

Social Media and Society

JRSM 4910-001, 350,

Fall 2021

Class meeting: Tuesday/Thursday 11:20-12:45 p.m. CT

Meeman Journalism Building, room 100

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Discussion of social media's impact on individuals, organizations, and society. Examines the fundamentals of social media-based community, diversity, and influence. Includes broad understanding of a variety of platforms and trends and their place and importance in the social media ecosystem.

Social media has altered how journalists and strategic communication professionals do their jobs and how we communicate as a society. We will be analyzing multiple apps, platforms, and trends to determine social media's impact on society, including digital inequality and social justice, online communities, photo and video manipulation, influencers, virality, and wearable technology. It's important to note that particular platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat will come and go in this fast-changing environment, but the need for high quality social content and understanding is constant. Thus, this course will help you apply these platforms and trends to the overarching understanding of social media and its place in society.

Prerequisites

None.

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Social Media & Society: An introduction to the mass media landscape (2021)

Regina Luttrell and Adrienne A. Wallace

Hardback: 978-1-5381-2908-1

Paperback: 978-1-5381-2909-8

e-book: 978-1-5381-2910-4

<https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781538129104/Social-Media-and-Society-An-Introduction-to-the-Mass-Media-Landscape>

Classroom format

As of August 1, 2021, this class will be conducted in the large lecture room (100) in the Meeman Journalism Building. This class will include lecture, discussion, in-class activities, and group assignments. Students will write and submit assignments to eCourseware, which will be returned with feedback meant to encourage student improvement over the course of the semester. Access to a computer or mobile electronic device (tablet or smartphone) with internet access is required to complete many (if not all) of your assignments. Please let me know if you need information on computers available for use on campus.

I see us building a classroom community together this fall. To do that, I expect that you show up ready to engage with myself and your classmates. It's important to ask questions when you're lost, and pay attention so you don't get lost on purpose.

It is my hope that you know and believe that I am always willing to help you. Always ask for clarification(s) if you have any questions or doubts: the sooner the better. It's important to be proactive. If you're having an issue, let's work together to make sure you are doing what you can, when you can.

COVID-19 policy around attendance

There is no attendance policy for this class—the only day you are required to attend is your guest speaker day.

In addition to a penalty-free attendance policy, you will not be required to attend class on campus. I want to recognize that there are still a lot of unknowns and fears surrounding COVID-19. If you feel uncomfortable attending class on campus, you may join via Zoom. I ask that you not Zoom from the beach, bar hopping, or while on vacation. Please note that this is something I'm doing to help alleviate COVID-19 stress, not make it easy for you to join from the pool. If you're on vacation, just be on vacation and don't rub it in.

This is a decision you can make day-by-day, so don't feel like you have to decide "Zoom" or "campus" and stick with it for the rest of the semester.

Students with disabilities & accommodations

If you will need accommodations through [Disability Resources](#) to meet any of the requirements of this course, please let me know as soon as possible. Remember, this does not mean you are incapable or receiving special treatment. We all have specific tools we use to do our best work. I encourage you to consider which tools you need to be your best in this class.

Trauma & emotional needs

This class is just one component of your life. It is important, but sometimes we experience trauma and crisis, and we need to reprioritize. As your instructor, I feel your health and well-being is more important than this class, especially under the circumstances. If completing this course or an assignment to the best of your abilities is challenging, please let me know as soon as possible. I am here for you and want to work with you.

COVID-19 illness accommodations

I hope that this is the most worthless syllabus section I've ever written. I hope that COVID-19 comes nowhere near you or your loved ones, and doesn't affect you in any way, including physically,

emotionally, spiritually, financially, and mentally. COVID-19 will likely affect one of us in one of those ways, however. Here's how we'll adapt:

If you get sick:

I recommend you take an incomplete for the semester. Given that it's hard to know how your body will react, and cases range from asymptomatic to months of illness to death, we should prepare for you to dedicate a substantial amount of your time to feeling better. Your health is more important than this course. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

If you need to take care of someone who gets sick:

Depending on the severity of their illness, I recommend you consider taking an incomplete. If you are the primary caretaker of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 with symptoms, your priority should be remaining healthy and supporting that person. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

If you are exposed to someone who tests positive:

You must isolate and monitor your symptoms. Please let me know as soon as possible if that affects your access to resources and technology. *Honor code: no documentation required.*

Resources specific to physical health and wellness:

[Mental health Services](#)

[UofM Student Health Center](#)

[Sexual, domestic, and intimate partner violence resources](#)

Financial resources :

There are many resources available through the Dean of Students including:

[Dr. Rosie Phillips Bingham Student Emergency Fund](#)

[Emergency Food Resources](#), which includes [Tiger Pantry](#)

