COURSE RATIONALE

Electronic communications networks and services, including telecommunications, broadcasting and digital communications services and applications are pervasive today. We use broadband internet services to connect with our friends, family, governments, and other parts of our local, national and global communities. So do terrorists, predators, hate mongers and political disrupters. An understanding of the legal and policy framework governing electronic communications will assist students to understand and deal with the legal issues faced by consumers, citizens, business and governments in today’s digital world. The course will provide working examples of the application of public administrative law and government policy in a key area of Canadian society.

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the legal and policy framework for electronic communications media that enable the digital information age. It focuses on the policy and regulatory frameworks for (1) telecommunications services, including telephone, cable TV, Internet access, mobile and fixed wireless and satellite services, (2) TV and radio broadcasting and other audio-visual content services including Internet video streaming services, and (3) digital platforms of various kinds. Issues related to competition policy, social harms and Canadian content in a globalized digital environment will be covered.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

The course will be taught by Mr. Intven, but generally includes guest lectures and debates (sometimes by videoconference) with leading experts on communications law and policy, senior representatives of relevant government and regulatory agencies, and/or industry and public interest group representatives. The majority of the 3-hour once-a-week sessions will be devoted to presentations made in an interactive format, with questions and comments encouraged.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Up to 70% of the marks for the course will be awarded for a research paper on a topic approved by the instructor and based on an approved outline. A list of suggested research paper topics will be circulated. With the express prior permission of the instructor, a limited number of students may be authorized to write and submit their research paper to fulfill the Faculty’s major research paper requirements. There will normally be one or more review sessions to discuss subject matter previously covered in the course. A short (3-5 page) summary will be produced by each student for the review sessions, on a topic assigned by the instructor. Up to 15% will be awarded for this summary. Up to 15% will be awarded for class participation that demonstrates an understanding of the required readings for the course. In some years, the research paper requirement will be replaced by preparation and presentation of a research and advocacy paper in an interactive mock-hearing format.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Hank Intven led the telecommunications practice of McCarthy Tétrault LLP, practising out of the firm’s Toronto office for over 27 years. He is a former Executive Director of Telecommunications at the CRTC, and in 2006 served as a member of the Canadian government’s Telecommunications Policy Review Panel. He is currently a member of the government’s Broadcasting and Telecommunications Legislative Review Panel. He has provided regulatory and business law advice in the communications field to companies, regulators, governments and others in Canada and over 25 other countries.

June 2019

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1 The information in this document is provided for course registration purposes only and is subject to change. More detailed course information about course content and evaluation will be provided upon the commencement of the course. Students seeking additional information about the course prior to its commencement may contact the instructor or, if no instructor is listed, the Manager, Academic and Students (lawmaass@uvic.ca).