

Teaching Transformation and Innovation Paths of the Course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” in the Intelligent Media Era

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Abstract

In the Intelligent Media Era, technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic recommendation have profoundly transformed the ecological landscape of the media industry, giving rise to emerging legal and ethical issues including algorithm-driven dissemination of disinformation and AI-generated content infringement. The traditional course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” is confronted with challenges such as an outdated knowledge system and a disconnect between talent cultivation and industry demands. To address these issues, the course needs to achieve a teaching transformation: upgrading into an interdisciplinary core course integrating “technology + laws/regulations + ethics”, establishing new training objectives, reconstructing teaching content, and incorporating updated legal provisions and ethical norms. Through innovative approaches such as the integration of Ideological and Political Education in Curriculum and innovative case teaching, we aim to cultivate high-quality media talents equipped with legal thinking, ethical literacy and practical capabilities.

Keywords

Intelligent Media Era, Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics, Teaching Transformation, Teaching Innovation, Media Talent Cultivation

1. Introduction

The Intelligent Media Era represents a new phase of media development jointly fostered by technological innovation, industrial practice, and academic exploration. Its core concepts were collectively proposed around 2016 and have gradually matured since then. Technologically, the advancement of mobile internet, big

data, artificial intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) has laid a fundamental foundation for the intelligent transformation of media production and communication. By 2025, intelligent technologies such as AI, algorithmic recommendation, and generative AI (AIGC) will have been deeply integrated into the entire lifecycle of the media industry. AI's role has evolved beyond a "tool assistant" and is rapidly transitioning toward a "core decision-making participant." This evolution not only enables intelligent media to leap from "single-link optimization" to "holistic ecological reconstruction" but also drives comprehensive and fundamental transformations in the media industry ecosystem. The technological iteration in the Intelligent Media Era has fundamentally reshaped the production and communication logic of the media industry, thereby imposing new requirements on the comprehensive capabilities of media professionals.

With the profound transformation of the media industry driven by the comprehensive penetration of intelligent media technologies, the classroom teaching of the course "Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics" in university media programs is confronting new problems and challenges. How to effectively align the teaching of this course with the emerging issues and scenarios in the media industry amid the iteration of intelligent media technologies has become a prominent and urgent era-specific task for such teaching in higher education institutions. On one hand, intelligent media technologies have comprehensively reshaped the production logic and communication ecology of the media industry. On the other hand, they have given rise to new ethical and legal controversies, such as algorithm-driven dissemination of disinformation, abuse of user privacy data, and algorithmic discrimination. These developments not only pose severe challenges to the standardized development of the industry but also create an urgent demand for updating teaching content and innovating teaching models in university media programs. Therefore, based on the development trends of intelligent media technologies and the practical needs of the media industry, exploring the era-specific challenges faced by the course "Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics" and investigating teaching innovation paths that integrate theoretical depth with practical orientation hold significant theoretical significance and practical application value. Specifically, such efforts contribute to enhancing students' legal literacy and professional ethical awareness in the Intelligent Media Era, thereby fostering media talents who meet the demands of this new era.

2. Literature Review

Existing research focuses on three levels: In the ethical dimension, Chen Changfeng, Gu Liping and others pointed out that algorithmic logic brings new dilemmas such as data justice and algorithmic bias, and teaching should shift to in-depth reflection on the compliant application of technology and responsible ethics. In terms of governance, Lu Jiayin and Zhao Yu advocate that innovation and order should be balanced through "technology empowerment + institutional guidance", and the core lies in adhering to human subjectivity. In terms of a practical path,

the smart course developed by Zou Jun's team at Guangzhou University uses AI knowledge graphs and teaching assistants to dynamically correlate legal provisions, ethical principles and practical scenarios, build a new teaching ecology, and provide a model for technology-enabled curriculum innovation. However, how to systematically integrate cutting-edge laws and regulations, ethical norms and technical literacy into the curriculum system to form a replicable and generalizable teaching model still lacks in-depth theoretical discussion and mature practical plans.

