

**Comm 730 - Social Media Theory & Practice**  
**5:30 - 8:00 Monday**  
**Room 227 (CAC)**

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Office Hours: Monday 2:00-4:00  
and by appointment

**Course Overview:**

This seminar course in social media is driven by in-class discussion. The readings are primarily oriented to theory, but I have also included several texts that lean toward application for practitioners. The first few weeks focus on historical context and include a few "classic" texts that help situate our conversations. Each of you will serve as moderator for part of one class period, and that, along with your attendance, participation, and reading responses, constitutes half of your grade.

The other half of your grade is either a research paper that you could submit to an academic conference or a social media project for a local client: Your choice. That is intended to be a semester-long endeavor, and I've devoted a couple class periods for each of you to provide updates and workshop ideas with the rest of the group.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Develop a better understanding of the historical context of social media;
2. Explain and apply a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives to studying issues related to social media;
3. Create a social media strategy for a client based on best practices;
4. Write a manuscript suitable for presentation at an academic conference.

**Readings:**

All readings are available online via D2L.

**Recommended Texts:**

There are no required texts, but you may find the following two books useful in crafting your final paper or project. For those completing a research paper, *The Craft of Research* is an update on a classic textbook for conducting research and crafting an academic paper. For those completing a client project, *The New Rules* text provides a nice overview of best practices. Both texts may be found online for around \$15.

Booth, Colomb, Williams, Bizup & Fitzgerald. (2016). *The Craft of Research*, 4th edition.

Scott, David Meerman. (2017). *The New Rules of Marketing and PR: How to Use Social Media, Online Video, Mobile Applications, Blogs, News Releases, and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly*. 6th edition.

### **Late Work**

Work submitted after the deadline has passed receives a 20 percent deduction. An additional 5 percent is deducted for each 24-hour period that elapses beyond that.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

You are expected to do original work. Recycling work you have previously done is known as self-plagiarism. When you use information or images that you did not create, you need to indicate that.

Section 14.03 of the UWSP code defines academic misconduct as occurring when a student takes any of the following actions:

- ◇ Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
  - ◇ Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
  - ◇ Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
  - ◇ Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
  - ◇ Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- or
- ◇ Assists other students in any of these acts.

The potential consequences of academic misconduct include failing the class, being placed on disciplinary probation, being suspended, or being expelled from UWSP.

The stakes are far too high to take risks in this area. Let me know if you need clarification.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

### **Attendance: 10%**

Regular attendance in class is worth 10% of your final grade. Bring readings and/or your analyses to class and be prepared to discuss them in detail.

### **Reading Responses & Participation: 20%**

The readings for each class period offer an opportunity for critical reflection. Class discussion may not address issues or concepts you initially find relevant. Between your reading response and participation in discussion, I hope to have a good idea of your thoughts each week. These responses are to be 1-2 pages in

length, single-spaced, and turned in at the end of each class. When applicable, your response should also include an answer to one of the questions posed by the person leading class discussion that week.

### **Guiding Discussion: 20%**

Each person is responsible for guiding class discussion for half of a class period during the semester. Email me with your top three choices before class begins on February 5.

To help facilitate that in-class conversation, send a list of 4-6 questions for the group to consider before we encounter the readings for the week. Ideally this will be done several days in advance, but it must be completed and sent to the group at least 48 hours before class begins (so by 5pm Saturday).

### **Final Paper/Project and Presentation: 50%**

*(Proposal: 10%, Final Paper/Project 25%, Presentation 15%)*

You have the option of completing a research paper or a client project.

Research papers should be suitable for presentation at an academic conference, and approximately 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced.

Client projects will involve a partnership with a local business or nonprofit to enhance their online presence.

The proposal (due Feb. 26) should be between 2-4 pages in length, double-spaced. Additional details will be provided during the semester.

### **Additional Resources**

The [Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center](#) offers assistance with writing, technology, and study skills. It is located in room 018 of the Learning Resource Center (in the basement of the library), and you can set up an appointment by stopping by or calling 715-346-3568.

Any student who anticipates they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) should contact me privately to discuss specific needs.

The [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](#) offers assistance and documentation for students with disabilities. It is located in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center. You can contact them at 715-346-3365 or via email at [datctr@uwsp.edu](mailto:datctr@uwsp.edu). Students registered with the DATC may provide their Notice of

Accommodation letter (yellow forms) during office hours, via email, or after class.

