

Florida First Amendment Lab

Law 6930 – CJC XXXX - 2 Credits

University of Florida Levin College of Law

Spring 2026

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Office Hours: TBD

The Florida First Amendment Lab is a hands-on, interdisciplinary program that provides non-partisan First Amendment analysis and education. This two-credit course combines legal research, journalism, and policy work by producing high quality written and multimedia commentary to help Floridians and Americans understand their First Amendment freedoms.

The First Amendment Lab will not engage in litigation. Instead, students work collaboratively to produce high-impact research, legislative analysis, explainers, and government transparency strategies—tools to protect and expand First Amendment freedoms in an era of fast news and rapid change. Projects will be devised by the instructors, in consultation with the students, based on three sources of need:

1. Direct requests from Florida lawmakers and residents who seek nonpartisan analysis
2. Requests from the Florida First Amendment Foundation based on the needs of the community it serves
3. Events in the news for which the instructors or students believe the public would benefit from objective and non-partisan free speech analysis

Typical written products will include:

- Nonpartisan First Amendment analyses of proposed legislation
- Nonpartisan analyses of high impact or newsworthy litigation
- Nonpartisan reports on First Amendment frontier topics (e.g. AI and First Amendment coverage)

- Explainers on rights or strategies for journalists (e.g. accessing public records, protest coverage, avoiding defamation risk)

Written work will feed into the class's production of podcasts and videocasts, which may subsequently be incorporated into public online outlets or the UF Law Youtube library.

Reading Materials. All required readings will be available on Canvas.

Grade Components. Your grade will be comprised of three components:

- Legal research (law students) or factual research (CJC students) [50%].
- Written communication [20%]
- Podcast/videocast work product [20%]
- Class participation [10%]

Course Objectives. By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Provide high quality assessments of legislation, executive orders, and other state actions that impact First Amendment rights and government transparency
2. Investigate facts related to the incidents, controversies, or government actions that raised First Amendment questions
3. Draft high-impact policy documents and public educational materials
4. Produce a high-quality podcast based on the written analyses and explainers developed in this class
5. Collaborate across disciplines
6. Practice and model constructive, civil debate

Class Periods:

Hour 1: Guest Lecture & Discussion

Each session opens with an expert-led conversation about a specific First Amendment topic. Guest speakers may include First Amendment scholars, investigative journalists, civil rights litigators, civil society organization staff members, and government transparency experts.

Example Guest Topics:

- Defamation law with Prof. Lyrissa Lidsky
- Social media addiction with Prof. Eugene Volokh or counsel in one of the many ongoing lawsuits
- Immigration and free speech with ACLU staff attorneys
- AI and free speech with U.S. or Florida congressional staff
- Privacy and free speech with Prof. Tom Haley
- New trends and problems with government transparency with Dr. Dave Cuillier
- Academic freedom with university general counsel
- Protest law and journalist safety with frontline reporters
- Free speech and health (mis)information with Prof. Zeve Sanderson (NYU)
- Free speech and national security with Prof. Jeff Kosseff
- The TikTok ban and cases with Carl Szabo (TikTok)

Hour 2: Lab Project Work or Podcast Production

In lab work, students will work in small teams to:

- Conduct factual investigations related to the designated project
- Conduct legal research and policy analyses
- Draft and edit documents to effectively communicate with the target audience

In podcast production, students will:

- Conduct interviews with the visiting experts
- Produce segments based on the FFAL written products (neutral commentary)
- Produce debate segments if/where students have differences of opinion about the legal or policy analyses of a particular issue

Outside of class, consistent with ABA requirements, students should expect to spend an average of 4.5 hours per week on research, writing, and preparation for podcast production.

UF LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW STANDARD SYLLABUS POLICIES:

Other information about UF Levin College of Law policies can be found at [this link](#).

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES:

Other information about UF academic policies and resources can be found at [this link](#).

SAMPLE MODULES

1	Intro, Writing Lab, Florida Legal Research Demo	CJC Prof. Andrew Selepak on production; Prof. Emily Jackson on Florida legal research
2	Protests, Right to Assembly, and Forum Analysis	ACLU staff attorney and a reporter
3	Defamation	Prof. Lyrissa Lidsky

4	Free Speech & Privacy	Prof. Tom Haley
5	Newsgathering and Access Rights	Frank Lomont and Dr. Dave Cuillier
6	Social Media and Content Moderation	Carl Szabo (TikTok)?
7	AI and Free Speech	U.S. or Florida congressional staff; Prof. Jane Bambauer
8	Social Media Addiction	Prof. Eugene Volokh, James Uthmeier, and/or counsel for Meta
9	TBD (Reserved)	
10	TBD (Reserved)	

11	TBD (Reserved)	
12	TBD (Reserved)	
13	TBD (Reserved)	

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the Law School. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Students are allowed 4 absences during the course of the semester. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are not recorded as absent if they come in late. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement will be dropped from the course. The law school's policy on attendance can be found [here](#).

COMPLIANCE WITH UF HONOR CODE:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Law Honor Code located [here](#). The UF Law Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so (which we have for your analysis memo!)

INFORMATION ON UF LAW GRADING POLICIES:

The Levin College of Law's mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College's website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The law school grading policy is available [here](#).

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

UF Law respects students' [observance of religious holidays](#).

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.
- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Assistant Dean Brian Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester. Students may access information about various resources on the UF Law Student Resources Canvas page, available at <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635>.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

RECORDINGS OF CLASS

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as

patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor and Student Conduct Code.

ABA OUT-OF-CLASS HOURS REQUIREMENTS: ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Each week, class meets for approximately 3 hours in length, requiring at least **6 hours of preparation** outside of class including reading the assigned materials, writing critical analyses, preparing for your debate.