



National Paralegal College

717 E Maryland Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85014-1561

Tel: 800 - 371 - 6105

Fax: 866-347-2744

e-mail: info@nationalparalegal.edu

Website: <http://nationalparalegal.edu>

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS LAW PLG-303-1403

Syllabus and Course Guide

The NPC Public Communications Law course meets 15 times over the course of the 9-week term in the NPC interactive classroom. Each session consists of 45 to 60 minutes of online lecture by the course instructor. After the lecture, students may ask questions and make comments on the material being studied.

There will be TWO alternative lecture times for this course:

2:00 PM Eastern Time – taught by Ellis Washington (ewashingtonnopc@gmail.com)

7:00 PM Eastern Time – taught by Eric Baime (ericb@nationalparalegal.edu)

You may come to either of these classes based on your own schedule and convenience. Attendance at either class (including answering the appropriate in-class quiz) will satisfy the weekly interaction requirement. You may switch back and forth between lecturers. Both classes will be recorded and may be viewed or downloaded at any time. There is no need to attend or listen to more than one section on a given day, as they will cover the same material.

This course will be assessed by the submission of:

- 5 written assignments
- 3 examinations

Unless an extension has been taken pursuant to the NPC Extensions Policy (see the end of this syllabus), all assignments and exams must be submitted by the course deadline which appears later in this syllabus. No extensions may be taken or granted unless the student has submitted one or more assignments or exams in advance of the original deadline. In addition, extensions are subject to grade penalties and are limited to no more than 30 days from the date of the original extension.

Please note that students are strongly encouraged to do their work as the course progresses rather than waiting for the days or weeks before the deadline to do all of their work. It is also critically important that students realize that:

1. *A grade of “Incomplete” is the same as an “F” and is a failing grade.*
2. *A grade of “Incomplete” will result in a reduction in the student’s grade point average.*
3. *Student may have to pay to re-take or replace a course for which a grade of “Incomplete” is assigned.*
4. *Two consecutive “Incompletes” may subject the student to dismissal from the college under NPC’s chronic incomplete policy.*
5. *Students with a GPA of under 2.0 are not eligible to receive federal financial aid and cannot graduate until their GPA is at or above 2.0.*

If a student is having trouble completing the course, the student is strongly encouraged to contact his or her student mentor or teacher as early as possible.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the role of the law in both protecting and limiting the media. The course looks at the First Amendment freedoms of speech and the press and how that impacts the government’s ability to regulate the media. Key concepts, such as prior restraint, obscenity, false advertising, election rules, etc., will be examined. We will look at federal regulation of the media and of private remedies people may have against the media regarding issues such as defamation and copyright infringement. The course will also look at public access to information and the rights afforded by the Freedom of Information Act.

INSTRUCTORS:

- Eric Baime (erich@nationalparalegal.edu)
- Ellis Washington (ewashingtonnpc@gmail.com)

Graders:

- Haskell Rosenfeld (assignments and interactions) (haskell@nationalparalegal.edu)
- Reena Green (exams) (reena@nationalparalegal.edu)

RECOMMENDED COURSE PREREQUISITE

- Constitutional Law

TEXT MESSAGE REMINDER OPTION

Students are given the option to subscribe to text message notifications for important notifications such as approaching deadlines, exam postings, class schedule changes, important developments in class materials, etc.

You do not have to opt in; it is entirely up to you. If you would like to opt in for text messages, please text “@PCL1403” (without the quotes) to 347-380-7720. You will only get these texts if you opt in and you must opt in separately for each course, so that you will not get unsolicited texts from classes you are not taking. There is no cost for this service, but depending on your texting plan, standard text messaging rates may apply.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

