

## **“CONGRESS, THE INTERNET AND TELECOM POLICY IN THE DIGITAL AGE”**

Course examines the myriad of critical issues faced by Congress as they attempt to rewrite the 1996 Act to deal with today’s digital marketplace

### ***COURSE SYLLABUS***

Summer 2006

### ***GENERAL INFORMATION***

GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Department: Master of Arts in Legislative Affairs

Course Title: Congress & the Internet and Telecom Policy

Course No: PSC224

Section: LH1

Meeting time: Tuesday & Thursday 6-8 p.m.

Dates: May 22 – June 29, 2006

Location: Hall of States

### ***INSTRUCTION INFORMATION***

Dr. Pepper English

Cell: 202-288-4845 Home: 540-775-1996

Email: [Drpepstone@aol.com](mailto:Drpepstone@aol.com)

***REQUIRED TEXT:*** *A Failure to Communicate: Reforming Public Policy in the Telecommunications Industry* by Stephen Pociask (can be bought used on Amazon)

Resources: Handouts will be distributed throughout the course to include legal briefs, articles, position papers and other assigned reading material. It is suggested that you keep these in a three-ring binder as information. Students are also expected to familiarize themselves with websites that are pertinent to the class.

### ***COURSE DESCRIPTION***

This course offers an extensive examination of the critical role assumed by Congress in establishing -- and continually influencing -- the nation’s telecommunications policy, in particular the landmark Telecommunications Act of 1996. Additionally, the course will examine the competitive and technological changes in the telecommunication marketplace over the past decade and the challenges they pose as Congress attempts to “modernize” the Act in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. As part of this examination, the course will explore:

- The legend and history of “Ma Bell” and the 1984 court-ordered divestiture that led to the formation of the seven Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCS)
- History of the Internet, was it “invented” by Al Gore?
- Telecommunications glossary and definition of the marketplace
- Impact of telecommunications on society
- AT&T vs. The Baby Bells: Key elements in the congressional debate over the 1996 Act
- Impact of the Courts and the FCC
- Impact of politics (2000 Presidential election and the need for a national telecommunications policy)
- Emerging technologies, the changing marketplace and other challenges facing Congress – including the fate of Universal Service—as they seek to modernize the Telecommunications Act
- Building an agenda and the importance of metaphors and language, interest groups, campaign financing, advertising, K Street
- Prospects for a new law
- The new wave of mergers –SBC-AT&T; Verizon-MCI, Sprint-Nextel, BellSouth-ATT—and the communications market of the future (job prospects)

### ***METHODS OF INSTRUCTION***

The primary method of instruction will be participatory discussions led by the instructor. My method of teaching is through concrete experience, reflective observation and some active experimentation. Additionally, experts in regulatory and legislative telecommunications policy may be included in lectures involving their areas of expertise.

### ***METHOD OF EVALUATION***

There will be two tests. A midterm covering the first half of the course will be given on June 8 and will count for 30 percent of the final grade. The final will be comprehensive given on June 29. It will count for 40 percent of the final grade. Twenty percent of the grade will be based on position papers requirements and reporting. The final 10 percent will be based on class participation.

### **Class Participation and Attendance**

This is graduate school. Class preparation and participation are mandatory and will count for 10 percent of the final grade. Failure to attend class without prior approval of the instructor is prohibited. Missing two such classes will result in a non-passing grade.