The [UWSP Counseling Center](#) is available to help you deal with the stresses of college life. There are licensed mental health professionals who can help. It is located on the 3rd floor of Delzell Hall at 910 Fremont Street. Contact them at 715-346-3553, or via email at [counsel@uwsp.edu](mailto:counsel@uwsp.edu).

## Course Schedule

### Jan. 22 - First Day: Introductions, Syllabus, TNB Viewing/Discussion

### Jan. 29 - Historical Context

- Marvin, C. (1988). "Inventing the Expert: Technological Literacy as Social Currency," pp. 9-47 in *When Old Technologies Were New: Thinking About Electric Communication in the Late 19th Century*.
- Loviglio, J. (2002). "Vox Pop: Network Radio and the Voice of the People," pp. 89-111 in *Radio Reader: Essays in the Cultural History of Radio*.
- Standage, T. (2013). Chapter 11, "The Rebirth of Social Media: From ARPANET to Facebook" and Epilogue, "History Retweets Itself," pp. 214-250 in *Writing on The Wall: Social Media--The First 2,000 Years*.
- Bory, P., Benecchi, E., & Balbi, G. (2016): "How the Web was Told: Continuity and Change in the Founding Fathers' Narratives on the Origins of the World Wide Web. *new media & society*. 18(7): 1066-1087.

### Feb. 5 - Situating Social Media

- McLuhan, M. & Fiore, Q. (1967). *The Medium is the Massage*.
- Baym, N. (2015). Ch. 3, "Communication in digital spaces," pp. 57-80 and "Conclusion: the myth of cyberspace," pp. 174-179 in *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*.
- Lamberton, Cait & Andrew T. Stephen. (2016). "A Thematic Exploration of Digital, Social Media, and Mobile Marketing: Research Evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an Agenda for Future Inquiry," *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6): 146-172.
- Borah, P. (2017). "Emerging Communication Technology Research: Theoretical and Methodological Variables in the Last 16 Years and Future Directions," *new media & society*, 19(4): 616-636.

### Feb. 12 - Meta-Analyses of Social Media Research

- Kim, Y., Kim, B., Kim, Y. & Wang, Y. (2017). "Mobile Communication Research in Communication Journals from 1999 to 2014," *new media & society*, 19(10): 1668-1691.
- Snelson, C.L. (2016). "Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research: A Review of the Literature." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Special Issue: 1-15.
- Stoycheff, E., Liu, J., Wibowo, K.A., Nanni, D.P. (2017). "What have we learned about social media by studying Facebook? A decade in review," *new media & society*, 19(6): 968-980.
- Ruppel, E.K. et. al (2017). "Reflecting on Connecting: Meta-Analysis of Differences Between Computer-Mediated and Face-to-

Face Self-Disclosure," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 18-34.

### **Feb. 19 - "The People Formerly Known as the Audience"**

- Goffman, E. (1981). Excerpt from Chapter 3, "Footing," in *Forms of Talk*.
- Bird, S.E. (2003). Introduction, "Beyond the Audience: Living in a Media World," and Conclusion, "Media Ethnography, The Interdisciplinary Future," *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World* in *The Audience in Everyday Life: Living in a Media World*.
- Flanagin, A.J. (2017). "Online Social Influence and the Convergence of Mass and Interpersonal Communication." *Human Communication Research*, 43(4): 450-463.
- Jenkins, H., Lashley, M.C. & Creech, B. (2017). "Voices For a New Vernacular: A Forum on Digital Storytelling (Interview with Henry Jenkins)." *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 1061-1068.
- Sarikakis, K., Krug, C., & Rodriguez-Amat, J.R. (2015). "Defining Authorship in User-Generated Content: Copyright Struggles in *The Game of Thrones*." *new media & society*, 19(4): 542-559.

### **Feb. 26 - Homophily, Echo Chambers and Political Communication**

*Final Paper/Project Proposal Due*

- Stroud, N.J., Muddiman, A. & Scacco, J.M. (2017). "Like, recommend or respect? Altering political behavior in news comment sections," *new media & society*, 19(11): 1727-1743.
- Dvir-Gvirsman, S. (2017). "Media audience homophily: Partisan websites, audience identity and polarization processes," *new media & society*, 19(7): 1072-1091.
- de Zuniga, H.G, Weeks, B., Ardevol-Abreu, A. (2017). "Effects of the News-Finds-Me Perception in Communication: Social Media Use Implications for News-Seeking and Learning About Politics," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 105-123.