At the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Identify the administrative agencies that are involved in regulating the media and describe their roles in doing so.
- Explain how the First Amendment protects the media and allows the media the right to communicate news and ideas to the public.
- Describe the methods of prior restraint employed by government to stifle speech by the media and the extent to which these are allowed.
- Explain the elements of defamation and the extent to which the media is protected from defamation lawsuits by the First Amendment.
- Describe the various actions that constitute invasion of privacy, especially as it relates to the media broadcasting information about people or companies.
- Apply the copyright laws to determine whether a media’s usage of copyrighted material is an infringement or is protected under the fair use rule.
- Apply the trademark laws to determine whether a media’s usage of a company’s trademark is an infringement of the owner’s rights.
- Explain the extent to which political speech is protected and the limitations to which the government can subject free speech to protect the integrity of elections.
- Describe the manner in which the First Amendment protects commercial advertising.
- Research and apply the false and deceptive advertising rules that exist under federal law.
- Determine whether a communication is obscene and thus not protected by the First Amendment.
- Describe the extent and manner in which the broadcast of “indecent” material is limited under federal law.
- Explain the steps that judges may take against the media to limit the media’s ability to poison the jury pool in preparation for a trial.
- Describe the protections that are given to journalists under federal and state law that allow them to keep their sources confidential.
- Determine what government information can and cannot be obtained under the Freedom of Information Act and state equivalents.
- Seek information under the Freedom of Information Act.

TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

The textbook for this course is “**The Law of Public Communications**” by **Kent R. Middleton and William E. Lee, Ninth Edition**. It is published by Pearson Education, Inc.

ISBN-10: **0205913334**

ISBN-13: **978-0205913336**

The book may be purchased from the publisher or from any other source, such as Textbooks.com or Amazon. It is expected that each student will obtain a copy of the textbook prior to the beginning of the course.

Examples of where to obtain the textbook include:

Publisher:

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/product/Law-of-Public-Communication/9780205913336.page>

Amazon.com:

<http://www.amazon.com/Law-Public-Communication-9th-Edition/dp/0205913334/>

Textbooks.com:

<http://www.textbooks.com/Law-of-Public-Communication-9th-Edition/9780205913336/Middleton.php>

You can also order an “ebook” here, which also allows you to search any section of the book and so is especially handy when you need to look something up. It is also typically cheaper than the printed version.

<http://www.coursesmart.com/0205913334>

Unless otherwise noted, all reading assignments refer to the above-referenced textbook. Any additional materials assigned in this syllabus may be posted on the NPC site for reading or download. All statutes and regulations referenced in the text can be downloaded or viewed through Lexis.

All reading assignments should be completed prior to the corresponding lecture. Lecture slides and additional documents can be found on the “Documents and Slides” page on the NPC student website.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

At the outset of the course, five assignments will be posted on the “Assignments and Exams” page. The 5 assignments will cumulatively count for 40% of the student’s grade for the course.

Please compose your answers to assignments on your own computer, remembering to save your work frequently. Once your assignment is complete, please submit by uploading it pursuant to the directions on the “Assignments and Exams” page within the NPC student site. Assignments may be submitted as PDF files, Microsoft Word documents, Open Office documents or PowerPoint presentations.

Each submitted assignment will be graded on the following scale:

4 - Excellent

3 - Good

2 – Satisfactory

1 – Poor

0 – Not acceptable (must resubmit)

(Half-points may also be awarded in assignment grading.)

Please see the “Assignment Grading Rubric” (the next page of this syllabus) for more detailed information as to how assignments are graded and the key elements of assignments that instructors look for when grading assignments.

In addition to a grade, students will receive written feedback from the instructor on their assignments, where appropriate.

To the extent possible, it is recommended that students complete the assignments as the course proceeds rather than waiting until after the course ends.