Therefore, based on the development trend of intelligent media technology and the practical needs of the media industry, this paper discusses the challenges of the times faced by the course of "Media Regulations and Ethics", and explores the teaching innovation path with both theoretical depth and practical orientation, aiming to make up for the gap in the practical operation path of existing research. It has important theoretical significance and practical application value for improving students' legal literacy and media professional ethical literacy in the era of intelligent media, and cultivating media talents that meet the needs of the era of intelligent media.

3. New Challenges Confronting the Course "Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics" in the Intelligent Media Era

Courses in journalism and communication studies (including Journalism, Radio and Television Studies, Advertising, Communication, Network and New Media, Digital Media Art, etc.) offered by universities typically designate "Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics" as a core compulsory course. Taught in the second semester of the sophomore year or the first semester of the junior year, it is designed for students who have already acquired basic communication theories. Meanwhile, interdisciplinary programs such as Chinese Language and Literature, Sociology, Public Administration, and Law often offer it as an elective to meet students' needs for learning and applying media governance and public communication norms. As a pivotal course bridging theory and practice, it regulates the communication behaviors of future media professionals. The teaching content of this course covers professional knowledge from multiple disciplines, including communication studies, law and ethics, public policy, and sociology.

The traditional teaching of the course "Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics" focuses on imparting basic theoretical knowledge in both legal and ethical dimensions. Centered on the core theme of "legal boundaries and rights protection in media activities," the course integrates journalistic and communication practices with legal norms and ethical principles to help students grasp the legal bottom lines and professional ethical standards of media operations. It enables students to understand the "balance between freedom, regulation, and ethics," providing compliance guidance for tasks such as news gathering and editing, content creation, and media management. The course content covers fundamental theories and core principles of media regulation, media and constitutional principles, pro-

tection of personality rights, laws and regulations on news publishing, radio and television, online communication regulations, protection of media intellectual property rights, as well as supervision and legal liabilities in the media industry.

Against the backdrop of the deep penetration of intelligent media technologies into the media industry, the inadequacy of alignment between the educational content of media laws and ethics in university media programs and the emerging industry issues and scenarios driven by technological transformation has become increasingly prominent. Currently, intelligent media technologies have not only reshaped the production logic and communication ecology of the media industry but also given rise to new ethical and legal controversies such as algorithm-driven dissemination of disinformation, abuse of user privacy data, and algorithmic discrimination. These developments not only pose severe challenges to the standardized development of the industry but also create an urgent demand for updating teaching content and innovating teaching models in university media programs. Therefore, by integrating the development trends of intelligent media technologies with the practical needs of the media industry, systematically sorting out the era-specific challenges faced by the course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics,” and exploring teaching innovation paths that combine theoretical depth with practical orientation, we can cultivate high-quality media professionals who meet the requirements of the Intelligent Media Era and possess legal thinking and media ethical literacy.

4. Teaching Transformation of the Course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” in the Intelligent Media Era

With the profound transformation, restructuring, and integration of the media industry, the explanatory and leading power of the existing media theory system has gradually declined. Mere piecemeal revisions and improvements to this system can no longer adapt to, let alone lead, the development of the media industry; instead, a fundamental and systematic reconstruction based on the new media ecology is imperative (Liao, 2019). The Intelligent Media Era has imposed new requirements on the literacy of media professionals, and the teaching of the course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” must directly address the impacts brought by new technologies. Intelligent media technologies have reconstructed the “rule logic” and “ethical scenarios” of the media industry, while the teaching objectives, content systems, and teaching methods of traditional teaching are struggling to fully adapt to these changes.

4.1. Reshaping the Course Orientation and Teaching Objectives

The course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” functions as a “bottom-line course” and a “literacy course” for journalism and communication programs. Its core value lies in not only equipping students with the hard skills essential for “lawful professional practice” but also fostering their soft literacy of “responsible communication.” Amid the rapid advancement of intelligent media technologies,

the quality of this course is directly intertwined with the professional competitiveness of media talents and the healthy development of the industry. The course must transcend its traditional positioning as a mere specialized foundational course and evolve into an interdisciplinary, integrated core course characterized by the “technology + laws/regulations + ethics” model, thereby achieving the three-dimensional training objectives of “legal constraint, ethical guidance, and practical empowerment.”