[Emergency Housing](#)

[Specific COVID-19 relief funds](#)

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis home page: <http://www.memphis.edu>
2. Click on the "MyMemphis" link at the bottom of the left column menu.
3. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
4. Click on the "eCampus Resources" tab.
5. In the center column of the page, click on the blue UofM eCourseware link
6. Down on that page, in the FALL 2021 course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM 4910 – 001/350 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Grading

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96%; A- = 90-92%

B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%

C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%

D+ = 67-69%; D = 60-66%

F 0-59%

Plagiarism policy

First offense: Redo for 50%, plus meet with Teri

Second offense: Automatic 0, no redo

Third offense: Automatic class fail

Final assignment, regardless of which offense: Automatic 0 on assignment

Citation policy

For this class, we'll use AP Style (<https://www.apstylebook.com>) and APA style

(https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html).

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar and language. A large part of public relations is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good – and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you must use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Late work

<24 hours late: -10% (perfect = 90% A)

24-48 hours late: -20% (perfect = 80% B)

48-72 hours late: -30% (perfect = 70% C)

Final call: Up to 50% credit (perfect = 50% F)

Your deliverables

Group assignments

(35 Points)

Guest speaker

25 points

What do you meme?

10 points

Thinking Critically about Social Media

(55 points)

Social Media Issues Explained (individual or partner)

30 points

Crit-Tik-Al (Get it? Critical TikTok)

15 points

Intro/Get to know you (with a social twist)

10 points

Social Media in Practice

(10 points + 5 available extra credit)

Twitter chat participation + reflection

5 points

Event attendance + live tweet

5 points

TikTok stitch/duet participation

1 point/TikTok

PRSSA PRogression blog

5 points/submission

Total

100 points

Assignments Details

This is a quick breakdown of grading approaches:

Credit/no credit: If you see an assignment for credit/no credit that means as long as you turn something in that resembles what is being asked of you—you will earn credit on that assignment. This is to reduce the anxiety around “getting it right the first time” and encourage you to think more deeply about the goals of the assignments *not* associated with a grade (e.g., a topic you feel passionate about, taking strategic risks and pushing yourself creatively)

Group speaker (group): This semester you and your group are responsible for finding a class guest speaker and facilitating a conversation with them. The 25-points will be dividing into sections:

1. Identify the speaker (3 points credit/no credit)
2. Draft pitch and invite (pitch) (5 points credit/no credit)
3. Drafting the questions (10 points)
4. Facilitate the discussion (5 points)
5. Thank you (2 points credit/no credit)

Social media issues explained: This is an assignment you can do individually or with a partner. For this assignment you will research a social media issue that matters to you. Issues might include: accessibility and disability, Black Lives Matter, shadow banning, privacy, ethics, politics—you get it. You will present your research on the platform of your choice. This assignment will also be divided into sections:

1. Identify your issue and platform (5 points credit/no credit)
2. Outline the research (5 points credit/no credit)
3. Write your script or blog (with sources) (5 points credit/no credit)
4. Produce your social media post (15 points)

You may choose one of the following platforms:

1. Series of TikToks
2. Series of IG Stories, Reels, or IGTV
3. YouTube
4. Podcast
5. Blog (500-800 words)
6. Pitch your own

Your final product should be 5-minutes long or shorter or 500-800 words.

Crit-Tik-AI: This is an individual assignment. You have the choice of doing one of two TikTok-centered assignments.

Track 1: Building your TikTok House

Track 2: Building your TikTok brand

These two assignments will have you acting on behalf of an organization (track 1) or yourself (track 2) to

think critically and strategically about one of the most popular platforms in the world: TikTok.

This assignment will not be broken down into smaller components, but you will have the opportunity to submit a rough draft (worth 5 points credit/no credit) and then a final draft (10 points graded).

Social media in practice. The goal for these assignments are to get you engaging and thinking about how to take what you're learning in this class and apply it. I have provided an á la carte approach, where you can pick and choose how you would like to earn these 10 points. For example, you may go to a PR or PR-adjacent event and live tweet it (five points), participate in a Twitter chat and submit a reflection (five points), and complete three TikTok stitches (three points). This will satisfy your "social media in practice" requirement (10 points) and earn you an additional three points of extra credit. You have the whole semester to complete these.

More information on these assignments posted to eCourseware.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced as soon as possible. All assignments are due on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. C.T. unless otherwise noted. More in-depth lecture topics on eCourseware.

Week 1, August 23: Course introduction

Readings: Read the syllabus, get familiar with eCourseware and the assignments
Assignments: No assignments

Week 2, August 30: The framework of social media

Readings: Chapter 1
Assignments: Groups assigned for guest speaker (GS) assignment
Get to know you due 9/5

NOTE: September 5 is the LAST DAY TO DROP.

