

MMC 3630 --
Social Media & Society
Spring 2025

Instructor: Matt Cretul, Ph.D.

Course Section/Number: UFO1

Room: Course held online through elearning/Canvas

Office Hours: Virtual (Meeting link will be posted in Canvas) Tue & Thurs 12p-1p

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Socials: Twitter: [CretulTweets](#) Instagram: [Instacretul](#) Snapchat: Snapcretul TikTok: CretulTok

Course Objectives and Goals

This course is designed to explore the impact of social media on our lives from a personal and professional perspective. Social media is impacting how we engage with family, friends, coworkers, and businesses. It impacts how and which media we consume. It turns casual fans into fanatics. It helps keep us better informed. And it provides us with information on what is going on in politics, sports, business, news, entertainment, and weather. But social media is also dividing us and creating vast echo chambers of ideology used to spread dissent, hatred, and propaganda. In this course, we will look at each of these dynamics....and more. By the end of the semester, students will develop a greater understanding of the prevalence of social media in all aspects of their lives.

Objectives

1. Explain the fundamentals of social media and the theories that attempt to explain their effects
2. Understand how traditional media theories incorporate social media
3. Compare and contrast social media and traditional media
4. Discuss how to use social media to enhance traditional media strategies
5. Understand different types of social media channels
6. Discuss ways companies use social media for marketing and audience engagement
7. Describe professional social media etiquette
8. Debate ethical decision-making for social media
9. Understand how social media has impacted multiple industries in profound ways

Textbooks

- Social media is a rapidly changing area and the skills students needed just a few years ago are already outdated. For this reason, few textbooks are as up-to-date as needed to cover the skills you will need for a job when you graduate. Therefore, all the material you will need for this course comes in lectures and online readings.
- To access, 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).

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. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully.](#) 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 ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. [Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.](#)

Class demeanor expected

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy along with applicable university policies in all online activities, as these are extensions of the course. The University's Netiquette guide can be found in the files section of our Canvas course page.

Attendance

While this course is 100% online, you are expected to watch the weekly lectures and complete all assignments and other work by the posted due date. Failure to do so may adversely affect your ability to learn, as well as your grade in the course.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students may only participate in classes if they are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors. Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first class meeting onward. Acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to engage in class include illness; Title IX-related situations; serious accidents or emergencies affecting the student, their roommates, or their family; special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences); military obligation; severe weather conditions that prevent class participation; religious holidays; participation in official university activities (e.g., music performances, athletic competition, debate); and court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena). Other reasons (e.g., a job interview or club activity) may be deemed acceptable if approved by the instructor.

For all planned absences, a student in a situation that allows an excused absence from a class, or any required class activity must inform the instructor as early as possible before the class. For all unplanned absences because of accidents or emergencies, students should contact their instructor as soon as conditions permit. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered during absence from class or inability to engage in class activities because of the reasons outlined above.

If a student does not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which they are registered, and they have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, the student can be dropped from the course. Students must not assume that they will be dropped, however. The department will notify students if they have been dropped from a course or laboratory. The university recognizes the right of the instructor to make attendance mandatory and to require documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

Late/Makeup Work

All work is expected to be turned in on or before the posted due date. Although, I do understand sometimes life happens. If for any reason you feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date if possible, to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. **Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans or official university, legal, or medical documentation will not be accepted.** If an assignment (or assignments) is (are) missed for an acceptable reason, I will work with you individually to come up with an alternative timeline for completing the assignment(s), ensuring that adequate time is allowed for completion.

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows: *“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.”*

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.”

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

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.

UNIVERSITY-PROVIDED STUDENT RESOURCES

If you feel at any time as though the semester is getting too rough or beyond your control and you need to access any of the university-provided counseling services, please don’t hesitate to contact the instructor if you are unsure how to proceed. You can find additional info below:

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.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#)

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without the permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a

recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Assignments

(Individual rubrics for each assignment, including how the assignment will be graded are available on Canvas)

Online Discussion Leader – This will be your chance to lead a virtual Canvas-based discussion during one of the weeks of your choosing. You will be responsible for directing and driving discussions, referring to points made in the lecture (even if you may not agree with a point, you can offer your point of view just make sure to have sources to back up your position), and interacting with your classmates (and me if I engage) to offer responses to their posts. There will be a sign-up discussion pinned in Canvas, with no more than two discussion leaders per week.