Assignment Grading Rubric

Factor	4 (Excellent)	3 (Good)	2 (Satisfactory)	1 (Poor)	0 (no credit)
Thoroughness	Answered all questions in the exercise completely and in the appropriate order.	Answered all questions in the exercise but not completely and/or not in the appropriate order.	Answered most of the questions in the exercise but not completely and/or not in the appropriate order.	Did not answer many of the questions in the exercise but did make some reasonable effort to do so.	Made little or no reasonable effort to answer the questions posed in the assignment.
Demonstrated Understanding of the Assignment and has come to an appropriate conclusion	Response demonstrates a thorough understanding of the exercise and the student has justified and enunciated an appropriate conclusion.	Response demonstrates an understanding of the exercise and comes to a conclusion.	Response demonstrates some understanding of the exercise. The conclusion that the student comes to may not be appropriately justified by the rest of the essay.	Response demonstrates some understanding of the exercise but shows a high level of confusion on the part of the student. The student's conclusion, if any, is not supported by the rest of the essay.	Response demonstrates a very poor understanding of the subject matter presented by the assignment.
Documentation/ Legal research (note: For assignments, sources should be those obtained through legal research; for exam essays, legal principles learned in class or the courseware is sufficient.)	Student has cited at least two excellent sources and has applied them appropriately. Appropriate sources are documented and well cited and well integrated.	Student has cited one excellent source or two or more good sources but has missed at least one excellent source. Sources are integrated well in the assignment.	Student has cited appropriate sources but has missed the best available OR student has cited good sources but has done a poor job of integrating them.	Student has cited poor or inappropriate authorities or has failed to establish the relevance of the sources that he or she has cited.	Student has not cited any legal authorities or has cited authorities that are irrelevant.
Organization	Essay is organized very well; the reader can clearly understand where the essay is going at all points and a cohesive easy-to-follow argument is made in the essay. Separate paragraphs are used for separate ideas.	Essay is well organized. The essay is coherent, though may not flow freely. Different components of the essay are broken up appropriately.	Essay shows some level of organization, but is difficult to follow. The essay is not as focused as it should be. Essay may go back and forth between points without using new paragraphs.	Essay is poorly organized and is very difficult to follow. The student did not appropriately separate thoughts and did not properly organize the essay.	Student's essay is in chaos. There is no reasonable attempt to organize the essay coherently.
Critical Thinking and Analysis	Shows excellent critical thinking and analysis. The student was able to apply the cited law to the facts of the given case in a clear and convincing manner.	Shows good critical thinking and analysis. The student's points are well argued and well supported.	Shows adequate critical thinking and analysis. The student's points are supported by logic, but are not exceptionally convincing.	Shows minimal critical thinking and analysis. The student's arguments are weak and unconvincing.	Shows no effort at critical thinking or analysis. The student's points make no sense.

Credit may also be taken off for poor spelling or grammar.

EXAMINATIONS:

Examinations will be posted on the NPC website when indicated on the syllabus of the course. The examinations consist entirely of “short essay” questions. The 3 examinations will cumulatively count for 60% of the student’s course grade.

Examinations are non-cumulative; they cover only the material that was covered since the previous examination. The instructor will provide specific information regarding the content of each examination, as the examination time approaches.

All examinations are timed. A student may begin the examination any time after it is posted to the NPC website. Once begun, the examination must be completed within 4 hours.

Examinations will be graded on a conventional 0-100 scale. The number of points each question is worth is equal to 100 divided by the number of questions on the examination.

For each examination question, full credit will be awarded if the student:

- 1) Correctly identifies the legal issue(s) presented by the question
- 2) Applies the correct law to the legal issue(s) presented (note: full credit may also be awarded if the student’s answer comes to an “incorrect” conclusion if the student bases his or her analysis on correct law and supports his or her position in a convincing manner)
- 3) Presents his or her answer in a clear and understandable manner

The amount of partial credit to be awarded, if any, for an answer that is not complete and correct is at the discretion of the instructor. Instructors are instructed to award partial credit that is proportional to the level of knowledge and legal skill displayed by the student in answering the question.

The following factors are generally NOT taken into account in grading examinations:

Legal research: Although research is a key component of assignments, examinations are graded on the student’s knowledge of the legal concepts taught and do not require independent research.

Grammar and spelling (unless they impact the ability of the graded to understand the student’s answer): Although these are essential skills for a paralegal, examinations test legal knowledge and ability to apply the skills learned, not necessarily the ability to write professional legal memoranda (assignments test this skill). In addition, because exams are taken under time constraints, we would rather see the students spend their time spotting legal issues and applying applicable law than on proofreading answers for typos and grammar mistakes.

For more information on assignments and examinations, please see the *NPC Student Handbook*.

To the extent possible, it is recommend that students complete the exams as the course proceeds rather than waiting until after the course ends.

Early Assignment Submission Incentive Policy

NPC encourages students to submit their assignments and exams as early as possible. In order to facilitate early submissions, students are advised that in exchange for submitting assignments in the first six weeks of the course, they will be awarded the opportunity to re-do or fix up an assignment after it is graded in order to increase the grade.