Week 3, September 6: The dark side of social media

Monday, 9/6: Labor Day
Readings: Chapter 2
Assignments: GS: Identify the guest speaker due 9/12

Week 4, September 13: The benefits of social media

Readings: Chapter 3
Assignments: GS: pitch & invite due 9/19 (or 9/21 if you observe Rosh Hashanah)

Happy Rosh Hashanah (Sept. 18-20)

Week 5, September 20: Mass media to niche media

Readings: Chapter 4
Assignments: GS: Drafting the questions due 9/26

Yom Kippur (Sept. 27-28)

Week 6, September 27: Brands on social

Readings: Chapter 5
Assignments: Guest speaker #1 & #2
Crit-Tik-Al: Rough draft due 10/3

Week 7, October 4: Social media & crisis

Readings: Chapter 6
Assignments: Guest speaker #3

Week 8, October 11: Fall Break (10/9-12) & Recovery Week (10/13-17)

Recovery week: No class, no assignments, no readings for the full week.

NOTE: October 15 is the last day to WITHDRAW (Courses dropped during this period will have "W" grades assigned and will appear on your transcript. Courses cannot be dropped online after this period).

Week 9, October 18: Sports Communication

Readings: Chapter 7
Assignments: Guest speaker #4
Social media issues explained (SMIE): ID issue and platform due 10/24

Week 10, October 25: Political and civic communication

Readings: Chapter 8
Assignments: Guest speaker #5

Week 11, November 1: Health communication

Readings: Chapter 9
Assignments: Guest speaker #6
SMIE: Outline the research due 11/7

Week 12, November 8: Celebrity and influencers

Readings: Chapter 10
Assignments: Guest speaker #7
Crit-Tik-Al: Final draft due 11/14

Week 13, November 15: What's next for social media

Readings: Chapter 12
Assignments: Guest speaker #8
SMIE: Write script or blog due 11/21

Week 14, November 22: Recovery week & Thanksgiving break

Recovery week: No class, no assignments, no readings for the full week.

Week 15, November 29: Last week into finals week

Last full day: Dec. 1
Study Day: Dec. 2
Assignments: Late/missing/redos due 12/1 at 11:59 p.m. This is late policy exempt.
Social media in practice due 12/5
GS: Thank you due 12/5

Exams week: December 3-9, 2021

Assignments: SMIE: final due 12/9 at 10 a.m. (this is the end of your finals period)
What do you meme? due 12/9 at 10 a.m.

Happy Hanukkah! (Dec. 10-18)

Merry Christmas! (Dec. 25)

Happy New Year! (Jan. 1)

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or Squarespace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without

prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty

take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Student who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

COVID-19 protocols for this course

COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy - Masks and Social Distancing

Faculty, staff, students and visitors are expected to monitor current health and safety measure requirements posted to our website and shared through other official communication channels including, but not limited to University email. Definitions

related to those requirements and enforcement mechanisms appear in the [COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy \(GE2040\)](#). Please be reminded that the University currently requires that all persons, regardless of vaccination status, wear masks indoors and in places where appropriate social distancing is not possible.

Classroom experiences from recent semesters have shown that the campus community generally understands and complies voluntarily with the mask requirement. The policy does permit faculty members to take action for non-compliance of mask use. Additionally, if students have concerns about faculty or staff mask use, contact Human Resources at hr@memphis.edu or 901.678.3573. Faculty who are delivering on-campus instruction may remove their face mask to teach, provided they are located within a delineated teaching area that is no less than 6 feet from students.

Student Health

Students who are experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing or a higher than normal temperature should inform me by email so they can be excused from class and should stay home. Students should contact their health care provider or the Student Health Center at <https://www.memphis.edu/health/>.

Students who have a positive COVID-19 test should contact the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@memphis.edu or 901.678.2187.

Testing & Notification

The University will continue to provide testing for the entire campus community. The details regarding test availability and locations can be found [here](#). Do not come to campus if you are experiencing symptoms, are in isolation or quarantine due to positive test results or exposure, pending test results, or have reason to believe you have come in contact with the virus.

Student Resources

Students who need additional resources can contact the Dean of Students Office at <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php>.

Guidelines for classes, labs and equipment in Meeman Journalism Building in Fall 2021

- Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Social distance from all others at least 6 feet when possible.
- Wear a mask at all times when in University buildings and outside when social distancing isn't possible.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.
- No more than one person in the elevator at a time.
- Disinfect your workstation before and after use, including desks, keyboards, mice and

screens. Wash your hands after cleaning.

- Air purifiers must run at all times during class meetings.