

COMM 330 – EFFECTIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

Syllabus – Spring 2016 Term

CAC BUILDING 239 • 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Monday/Wed.

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Office hours: 10:15 a.m.-11 a.m. Monday-Wed. (definitely)

Virtual office hours via Facebook (Kit Kiefer), Twitter (@KitKatUWSP), LinkedIn, and email

Course Objective

After taking this class, you should have a working knowledge of the social-media forms currently being used by organizations to public relations, how they're being used, and how to formulate general rules of use that you can apply to future social-media tools. You'll also learn how public relations is being changed by social media, and the best practices for using social PR in a variety of special settings, like healthcare, the arts, non-profits, and in crises. Finally, you'll learn how to best use social media to further your own personal brand. The focus of this class is real-world preparation and applications.

Required Text

Solis, B., & Breakenridge, D. (2010). *Putting the public back in public relations*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press. The text does a reasonable job with overarching themes, despite its rather advanced age. Because of that, the text will be supplemented. You will be sent electronically a list of links more than 100 articles on social media. Many of them are news items; almost all of them are short. You should read them, even the ones that aren't specifically assigned, since they will either appear on the test or will be useful to you in your classwork. You aren't required to read them all, but if you don't you may not like the consequences.

Attendance & Timeliness

One-quarter of your grade will be based on in-class participation, so get here on time, be ready to participate, and get your assignments done. This class is not going to ask a lot out of you outside of class, but classes are going to be run like business meetings, and you don't get anywhere in business meetings if you don't show up on time, aren't prepared, and don't speak up. Along those lines, if you are 10 minutes late for class, you receive a participation grade of 0 for that day. Finally, please leave the cell phones and tablets in your bags unless you're asked to use them for an assignment (which may happen).

Grading Scale

Final grades for COMM 330 are based on the following percentages (subject to modification at the instructor's discretion):

A	B	C	D	F
100-96% = A	92-90% = B+	82-80% = C+	72-67% = D	66-00% = F
95-93% = A-	89-86% = B	79-76% = C		
	85-83% = B-	75-73% = C-		

Class Assignments – There are 1,000 points available in COMM 330, allocated as follows (and subject to change):

Assignment	Total Points Available
Class participation	300 points

Social-media introductory presentation	100 points
In-class assignments	50 points
Personal-branding exercises	150 points
Midterm	100 points
Capstone social media assignment – Social Media Plan	150 points
Final Exam	100 points
Arbitrary and capricious whims of the instructor	50 points
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE FOR SEMESTER	1,000 points

More on Class Assignments

Assignments should be approached as if you were in charge of social media at an organization and your boss asked you to do a project. If it wouldn't cut it in the business world, it's not going to cut it in class. If you have any questions on what that entails, ask me.

It goes without saying (yet I'm saying it) that all assignments should be completed on time, should be relatively attractive, and should be well-written, with attention paid to grammar, spelling, and wordiness. I'm a professional writer and a grammar freak, and while I'll cut you some slack, I don't have much tolerance for needlessly sloppy writing. Any graphics-related assignments should be clean and attractive. Videos should be functional first, fancy second.

Remember: You're trying to sell your boss (a/k/a me) on whatever you've been assigned. If you've been assigned an overview on a social-media channel, you want to convince me to allow you to use that channel for public relations, or convince me not to use a given channel. Before turning in an assignment, ask yourself, "Would I go along with what I'm saying based on what I'm turning in?"

More on Personal Branding

One of the things you will learn in this class is that the most important brand you will represent throughout your marketing, journalism, and PR career is your own – you. As such, your personal-branding process through social media starts *now*. We will discuss the aspects of your personal brand in class, and then you will be assigned a social-media channel or channels to use to build that brand. For your personal-branding exercise, you will be asked to create new accounts in the channels you're assigned. While most of you have been engaging in personal branding via social media for some time, the accounts you're using now are off-limits for our exercise. The only accounts you'll be graded on are the new ones you've been assigned. You are expected to follow and interact with your fellow class members/branders on their assigned channels. You will be graded on how well you use your assigned channels to further your personal brand, and the hope is that you will continue this branding exercise after the class has finished.