The following limitations apply:

1. When resubmitting an assignment or exam, a student will only be able to increase their grade to a maximum of 3 or by one full point, whichever is greater. For example, if a student submits an assignment within the first six weeks of the course and receives a 1.5 or a 2.0, the student may make corrections suggested by the instructor and can potentially raise the grade to a maximum of 3. A student who initially receives a grade of 2.5 may raise the grade as high as 3.5 with a resubmission.
2. A student may exercise this option up to two (2) times per course.
3. Students are not guaranteed the maximum increase if their corrections do not merit such a change. A grader has the discretion to award a smaller or no increase if the student does not follow the graders feedback.

To resubmit an assignment under this policy, please contact the course grader.

NPC PLAGIARISM POLICY

All work done by NPC students on assignments, examinations and research projects is expected to be their own work. Quoting other sources as part of analyzing a subject is desirable and necessary in many cases. However, when other sources are quoted or used, they must be properly attributed to the original sources. This applies to direct quotes of sources and to paraphrasing other sources or using ideas obtained from other sources even if the exact text it not used.

Plagiarism means using the materials of others without appropriately citing the source and is an academic offence.

Under the NPC plagiarism policy, a student may not, as part of any assignment or exam submission:

- 1) Quote any text from any other source without:
 - a) putting quotation marks around the quotes material;
 - AND
 - b) appropriately citing the source of the quote.

2) Pass off the work of another as his or her own, even if the student does not directly quote from the other source.

Please note that the NPC plagiarism policy does not mean that you cannot quote language from the courseware, textbook or slides as part of an answer to a question on an exam. These are resources that are meant to be used on an exam when applied in an appropriate manner. However, quoting other sources without attribution or quoting the text, slides or courseware without attribution in an assignment is plagiarism.

For more information regarding the NPC Plagiarism Policy, penalties and due process rights where plagiarism is alleged, please see the NPC Plagiarism Policy at:

<http://nationalparalegal.edu/pages/Plagiarism%20Policy.pdf>

WEEKLY INTERACTION REQUIREMENT

To ensure that all students are involved and participating in the course as the course moves forward, each student enrolled in this course must, at least one during each week, either:

- 1) Attend a live lecture and take and pass a short quiz given during class
- OR
- 2) Submit at least one assignment
- OR
- 3) Take at least one examination
- OR
- 4) Answer a weekly “interaction” question or questions that will be posted on the “Assignments and Exams” page.

The weekly “interaction” question(s) will be simple and straightforward and will cover material covered in class that week. Answers to these questions should be short (typically 1-3 sentences) and to the point.

This student response (which is necessary only if the student does not attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week) will be graded on a pass/fail basis. The interaction questions will be posted no later than Monday of each week and must be answered on or before the following Monday.

The weekly interaction questions will be posted alongside the assignments. Students who do not attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week will be required to answer the questions presented. Students who did attend a live class or take an exam or submit an assignment in the given week may ignore the question.

Any student who does not fulfill this requirement during a given week will receive a reduction in his or her over-all grade of 2 percentage points from his or her over-all average.

Fulfilling the weekly interaction requirement is particularly important for students receiving financial aid. Federal regulations require the school to withdraw students who go 14 consecutive days without fulfilling an interaction requirement from financial aid and to return any outstanding financial aid money to the government unless the student interacts with the school prior to the time that the withdrawal is completed. If you are unable to fulfill a weekly interaction requirement, it is critical that you stay in contact with the school so that other arrangements can be made.

COURSE GRADES

The following formula will be used to calculate final grades

$$\text{Cumulative exam scores} + (\text{assignment points} \times 10) = \text{raw score}$$

Because exams are worth up to 100 points and assignments up to 4 points each, the maximum raw score is 500. 10 raw points (2% of the raw point total) are deducted for each missed weekly interaction. Extra credit may be available for certain in class activities as may be announced by the instructor.

The following conversion chart is then applied based on the total raw points you have earned:

>474	=	A+
445-474	=	A
420-444	=	A-
395-419	=	B+
365-394	=	B
340-364	=	B-
315-339	=	C+
285-314	=	C
260-284	=	C-
230-259	=	D
<230	=	F

OPTIONAL STUDY SESSIONS

In addition to the 15 classes listed below, instructors and/or graders will run 1 or 2 additional study sessions to discuss assignments and/or the course materials. Attendance and participation in at these sessions is optional and they will be recorded for those who cannot make it to the live sessions.

