



MMC 3630 -- Social Media & Society (Fall 2024)

Instructor: Sunny (Qing) Xu

Meeting Time: Online, Completely Asynchronous

Office Hours: Wednesday 9-11 AM or by appointment (<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/94829641877>)

Contact: qingxu@ufl.edu

Response/feedback policy: typically respond within 48 hours except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks; please send me the email again if you do not hear back from me after 48 hours.

Course Objectives and Goals

The goal of "Social Media & Society" is to explore the impact of social media on contemporary society. Students will learn how social media affects communication, culture, politics, interpersonal relationships and so forth. The course will develop students' critical thinking skills and provide theoretical frameworks for analyzing social media's influence on public opinion, identity, and social behavior. Additionally, students will investigate ethical issues, the digital divide, and how social media can both empower and marginalize different groups. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain the fundamentals of social media
- Understand how traditional media theories incorporate social media
- Understand different types of social media channels
- Discuss ways companies use social media for marketing and audience engagements
- Debate ethical decision-making for social media
- Describe professional social media etiquette
- Understand how social media has impacted every industry in profound ways
- Critically evaluate the benefits and challenges of social media
- Form informed perspectives on the future and trends of social media

Readings

There are no required textbooks for this class. All the readings and videos will be posted on Canvas or E-Learning <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

Select “e-Learning in Canvas,” and log in using your Gatorlink ID. If you have problems with Canvas or any computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk by email (helpdesk@ufl.edu) or by phone (352-392-4357).

Outcome Measurements

This course is offered online only via Canvas. All deadlines are set in Eastern Time. It is the student’s responsibility to adhere to this schedule. Each week may include video lectures, readings, discussion topics, and assignments.

Video Introduction	5%
Weekly Reflections (3 x 5%)	15%
Midterm/Final exam (2 x 15%)	30%
Online Discussion Leader	20%
Final Project Proposal	10%
Final Project Report	20%
Total	100%
Extra credits	3%

Ice-breaking Video Introduction (Due Saturday 8/31 @ 11:59PM). To foster virtual connections, please upload a 2–3 minutes self-introduction video in the discussion forum. Feel free to share any relevant information you are comfortable with, such as your year in school, major, hobbies, hometown, and career plans.

Weekly Reflections (Due Saturday @ 11:59PM on selected weeks). To maintain active interactions in our online community, please post at least one paragraph reflections in the discussion forum during three weeks of your choosing. These reflections can include questions, critiques, written comments, or practical examples.

Midterm/Final exam (Midterm due Saturday 11/12 @ 11:59 PM, Final due Wednesday 12/4 @ 11:59 PM). Exams will include single-choice, multiple-choice, true-false, and open-ended questions based on lecture videos and readings. The midterm will cover material from weeks 1-7, while the final will cover material from weeks 8-14. Additional details will be provided throughout the semester. Barring emergencies, missed exams cannot be made up.

Online Discussion Leader. You will lead a Canvas-based discussion during a week of your choice. As a discussion leader, you are responsible for directing discussions, referencing lecture

points (with supporting sources for your views), and engaging with / responding to classmates and the instructor.

- **Sign-Up:** A sign-up discussion will be pinned in Canvas, with no more than two leaders per week. Select your week by the end of Week 3 (9/7) to avoid losing points.
- **Preparation:** Research the topics in advance to effectively contribute to the discussion.
- **Participation:** When not leading, respond to the leader's prompts with original, valuable comments.
- **Format:** You are welcome to use written proposal, slides, attached videos and more to structure your topic.

Final Project (Proposal Due Saturday 10/5 @ 11:59 PM; Final Report Due Saturday 12/7 @ 11:59 PM). Designing a real-world social media campaign is an opportunity for you to delve deeply into a topic of your choice related to the course, allowing you to apply the concepts and theories discussed in class to a practical issue. Here are guidelines for the real-world social media campaign:

- **Topic Selection:** Choose a topic related to the course content that you are passionate about. Submit a brief proposal (about 250 words) outlining your chosen topic, its relevance, and your planned approach by Week 7 (10/5). I am more than happy to discuss it with you during office hours.
- **Campaign Objectives:** Clearly define the objectives of your campaign (e.g., raising awareness, driving engagement, promoting a cause, etc.). Identify your target audience and explain why they are relevant to your campaign.
- **Research and Strategy:** Conduct thorough research on existing campaigns related to your topic. Develop a detailed strategy that includes your key messages, tone, and content plan.
- **Content Creation:** Create a variety of content pieces (e.g., posts, images, videos, infographics) tailored to different social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Ensure your content aligns with the objectives and appeals to your target audience.
- **Written Report:** Your report should include an introduction, objectives, target audience, research, strategy, content examples, and a conclusion. Follow APA formatting for your references and citations.

Extra credits (Due 12/4 @ 11:59 PM). Up to 3 extra credits (out of 100) will be offered for research participation through [CJC's SONA research management system](#). Please register a SONA account and choose studies to participate in to receive extra credits for this class.

Grading Scale

A (93-100)	B (83-86)	C (73-76)	D (63-66)
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A- (90-92)	B- (80-82)	C- (70-72)	D- (60-62)
B+ (87-89)	C+ (77-79)	D+ (67-69)	E (Below 60)

The university policies concerning this grading scale can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Policies

Flexibility. We believe the semester plan outlined in the calendar is realistic. However, the instructor reserves the right to adjust the course content, assignments, exams, and other activities based on the class's overall ability to maintain the planned pace. Disclaimer Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change

Attendance. Although this course is entirely online, you are expected to watch the weekly lectures and complete all assignments by the posted due dates. Relevant university policies can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Late/Makeup Work. All assignments are due by the posted deadlines. Students are advised to plan their schedules to accommodate all course requirements and avoid last-minute submissions. However, I understand that sometimes life happens. Exceptions to the late or makeup submission policy will only be considered for acceptable reasons, such as documented emergencies (e.g., medical emergencies, family emergencies). Please notify the instructor before the due date and provide an appropriate alternative timeframe for completion.

Incomplete. A course grade of incomplete will be permitted only for serious illness documented by a physician. A timetable for completing the course work must be set before the incomplete is given.

Netiquette. All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [CISE Netiquette Guide.pdf \(ufl.edu\)](#)

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at

<https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

University Policies

University Policy on Academic Misconduct. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/wpcontent/uploads/sites/4/2018/08/The-Orange-Book-Web.pdf>

The University of Florida Honor Code reads as follows:

The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by Students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

Student Conduct Code. All students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students’ responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

Plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others’ ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others.

Cheating. Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes, in physical or electronic form, in an exam, submitting the work of another as one’s own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student’s responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

University resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care](#) website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center](#) website

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department](#) website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center](#) website

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell](#) website or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

A list of useful UF resources can be found here: <http://www.ufl.edu/academics/resources>

Course Calendar (subject to change)

Week/Date	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 8/22-8/24	Course Introduction/What is Media/Communication	
Week 2 8/25-8/31	What's Social Media?	Video Introduction Due 8/31 @ 11:59 PM
Week 3 9/1-9/7	Social Media & Users	Discussion Leader Sign-up Due 9/7 @ 11:59 PM
Week 4 9/8-9/14	Social Media Effects	
Week 5 9/15-9/21	CMC/Social Cognitive Theory	
Week 6 9/22-9/28	Agenda Setting & Framing	
Week 7 9/29-10/5	Social Media Literacy	Personal project topic selection Due 10/5 @ 11:59 PM
Week 8 10/6-10/12	Midterm	Due 11/12 @ 11:59 PM
Week 9	Social Media & Self	

10/13-10/19		
Week 10 10/20-10/26	Social Media & News	
Week 11 10/27-11/2	Social Media & Politics	
Week 12 11/3-11/9	Social Media & AI	
Week 13 11/10-11/16	Social Media & Marketing	
Week 14 11/17-11/23	Social Media Entertainment & Well-being	Final Project Proposal Due 11/23 @ 11:59 PM
Week 15 11/24-11/30	Happy Thanksgiving (∩_∩)	
Week 16 12/1-12/7	Final Exam Work on Final Project	Final Exam Due 12/4 @ 11:59 PM Final Project Due 11/7 @ 11:59 PM