

GUJARAT NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY
SILVASSA CAMPUS
 Course: **Media and Telecommunication Laws**
Semester- I (Batch: 2025-26)

End Semester Examination: Oct-Nov 2025 (LLM)

Date: 03rd Nov, 2025

Duration: 3 hours

Max. Marks: 50

Instructions:

- Read the questions properly and write the answers in the given answer book.
- Do not write anything on the question paper.
- The respective marks for each question are indicated in-line.
- Indicate correct question numbers in front of the answer.
- No questions or clarification can be sought during the exam period, answer as it is, giving reason, if any.
- Word Limit: 10 Marks: 700 - 800 words, 5 Marks: 350 - 400 words.

Part A

Answer any **four** of the following questions.

- | | Marks |
|---|--------------|
| <p>Q.1 Western theories of the mass media were first propounded by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm in their seminal work <i>Four Theories of the Press</i>. These theories have now come to be termed 'normative' in the sense that they mainly express ideas of how the media ought to, or can be expected to, operate under a prevailing set of conditions and values.</p> <p>Discuss and elaborate on the four theories, identifying key characteristics of each theory and contextualising them in India's past, present and/or future.</p> | (10) |
| <p>Q.2 In <i>Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media</i>, Chomsky notes that the media's role is to create an illusion of choice, while limiting the range of acceptable opinion to a narrow spectrum. He informs that the media's job is not to educate us; it is to guide public opinion along acceptable lines, marginalizing and excluding dissidents who challenge State or corporate power. This is done by using the Propaganda Model.</p> <p>What are the five filters of mass media put forward in the Propaganda Model hypothesised by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman?</p> | (10) |
| <p>Q.3 A national news channel obtains leaked documents relating to an ongoing Supreme Court of India hearing involving allegations of large-scale financial fraud by a major corporation. The documents include confidential settlement proposals exchanged between the parties. The channel broadcast the details immediately, arguing that it is exercising its right to freedom of the press under Article 19(1)(a). However, the corporation involved files an urgent petition before the Supreme Court, claiming that such media reportage has prejudiced the <i>sub judice</i> proceedings and violates its right to a fair trial under Article 21.</p> <p>In the context of media reportage, explain how the Supreme Court in <i>Sabara India v. SEBI (2012)</i> balanced the right to free press with the right to a fair trial. Discuss the doctrine of postponement laid down in the case and the conditions under which courts may impose such restrictions on media reporting.</p> | (10) |
| <p>Q.4 The Telecommunications Act 2023 aims to reform the legal framework governing the telecommunication sector, which has long been based on two colonial-era laws – the</p> | (10) |

Telegraph Act 1885 and the Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933. While introducing the Telecommunications Bill 2023 in Lok Sabha, the Telecom Minister claimed that this legislation marked a significant break from the past. However, critics argue that, contrary to these assertions, the law reaffirms the colonial *status quo*.

In light of landmark cases by the Supreme Court of India such as *PUCL v. Union of India (1997)* and *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)*, critically analyse how the telecom regulatory framework in India balances State control, regulatory oversight, and the protection of fundamental rights such as privacy and freedom of speech.

- Q.5 The rise of fake news, paid news, and sensationalism in Indian media has raised serious concerns about the credibility of journalism. While the Press Council of India (PCI) is mandated to uphold media ethics, its limited powers and lack of enforcement capacity have led many to question its effectiveness. Critics argue that the PCI, due to its limited powers, functions more as a 'paper tiger with rubber teeth' rather than as an effective regulator. (10)

Critically evaluate the challenges posed by fake news and paid news to media ethics in India. In your answer, assess whether existing self-regulatory mechanisms like the PCI are sufficient, or if stronger statutory regulation is necessary.

Part B

Answer any **two** of the following questions.

- | | Marks |
|--|--------------|
| Q.6 A television channel secretly records a sting operation involving a school teacher accused of misconduct. Without obtaining certification of authenticity from the recorder and without seeking clearance from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's Committee, the channel edits the footage and broadcasts it during prime time. | (05) |
| In light of the guidelines laid down in the <i>Uma Khurana (146 (2008) DLT 429)</i> case, discuss whether the telecast is legally and ethically valid. | |
| Q.7 Peter Weir's <i>The Truman Show</i> is a satirical fiction drama where the titular character lives in a simulated reality fabricated by a single corporation. Everything from his childhood fears to his day-to-day interactions is carefully manufactured by the people behind the central show's production. This acclaimed movie explores the power of media and entertainment in shaping our lives. It raises important questions about identity, personal freedom, relationships and the manipulation of reality. | (05) |
| Explore any two themes of the film, parallelly addressing how the film continues to remain relevant even after twenty-five years. | |
| Q. 8 There are only two industries that call their customers 'users': illegal drugs and software. - Edward Tufte | (05) |
| Jeff Orlowski's <i>The Social Dilemma</i> explores the unintended and devastating consequences of social media including: isolation, anxiety, disorientation from reality, political polarization, and even violence against self or others. Discuss any three key takeaways from the docudrama. Give illustrations. | |