Please keep an eye on the course message boards to details as to when these will be held.

All examinations and assignments are due no later than Sunday, June 1, 2014 at 11:59 PM EASTERN TIME; that's EASTERN time. That means 8:59 PM Pacific time, 9:59 PM Mountain time, 10:59 PM Central time, etc.

Please see the end of this syllabus for a note on NPC course extensions policy!

Lecture and reading assignments schedule

CLASS ONE

Monday, March 3, 2014

In our opening class, we will discuss some of the legal background concepts that are critical to understanding government regulation of communications. We will discuss the sources of communications law, including the ultimate source, the First Amendment and case law interpreting it. We will discuss the roles of the legislature, the courts, the President and the administrative agencies in regulating communications. Finally, we will touch on some other introductory issues, such as remedies for “illegal” communications.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 1:

CLASS TWO

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

In class two, we will review (from Constitutional Law) the basics of the rules regarding the First Amendment’s guarantee of free speech. We will look at the differences between public forums and non-public forums and discuss when government regulations must meet strict scrutiny. We will also quickly look at the types of speech that are not protected and their rules. Finally, we will discuss the application of freedom of speech to a variety of people and entities other than individual adults engaging in politically motivated speech.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 2

CLASS THREE

Monday, March 10, 2014

In this class, we will focus on the important question of when it is proper for a court to enforce “prior restraint” against the publication of constitutionally protected speech. We will discuss why this is generally not allowed and the limited circumstances in which it is. In addition, we will focus on the distinction between prior restraint and post-publication punishment. Next, we will turn to certain types of restrictions on media outlets. Finally, we will discuss the rules that govern content-neutral restrictions on speech.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 3

CLASS FOUR

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Tonight we will begin our two part discussion of defamation. We will trace the common law elements of defamation and discuss the elements as they apply today. We will also discuss the history of defamation actions and how the principles developed are relevant to the media today. We will look at the famous New York Times v. Sullivan case and the “actual malice” rule. We will then apply that rule to cases where a media outlet is being sued for defamation.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 4: Pages 93-134

CLASS FIVE

Monday, March 17, 2014

In this class, we will continue our discussion of defamation. We will look at the requirement of falsity that usually applies when a media outlet is sued for defamation. We will also examine what constitutes a public figure, as that question is so important for purposes of applying the constitutional rules regarding defamation. Finally, we will spend quite a bit of time on defenses to defamation actions, including various privileges, especially as they pertain to reporters.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 4: Pages 134-175

Examination # 1 will be administered at this point

CLASS SIX

Wednesday, March 19, 2014

In this class, we will look at the invasion of privacy torts. We will look quickly at the elements of torts like misappropriation, intrusion, false light and trespass. We will focus more on their relationship with media outlets and the limits of the protections that exist for media outlets in their coverage of “newsworthy” stories. We will discuss some Constitutional, federal law and state law issues that relate to these torts as well.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 5

CLASS SEVEN

Monday, March 24, 2014

In this class, we will discuss another area of law very relevant to the media: that of intellectual property. We will briefly go over what a copyright is, how it is formed and the exceptions that allow people to use copyrighted materials. We will focus on the aspects of copyright law that are particularly relevant to newspapers, television stations and other media outlets. We will also discuss trademarks in a similar manner.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 6

CLASS EIGHT

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Tonight we will delve further into the free speech rights. We will look at the rules regarding elections and campaigning. We will also discuss the rights of companies (broadcast companies and others) to wage publicity campaigns and the limits on those rights. We will also look at the roles of Political Action Committees. Near the end of the class, we will discuss broadcasting rules and restrictions relating to elections and political issues, such as the Equal Opportunity Rule and the Fairness Doctrine.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 7

CLASS NINE

Monday, March 31, 2014

In this class we will focus on the rules of advertising and how they are affected by the First Amendment. We will first look at the Constitutional free speech restraints that there are on government regulation of advertising. Then, we will discuss false and deceptive advertising rules themselves. Finally, we will look at remedies that the government and other private parties have available to prevent or stop false or deceptive advertising.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 8: Pages 326-366

CLASS TEN

Wednesday, April 2, 2014

Tonight we will continue our discussion of advertising rules. We will discuss advertising of gambling and lotteries. Then we will look at other miscellaneous false advertising rules. Next, we will look at advertising rules as they apply to securities rules. We will look briefly at insider trading rules and some SEC rules regarding publicly traded companies, especially as they regard advertising to promote the trading of securities.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 8: Pages 366- 398

Examination # 2 will be administered at this point.