“Compliance awareness” as a core recruitment criterion, and this course directly aligns with professional competency requirements. In recent years, disputes in the media industry have occurred frequently, such as online rumors, privacy breaches, and false advertising, leading to an urgent demand from employers for talents who “understand laws and regulations and adhere to ethics.” By enabling students to master the core laws, regulations, and ethical norms in the media field through this course, as well as understand the latest intelligent media technologies adopted by domestic and foreign media and the latest developments in media governance, it helps students develop the ability to identify legal risks and ethical dilemmas in media activities and apply legal and ethical knowledge to solve practical problems.

4.2. Focusing on Emerging Issues in the Intelligent Media Era and Reconstructing Teaching Content

The teaching content of the traditional course “Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics” centers on traditional media scenarios, focusing on explicit issues in fields such as news publishing, radio and television, including fake news, infringements of reputation rights, portrait rights, and copyrights. It covers basic legal provisions and classic ethical principles, emphasizing the explanation of the fundamental legal boundaries and professional ethical bottom lines of media activities. Its core objective is to cultivate students’ compliance awareness and ethical judgment capabilities in traditional media contexts.

Against the backdrop of intelligent media, concealed and technology-driven issues such as infringement of AI-generated content and compliance in digital human communication have become increasingly prominent, rendering the original theoretical system and teaching cases of the course inadequate in addressing these emerging challenges. The teaching content of *Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics* in the Intelligent Media Era should be structured around the core thread of “technological logic - legal regulation - ethical principles - practical application.” Closely adhering to the underlying logic of technologies such as big data, algorithmic recommendation, and generative AI, it should dissect compliance dilemmas at key nodes including data crawling, content generation, and distribution.

In the legal regulation teaching module, the latest laws and regulations are introduced to carry out systematic teaching around the core legislative goals. For example, the “Regulations on the Administration of Deep Synthesis of Internet Information Services” aims to regulate the application of deep synthesis technol-

ogy and prevent the risk of dissemination of false information; The Interim Measures for the Management of Generative AI Services focus on the compliance operation of generative AI services and clarify data security and content review requirements. The “Measures for the Identification of Artificial Intelligence-Generated Synthetic Content” focuses on protecting users’ right to know and establishes the labeling rules for AI-generated content; The EU’s Artificial Intelligence Act defines the legal boundaries and responsibilities for the application of AI technology through a risk-graded regulatory framework. In the ethics teaching module, it is necessary to simultaneously explore the boundaries of new ethical principles. On the basis of adhering to ethical principles such as authenticity, conscience, and good faith, it integrates ethical standards in the era of intelligent media such as algorithm transparency and data fairness to guide students to accurately grasp the ethical essence of new problems, and exercise critical thinking and ethical decision-making ability in complex scenarios.

5. Innovative Paths for the Teaching of Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics in the Intelligent Media Era

5.1. Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education Integration: The Unification of Value Guidance and Competence Development

According to the requirements of the *Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in Institutions of Higher Education* (Jiaogao [2020] No. 3), curriculum teaching should integrate value guidance into the entire process of knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. It helps students master the Marxist world outlook and methodology, and deepens their understanding of socialist core values in combination with professional education. As a core course for journalism and communication majors, *Media Laws and Ethics* should design ideological and political elements throughout its curriculum system under the guidance of professional talent training objectives, and fully explore the “moral education” function of the course (Zou, 2021). This enables the course to have the dual attributes of imparting laws and regulations and guiding values, and its in-depth integration with curriculum ideology and politics is the key to implementing the fundamental task of “establishing morality and cultivating people”. In the intelligent media era, ethical anomie issues such as algorithmic bias and information distortion have become prominent. The teaching of *Media Laws and Ethics* should combine the requirements of ideology and politics with the interpretation of media laws and regulations and the explanation of ethical principles, so as to strengthen students’ awareness of core criteria such as social responsibility and public interests. This not only implements the national macro requirements for talent cultivation, but also guides students to adhere to professional bottom lines, realizes the unification of knowledge imparting and value shaping, and meets the needs of media talent cultivation in the intelligent media era.