### **March 5 - The Parasocial Spectrum**

- Horton, D. & Wohl, R.R. (1956). "Mass Communication and Parasocial Interaction: Observations on Intimacy at a Distance," *Psychiatry*, 19(3): 215-229.
- Gray, J. (2003). "New Audiences, New Textualities: Anti-fans and non-fans," *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(1): 64-81.
- Marwick, A. & boyd, d. (2011). "To See and Be Seen: Celebrity Practice on Twitter," *Convergence*, 17(2): 139-158.

Tsai, W.H.S. & Men, L.R. (2017). "Social CEO's: The effects of CEOs' communication styles and parasocial interaction on social networking sites," *new media & society*, 19(11): 1848-1867.

### **March 12 - Problematizing Interpersonal Communication**

French M. & Bazarova, N.N. (2017). "Is Anybody Out There?: Understanding Masspersonal Communication Through Expectations for Response Across Social Media Platforms" *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 303-319.

Dhir, A., Chen, G.M. & Chen, S. (2017). "Why do we tag photographs on Facebook? Proposing a new gratifications scale" *new media & society*, 19(4): 502-521.

Schwartz, R. & Halegoua, G.R. (2015). "The Spatial Self: Location-Based Identity Performance on Social Media," *new media & society*, 17(10): 1643-1660.

Spottswood, E.L. & Hancock, J.T. (2017). "'Should I Share That?' Prompting Social Norms That Influence Privacy Behaviors on a Social Networking Site," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 55-70.

### **March 19 - Theory & Methodological Approaches**

#### ***Paper/Project Update***

Baym, N.K. (2015). Chapter 2, "Making New Media Make Sense," *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*.

Creswell, J.W. (2012\*). "Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry" in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*.

Elish, M.C. & boyd, d. (2017). "Situating methods in the magic of Big Data and AI," *Communication Monographs*, In press: 1-24.

Evans, S.K. et. al. (2017). "Explicating affordances: A Conceptual framework for understanding affordances in communication research," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22: 35-52.

Gehl, R.W. (2016). "Power/freedom on the dark web: A digital ethnography of the Dark Web Social Network," *new media & society*, 18(7): 1219-1235.

### **March 26 - No Class / Spring Break**

### **April 2 - Best Practices I**

Cameron, Wilcox & Reber (2015). "Program Planning" pp. 152-170 in *Public Relations Strategies and Tactics*.

Scott, D.M. (2015). "New Rules for Reaching the Media," pp. 366-378 in *The New Rules of Marketing & PR*.

- Millman, D. (2013). Foreword and Introduction, pp. vii-5, in *Brand Thinking*.
- Miller, J. (2015). Introduction, pp. 11-23 in *Sticky Branding*.
- Carah, N. (2017). "Algorithmic brands: A decade of brand experiments with mobile and social media," *new media & society*, 19(3): 384-400.

### **April 9 - Best Practices II**

- Zitron, E. (2013). "Pitching," pp. 77-99 in *This is How You Pitch*.
- Solis, B. (2011). "The New Media Scorecard," pp. 271-293 in *Engage!*
- Sponder, M. & Khan, G.H. (2018). Chapter 8, "An Introduction to Social Media Analytics," and Chapter 9, "Leveraging Social Media Content and Analytics," pp. 167-224 in *Digital Analytics for Marketing*.
- Ashley, C. & Tuten, T. (2015). "Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement," *Psychology & Marketing*, 32(1): 15-27.

Supplemental Text: Smith, R. (2013). "Selecting Communication Tactics," pp. 227-303 in *Strategic Planning for Public Relations* (Not required; Skimming is fine.)

### **April 16 - Readers' Choice & Paper/Project Workshop**

*Each person should post a link to an article of their choice to the Discussion Board of D2L before 5pm Friday, April 13.*

### **April 23 - Finding Balance: Unplugging**

- Scott, L. (2016). "Introduction: The Reverse Peephole," and Chapter 1, "Anatomically Correct," pp. xi-38 in *The Four-Dimensional Human: Ways of Being in the Digital World*.
- Friedman, T.L. (2016). Excerpt from "Part IV: Anchoring. From Minnesota to the world and back," in *Thank You For Being Late: An Optimist's Guide for Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*.
- Powers, W. (2010). Ch. 12, "Not So Busy: Practical Philosophies for Every Day," Ch. 13, "Disconnectopia" & Afterword, "Back in the Room," pp. 209-240 in *Hamlet's Blackberry: Building a Good Life in the Digital Age*.

### **April 30 - Work Day**

No official class meeting: Prepare for presentations.

### **May 7 - Last Day of Class**

Presentations