You MUST have your week selected by the start of week 3 (1/27) or there may not be a week available for you to sign up for, which means a zero for your assignment grade. In advance of the week you choose, it would be worth it to do a bit of research to understand the topics being discussed, as well as material to add to the discussion if needed. In weeks where you are not a discussion leader, your role will be to respond to the leader's prompts with original thoughts/comments that provide value and add to the topic(s) being discussed. I understand the course is asynchronous, so this assignment will extend 2 weeks past the calendar week you signed up for.

Social Media Diary – Starting week 5 (the week of 2/10) you will be asked to keep a diary of your social media usage beginning Mon. 2/10 through Wed. 3/12. This includes all social media accessed from your tablet, mobile device, smart TV, or any other means not listed. Once you have completed capturing your usage data, you will begin analyzing it for any trends that may stand out (usage times, durations, specific platforms, etc.). You will then detail your usage and trends in a report (visual aids and written analyses) along with offering critiques and observations. The assignment will be due on Sun. 3/31 @ at 11:59 pm. **It is recommended and HIGHLY ADVISED that you utilize the screen time feature on your devices and not rely on manually capturing your usage.**

Midterm/Final Exam – The midterm and final will be a mixture of multiple-choice answers, fill-in-the-blank, & medium answer questions. They will test your knowledge and understanding of the subjects covered during the semester. The midterm will take place the week of 3/10 and will cover weeks 1-8, while the final exam will take place during the week of 4/28 and cover weeks 10-16 (with some bleed-over from weeks 1-8). The exams will be open for 48 hours and you will have a set amount of time during that window in which to take them. More information on each will be given during the semester.

Online Discussion Participation – While I do not have a post limit or minimum, I expect you to play an active role in taking part in the weekly discussion. I will monitor the discussion threads throughout the semester and will take note of who is/is not participating. You don't have to be active EVERY week, but you do most weeks. It's ok to take a week or two off, but any more than

two weeks without a post will result in a loss of points on the assignment. I look at this as a virtual class discussion as if we were meeting in person.

Video Introduction – This is your chance to introduce yourself to your classmates. By the end of week 2 (Sunday 1/26 @ 11:59 pm), you should upload a 2-3-minute video introducing yourself and any relevant information you feel comfortable passing along (year in school, major, hobbies, favorite movies, artists, pets, general location, e.g., city, state, country, work experience, social media experience, etc.). This helps everyone put a face to a name and makes the discussion participation a bit more personal.

Grading

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found [here](#):

You will be evaluated, and your grades will be determined by your ability to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding relating to the assignment subject matter. It is expected that you will use proper spelling and grammar when asked to write (this includes weekly discussion posts, social media diary, and all tests), and that you will follow the specific prompts in each assignment rubric.

Grading Components

200 points (Midterm)
+ 200 points (Final Exam)
+ 150 points (Online Discussion Leader Assignment)
+ 250 points (Social Media Diary Assignment)
+ 100 points (Online Discussion Participation)
+ 100 points (Video introduction)
= 1000 points total

Grading Scale

A	(930-1000)
A-	(900-929)
B+	(870-899)
B	(830-869)
B-	(800-829)
C+	(770-799)
C	(730-769)
C-	(700-729)
D+	(670-699)
D	(630-669)
D-	(600-629)
E	(below 599)

Spring 2025 Topic, Reading & Assignment Schedule

*Instructor reserves the right to amend and change the lecture schedule and class plan as needed.

<u>WEEK</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
Week #1	1/13	Course Intro/What is Media & Communication
Week #2	1/20	What is Social Media
Week #3	1/27	Media Theory/Media Effects
Week #4	2/3	Digitally Mediated Communication
Week #5	2/10	Social Cognitive Theory
Week #6	2/17	Agenda Setting/Framing/Priming
Week #7	2/24	Social Media Literacy
Week #8	3/3	Social Media & You
Week #9	3/10	Midterm
Week #10	3/17	SPRING BREAK
Week #11	3/24	Social Media & Sports
Week #12	3/31	Social Media & Entertainment
Week #13	4/7	Social Media & News
Week #14	4/14	Social Media & Politics/Government
Week #15	4/21	Social Media & Advertising
Week #16	4/28	Final exam