Only by ingeniously integrating, scientifically configuring, and embedding ide-

ological and political content in alignment with the course characteristics can we achieve the educational effect of “moistening things silently,” enabling students to subtly receive value guidance and personality cultivation while acquiring professional knowledge (Li, 2022). On one hand, it is necessary to summarize and extract the connotations such as the spirit of the rule of law and fairness and justice embodied in media laws and regulations. Closely adhering to the essence of provisions in the *Measures for the Administration of the Ecological Governance of Online Information Content*—including “encouraging the creation and dissemination of online information that promotes core socialist values” and “preventing and resisting the spread of harmful information”—we should elaborate on the state’s value-oriented requirements for the media industry to uphold ideological positions and actively disseminate core socialist values, and clarify the value pursuit of the journalism and communication industry in adhering to political stances and fulfilling the mission of the times in the era of intelligent media development. On the other hand, it is essential to grasp the new characteristics of intelligent media such as algorithmic governance, AI-generated content, and data privacy protection, and explore the ideological and political elements behind typical cases. Representative cases should be carefully selected, such as mainstream media practicing the value orientation of “content is king” through algorithm optimization, the ethical adherence to fact-checking in AI news, and legal accountability for incidents like big data price discrimination and user information leakage. In teaching, diverse methods including case analysis and scenario simulation, should be adopted to guide students to strengthen their social responsibility in journalism and communication while analyzing and applying media laws and regulations and assessing ethical dilemmas, thereby cultivating interdisciplinary media talents with legal literacy, ethical awareness, and patriotic sentiments in practice.

5.2. Innovative Practice of the Case Teaching Method

The case teaching method serves as the core of the course *Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics*. Traditional case teaching predominantly relies on teachers’ one-way lectures, focusing on traditional media scenarios such as radio, television, and newspapers, and suffers from limitations including outdated cases, insufficient interaction, and a single perspective. However, the iterative upgrading of intelligent media technologies has driven the case teaching method to exhibit new characteristics of dynamism, diversification, and interactivity, which better aligns with the training needs of practical talents.

In terms of case sources, the selection of cases breaks through the scope of traditional media carriers and adopts a “typical cases + real-time cases” approach, increasing the proportion of discussions on “controversial cases” in the intelligent media era. It focuses on typical controversial cases such as disputes over the authenticity of AI fully automated writing, whether algorithmic recommendations has formed information cocoons, and whether AI data collection infringes on privacy, analyzing emerging issues like the spread of disinformation and infringe-

ment of AI-generated content to ensure a strong correlation between teaching content and the practical problems currently faced by the industry.

In terms of case analysis, it breaks the traditional single model of “case introduction + legal comparison” and carries out multi-angle and multi-dimensional analysis. For cases such as AI face-swapping portrait rights infringement, students are guided to discuss and analyze from multiple perspectives such as communication, journalism, law, ethics, public policy, etc. It takes into account core issues such as technological communication reform, legal regulation improvement, and professional ethics boundaries. At the same time, through special literature reading, group debates, mock courts and other forms, students are encouraged to actively explore the contradictory focus of the case.

Taking “algorithmic targeted push of sad content” as an example, media platforms, on the premise of obtaining users’ authorization for data use, accurately identify groups with low mood through user portraits and push targeted content such as disaster and sad stories to extend users’ stay time and increase click-through rates. From a legal perspective, this operation process is compliant and constitutes a legitimate commercial behavior. However, from an ethical perspective, this practice deliberately exploits users’ negative emotions to gain traffic, ignores the potential harm to users’ mental health, and may even exacerbate users’ negative emotions, violating the principle of “humanistic care”.

Such cases reflect the limitations of the law. The law is only the bottom line of behavior and cannot cover complex ethical dilemmas. This is precisely the value of ethical case analysis. Through such cases, students can be guided to go beyond the bottom-line thinking of “if it is legal, it can be done”, establish the concept of “ethics first”, and learn to strike a balance between technology, commerce and humanistic care. Innovative case teaching methods can continuously stimulate students’ interest in exploration, help them master laws, regulations and ethical principles, and at the same time exercise their logical analysis, critical thinking and ability to solve complex problems, laying a solid foundation for students to meet the requirements of media work in the intelligent media era.

