situations.

ULO3: Provide advice in relation to legal challenges encountered in the context of media regulation in Australia.

ULO4: Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different kinds of speech regulation as compared across at least two jurisdictions.

ULO5: Critically analyse the relevance of different theoretical frameworks as they apply to aspects of media law

General Assessment Information

All written assessments submitted electronically must be submitted through the link provided in iLearn. This unit will utilise Turnitin plagiarism detection software. Students should carefully check that they submit the correct file for an assessment, as re-submissions will not be accepted after the due date and time, including instances where students upload an incorrect file in error.

The design, moderation and feedback of all assessments is in accordance with the Macquarie University Assessment Procedure (link provided under 'Policies and Procedures' below).

Late Submission Policy

A maximum penalty of five (5) percentage points of the total possible marks will be applied per day to late submissions, for up to a maximum of seven calendar days. Tasks that have not been submitted within the maximum number of additional late days will receive a mark of zero. This provision does not apply to online exams or other assessment with a time limit of less than 24 hours.

Penalties for late submission will be applied consistently and equitably to all students enrolled in the unit. Where short-term, serious and unavoidable circumstances have affected their ability to submit an assessment task, a student must submit a formal application for Special Consideration as per the Special Consideration Policy. Students should not request an informal arrangement from their tutor, lecturer or Unit Convenor.

Where an application for Special Consideration is approved, and the outcome is an extension to the due date of a task, submissions that are received after the new due date will be subject to late penalties that are calculated from the new due date. This only applies where the outcome is an extension to the due date – see the Special Consideration Policy for a schedule of all possible outcomes.

Special Consideration

Students should submit applications for Special Consideration electronically via the Service Connect portal, along with the supporting documentation. Before submitting their applications, students should refer to the Special Consideration Policy (link provided under Policies and Procedures below).

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Professional Skills</u>	20%	No	Ongoing
<u>Research Essay</u>	40%	No	12/04/2025
<u>Professional advice</u>	40%	No	01/06/2025

Professional Skills

Assessment Type ¹: Practice-based task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 0 hours

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Students will develop essential legal professional skills through structured classroom activities such as oral advocacy, critical reasoning, strategic problem-solving, collaborative work, team leadership, mooting, simulated client consultations, legal presentations or demonstrations, doctrinal analysis and problem solving, and/or collaborative legal research. These activities are designed to develop students' professional capabilities including capacity to communicate legal concepts clearly and engage professionally with diverse audiences in diverse contexts.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an advanced and integrated understanding of how Australia regulates important aspects of the media.
- Apply key and relevant aspects of Australian media regulation to resolve real or hypothetical situations.
- Provide advice in relation to legal challenges encountered in the context of media regulation in Australia.
- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different kinds of speech regulation as compared across at least two jurisdictions.
- Critically analyse the relevance of different theoretical frameworks as they apply to aspects of media law

Research Essay

Assessment Type ¹: Essay

Indicative Time on Task ²: 17 hours

Due: **12/04/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will be asked to submit a research essay analysing topics in media law.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of different kinds of speech regulation as compared across at least two jurisdictions.
- Critically analyse the relevance of different theoretical frameworks as they apply to aspects of media law

Professional advice

Assessment Type ¹: Professional writing

Indicative Time on Task ²: 13 hours

Due: **01/06/2025**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will be asked to prepare professional advice, which may take the form of legal advice to a client or proposal for law reform.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate an advanced and integrated understanding of how Australia regulates important aspects of the media.
- Apply key and relevant aspects of Australian media regulation to resolve real or hypothetical situations.
- Provide advice in relation to legal challenges encountered in the context of media regulation in Australia.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

Delivery

Lectures: There will be 12 lectures, Weeks 1-12. The lectures will be recorded on ECHO with a goal having lectures available by the beginning of the appropriate week

Tutorials: Tutorials run from Weeks 2 - 13. Professional Skills grade will be based on tutorial performance

This unit is worth 10 credit points, which equates to 150 hours of work. Therefore, students should expect to commit an average of 10 hours per week to this unit, including all scheduled and unscheduled activities and preparing and executing the assessment tasks.

Resources

The required textbook is:

David Rolph, **Media Law 3rd ed** (Oxford University OPress 2022)

Students can purchase this textbook online.

Additional readings will be accessible through iLearn.

Students require access to a computer, internet with decent speed and a secure/reliable server. The iLearn page contains all Unit requirements and a weekly schedule for teaching, readings and tutorials. Information about all assessment tasks is also avail

Unit Schedule

Our goal is to learn law in a very contemporary context. While details are provided on iLearn, and everything is subject to change depending on current events. Here are some topics we will likely be dealing with:

- Freedom of Expression
- Restraints on Freedom of Expression - defamation, privacy, copyright, obscenity (whatever that means in the 21st Century), censorship, contempt of court and suppression
- Intellectual Property Issues (owning and using media content)
- Online Intermediary Liability in Australia - What's Happening?
- Online Privacy

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central \(https://policies.mq.edu.au\)](https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Workshops](#)
- [Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)

- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)
- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Changes from Previous Offering

As per University and departmental policy, students should not send emails to faculty members but should exclusively communicate through the iLearn communication facilities:

- Any questions about the unit content, classes or assessments should be posted in the discussion forum - not in private messaging. Please ensure you have read the Unit Guide and instructions on iLearn carefully before posting questions about textbooks or assessments. The unit convenor will check the forum regularly and will endeavour to respond to questions within 2 working days.

Unit information based on version 2025.03 of the **Handbook**