In-Class Writing – Participation

Expect there to be assignments – I prefer to call them "social-media crises" – that will pop up at any time during any class period. Basically you will be given a case study with some relevance to the topic being discussed, and be asked to formulate a plan for addressing it in a limited amount of class time. If you are prepared and use common sense you will do well. And just to be very clear: Being prepared means bringing paper and a writing instrument to every class.

Guests

We will have professional guests working with the class from time to time, either live or via Skype. Some of these people are working at the highest levels of their professions. Please treat them with respect and give them your undivided attention. If you don't, you will receive a participation grade of 0 for the day.

UWSP Values Statement

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point values a safe, honest, respectful, and inviting learning environment. In order to ensure that each student has the opportunity to succeed, a set of expectations has been developed for all students and instructors. This set of expectations is known as the Rights and Responsibilities document, and is intended to help establish a positive living and learning environment at UWSP. To view a copy of the document, click on: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Pages/rightsandresponsibilities.aspx>

Statement on Disabilities Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law requiring educational institutions such as UWSP to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information about UWSP's policies, click on: <http://www.uwsp.edu/stuaffairs/Documents/RightsRespons/ADA/rightsADAPolicyInfo.pdf>

If you have a disability and require classroom and/or exam accommodations, please register with the Disability and Assistive Technology Center. From there, you can share with the instructor any special accommodations that will assist you in being successful in this course. The Disability and Assistive Technology Center is located on the sixth floor of the Learning Resource Center. You may also click on: <http://www4.uwsp.edu/special/disability>

Class Schedule (Subject to change at any time)

WK	DAY	DATE	TOPIC	READING/ ASSIGNMENT
1	Monday	Jan. 25	Syllabus Review – Introductions -- What is Social Media?	Social-media channel assignment Personal-branding assignment Mary Meeker’s “State of the Internet” report Sree’s social-media tips Pew Report
	Wed.	Jan. 27	Social Media in a PR World	Textbook Ch. 12; What Businesses Use Social Media For
2	Monday	Feb. 1	Social-Media Channels	Ways you should be using LinkedIn; social-media infographics
	Wed.	Feb. 3	Social-Media Channels II	How Instagram Is Driving Brands; Why Brands Like Instagram Better Than Facebook; How Brands Can And Can’t Use Periscope; Meerkat’s Cameo
3	Monday	Feb. 8	Social-Media Channels III	Facebook at Work; Facebook Live; Facebook algorithm; Brands ditching Vln
	Wed.	Feb. 10	Social-Media Channels IV	Textbook Chs. 2-3; History of YouTube; YouTube and Brands; Imgur; Kik
4	Monday	Feb. 15	SM Channels	Millennials and Snapchat; How Snapchat Got Hot; Whisper; Tumblr
	Wed.	Feb. 17	SM Channels	YouNow; Peach; Kellogg’s and Pandora; Spotify and the Beatles
5	Monday	Feb. 22	PR in a Social-Media World	PR and Food Bloggers
	Wed.	Feb. 24	Social Media & the New Newsroom	Textbook Chs. 8 and 17; Social-Based Newspaper Alternatives; News on Twitter and Facebook; The Changing Newsroom; The New Publisher
6	Monday	Feb. 29	Social Media and Politics	Facebook and Politics; How Social Media Is Ruining Politics; Trump-Hillary war
	Wed.	March 2	Social Media and the Arts	Legal Issues With Live-Streaming Comic-Con
7	Monday	March 7	Social Media and Sports	Leading Sports Social Brands
	Wed.	March 9	Social Media and Healthcare	Reading list
8	Monday	March 14	MIDTERM	