CLASS ELEVEN

Monday, April 7, 2014

In this class, we will focus on media dissemination of material that is “obscene” or “indecent.” We will look at the definition of obscenity and discuss the importance of a communication being classified as obscene. Next, we will look at the rules of regulation of communications that do not rise to the level of obscenity, but nevertheless are “indecent” and thus may be regulated to some extent. We will also look at various types of private sector self-regulation that exists in various media industries.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 9

CLASS TWELVE

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

Tonight we will discuss whether the media can be prevented from publicizing information that might disrupt the functioning of the judicial system and process. We will particularly look at the complex problem of “poisoning the jury pool” and the media’s role in doing so. We will look at various judicial remedies for this problem, including gag orders and sequestration. Finally, we will look at the question of whether journalists and/or video cameras have a right to have a place in the courtroom.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 10: Pages 454-476

CLASS THIRTEEN

Monday, April 14, 2014

Tonight, we will continue our discussion of the media and the judiciary. We will look at the ability of judges to control pre-trial publicity and the punishment media outlets can be subjected to for failing to abide by a judicial order. Next, we will turn to the ability of the public and the media to access judicial records. Finally, we will look at other rules regarding media access to trials and the contempt power that judges have in enforcing their orders to the media.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 10: Pages 476-509

SPRING BREAK!

CLASS FOURTEEN

Monday, April 28, 2014

Tonight we will turn to a very important and interesting aspect of communications law: the right of journalists to avoid naming their sources for quotes and stories. We will look at the common law position on these issues and then the seminal Supreme Court case of Branzburg v. Hayes where this issue was taken up by the Supreme Court. Then, we will look at the rules enacted by the federal and state legislatures to protect sources and how they operate in real-life situations.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 11

CLASS FIFTEEN

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

In our final class, we will look at the public's right to access government information. We will focus mainly on the Freedom of Information Act and its state equivalents. We will look at the requirements of the Act and its exceptions. In addition, we will look at other rules that require the government to produce information upon public demand. Finally, we will look at the federal and state rules that seek to allow the public to become an active part in government agency decision-making.

Assigned Reading:

Chapter 12

Examination # 3 will be administered at this point.

All examinations and assignments are due no later than June 1, 2014 at 11:59 PM EASTERN TIME; that's EASTERN time. That means 8:59 PM Pacific time, 9:59 PM Mountain time, 10:59 PM Central time, etc.

Please see the NPC EXTENSIONS POLICY below for details on extensions to complete your work.

NPC EXTENSIONS POLICY

1) Extensions that conform to the rules below may be requested from the “assignments and exams” page on the NPC student website.

2) No extensions are possible unless the student has first submitted at least one assignment or examination.

3) No extensions of more than thirty (30) days beyond the deadline are possible for any reason at all.

4) Requested extensions are granted automatically. It is not necessary to give any reason for the request. However, for each day of extension you request, you will be penalized 4 raw points (of 500 that determine your final grade - see page 8 of this syllabus). This accounts for 0.8% of your course grade, per day of extension. This is necessary to compensate for the advantage that students who take more time to do their work enjoy over those who complete their work on time. This also means that a short extension (e.g., a day or two) is unlikely to affect your grade, but a long extension (e.g., two weeks) is guaranteed to affect your grade.

5) The penalty referenced in Paragraph 4 may be waived by an instructor in extreme cases only. Extreme cases include circumstances beyond the control of the student that caused the student to be unable to complete work for *a significant period of time*. Foreseeable life circumstances such as being busy at work or at home, vacations, family occasions or power or internet outages lasting a few days, are foreseeable life circumstances. Extensions may be taken for these reasons (or, for that matter, for any reason at all), but the grade penalty will not be waived for anything short of a true, unforeseeable emergency.