5.3. Innovative Design of the Scene Simulation Teaching Method

The scene simulation teaching method is an innovative approach developed on the basis of traditional curriculum teaching in the intelligent media era. By reproducing real industry environments or constructing virtual industry settings, it enables students to experience and resolve ethical dilemmas in simulated scenarios. The core logic of this teaching method lies in addressing real pain points in the media industry: it designs typical dilemmatic scenarios such as “handling AI-generated fake news,” “ethical decisions in algorithmic recommendation,” and “privacy protection in intelligent communication,” guiding students to engage in role-playing and participate deeply in ethical decision-making within these contexts.

In the specific teaching implementation, students assume multiple professional roles such as media anchors, content auditors, legal specialists, and platform op-

erators according to scenario settings, making decisions under multiple constraints including “the pressure of the 100,000+ traffic assessment,” “conflicts between commercial interests and social responsibilities,” and “the balance between technical efficiency and ethical compliance.” Taking the simulated scenario of “handling AI-generated fake news” as an example, students are required to complete a series of tasks within a limited time, such as verifying news sources, fact-checking the truth, and defining legal liabilities. They must comprehensively consider multiple factors, including the regulatory requirements of the *Measures for the Administration of the Ecological Governance of Online Information Content*, the social hazards of disinformation dissemination, the maintenance of media credibility, and commercial operation objectives, and ultimately formulate a systematic response plan covering information refutation, liability tracing, and public communication.

Centered on role-playing, the scene simulation teaching method breaks the limitation of one-way knowledge transmission in traditional theoretical teaching. It transforms students from passive recipients into active thinkers who apply legal norms and media ethics principles in virtual scenarios, enabling them to exert their subjective initiative, develop critical thinking, and enhance professional judgment. In the teaching process, the theoretical foundation is consolidated through case review sessions, and practical application capabilities are strengthened via role-playing. This method not only improves students’ ability to identify risks associated with intelligent media technologies but also guides them to establish the professional philosophy of “technology for good,” encouraging them to uphold the bottom lines of law and professional ethics while pursuing communication effectiveness.

5.4. Practical Challenges and Responses to Innovative Teaching Methods

The innovative design of the case teaching method and real-life simulation teaching method proposed above has a strong practical orientation, but it is necessary to face up to the potential challenges in the implementation process. On the one hand, it faces the challenge of teacher ability adaptability. Both teaching methods require teachers to have a professional foundation in media regulations and ethics, cognitive and application of intelligent media technology, and multidisciplinary integration ability. At present, some teachers have problems such as single knowledge structure, insufficient application of intelligent media or lack of interdisciplinary experience. In this regard, special training can be used to focus on core modules such as case design and intelligent media application. At the same time, the comprehensive literacy of teachers is improved through industry practice exchanges. On the other hand, it faces the problem of evaluating students’ performance. The process performance of ethical decision-making and group debate in real-life simulation is subjective and situational, and difficult to quantify. It is necessary to build a system that combines “process evaluation + consequential

evaluation”, refine evaluation indicators and weights by focusing on role-playing participation, case analysis depth, ethical decision-making logic and other dimensions, and formulate graded evaluation standards. The result evaluation adopts multiple forms such as case analysis and scheme design to examine theoretical application and innovative thinking. Ensure that the curriculum evaluation system can objectively and comprehensively reflect students’ comprehensive abilities.

6. Conclusion

Intelligent media technologies have reshaped the development pattern of the media industry, imposing higher requirements on the legal literacy and ethical integrity of media talents. The teaching reform of the course *Media Laws, Regulations and Ethics* represents a systematic exploration integrating value guidance, theoretical updating, and practical empowerment. In the future, the course should closely align with the development trends of intelligent media and the actual needs of the industry, respond to changes in legal norms through a dynamic theoretical system, and strengthen ethical decision-making capabilities via practical teaching. By striking a balance between technological innovation and value adherence, it aims to cultivate interdisciplinary media talents with legal thinking, ethical awareness, and innovative literacy, laying a solid talent foundation for the standardized development of the industry and providing strong support for safeguarding public interests.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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