	Wed.	March 16	Social-Media Fails	Race Together ; "Rape Us Now" ; Gawker and Conde Nast
9	Monday	March 28	Paid Content	Blogger Codes of Ethics ; People Can't Identify Paid Content ; Engagement With brand content
	Wed.	March 30	Brand Interaction – Real or Fallacy?	Target FB Troll ; Who Creates Great Branded Content?
10	Monday	April 4	Creating Effective Social-Media Strategies & Programs	How To Use Twitter Chats ; Dunkin' Donuts Campaign ; Southwest and Social Media
	Wed.	April 6	Managing Social Media in an Organization	7 Habits of Highly Effective SM Managers ; How To Recover From A Bad SM Post ; Social-media crisis communication
11	Monday	April 11	Social-Media Planning and Scheduling	Textbook Ch. 18; Why You Need A Content Calendar
	Wed.	April 13	Social-Media Measurement	Key Metrics For Content Marketing
12	Monday	April 18	Social-Media Measurement Tools	Reading list
	Wed.	April 20	Social Media and Gender/Race	Facebook and Empowerment ; Twitter and Women
13	Monday	April 25	Social-Media Careers	Social media and job applicants ; Applicants' social-media profiles
	Wed.	April 27	Capstone Presentations	Reading list
14	Monday	May 2	Capstone Presentations	
	Wed.	May 4	Capstone Presentations	
15	Monday	May 9	Capstone Presentations	
	Wed.	May 11	Capstone Presentations	
16	Monday	May 16	10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. – FINAL	

"Capstone" Assignment

Your "capstone" assignment (used in the non-branded, non-specific sense of that term) is to create a social-media plan to address a scenario you will be assigned at random. Each student will be assigned a different scenario; while there may be a few similarities between scenarios, most will be sufficiently different that simple copying one another's approach will not work.

You will be presented with the bare essentials: a brief description of your scenario and a budget. The rest is up to you.

As with any plan, your plan will likely want to address objectives, strategies, and tactics. You will also want to discuss scheduling and measurement. While you are under no obligation to spend all the money in your budget, if you decide not to spend a significant portion of your budget, you'll need to explain why.

Among the other things to keep in mind are:

- Specify a time frame, with an absolute minimum of six months. Even those of you who are presented with a very short-term scenario should probably be planning out 12 months. Your budget is for 12 months; if you go longer, assume the same rate of spend. However, nothing says you have to spend the same amount every month.
- What you do as a social-media expert has to exist with other marketing and PR efforts within this scenario. While you shouldn't neglect other forms of PR and marketing in your plan, you shouldn't focus on them so much that you neglect social media. The bad news is they're not going to come to your rescue; the good news is that you don't have to pay for them,
- Be as realistic as you can about spending your budget. If you're going to spend some of your money on boosting posts, know how much it costs to boost posts. If you're going to do survey research, figure on \$25,000 for each survey. If you're doing video, understand video-production costs. Even if you say you're going to do it in-house you need to budget for the time and resources of the people who are going to do it in-house. If you don't take all your photos, come up with a photo budget. Most of this information can be gleaned online. If you hit a wall let me know and I'll help.
- Be realistic about your outcomes. A 100 percent engagement rate probably isn't realistic; a 1 percent engagement rate is more likely. Expect that not everyone will see everything you do, and plan for that.
- It's okay to say you're not going to "solve" your particular scenario. If you've been given a crisis, the crisis may not go away at the end of your plan. That's all right, as long as you've laid out a plan for controlling it.

What are your deliverables?

- A plan document, with:
 - An executive summary;
 - A description of your scenario, outlining challenges and opportunities;
 - A description of your chosen objectives, strategies, and tactics;
 - A calendar of campaigns and channels;
 - A budget plan; and
 - A measurement plan; and
- A presentation of no longer than 15 minutes (and I'm gonna hold you to that) describing your scenario and how you plan to address it.

One final thought: For this particular assignment, it's better to be detailed than grandiose. You're probably not going to break the internet. A series of small victories are a more realistic – and in many ways, a better – expected outcome.