

Social Media Theory and Practice

JOUR 7330/8330-01

Spring 2011

Monday 5:30p.m. to 8:30p.m.

Meeman 112

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COURSE-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

This course will combine theory and practice to help you develop your understanding of the many changes rocking the media landscape and build the skills you will need to join the fray.

Social media is altering how journalists and public relations professionals do their jobs and how we communicate in a Web 2.0 world. You will read research and theory by some of the most formative thinkers in our field examining the impact of social and new media and applying these core concepts to your real-world use of digital tools. We will be actively using blogs, RSS feeds, Twitter, widgets, social bookmarking, mapping, and other Web 2.0 tools to produce and curate content and interact with other professionals in our field and reflecting critically on this experience.

It's important to note that particular sites like Twitter or Foursquare may come and go in this fast-changing environment in which it seems every month brings with it a new must-have app, toy, or social network. Ultimately, this course hopes to foster the meta-skill of applying the core values of journalistic practice to new media forms in productive, creative, and intelligent ways. Flexibility and the ability to experiment and think critically will perhaps be among the most vital abilities of the new era.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how social media is changing the media landscape and what that means for the present and future of news, advertising and public relations
 - Build your knowledge of the latest theory and research on social media
 - Learn how to use a variety of social media tools from Posterous to Foursquare and beyond effectively as a media professional.
 - Understand how to analyze and evaluate your social media performance so that you can continue to improve it.
 - Hone your writing, reporting/researching, and multimedia production skills.
1. Be sure you have **read the material** BEFORE class and come prepared to discuss it. Class participation will count toward your grade.
 2. **Assignments:** You will receive a wide variety of assignments throughout the semester designed to help you apply core journalism principles and relevant theory to new media skills. Students taking the class at the **8000 level** must additionally complete a 5-10 page research paper in which they synthesize research on a specific topic related to social media use.

3. **Reflection Blog:** You will be maintaining a blog throughout the semester in which you reflect critically on readings and your experiences using social media and how they apply to your current or future professional life. Borrowing a concept used at NYU, these blogs will function like “travelogues” -- travel journals or field reporting -- from the social networking sites and new media ventures we will explore.
4. How to turn in assignments: Please turn in assignments as a Microsoft Word document or as a link to your blog post (as specified in class) via email. **You MUST use relevant email subject lines;** I get a lot of email and that helps me to keep track of things. If your email does not have a relevant subject line, it may not be graded. No dead trees allowed.
5. **CHECK YOUR EMAIL AT LEAST ONCE A DAY. I use it frequently to communicate with the class.**
6. **LATE WORK.** Normally I’m relatively laid back about this in graduate classes, but there will be too many students in the class and too wide a variety of assignments for me to keep track of work if it’s not submitted on time. Deadlines are 11:59 pm on the day the assignment is due unless otherwise specified. **Work received more than 24 hours late will NOT BE ACCEPTED** unless you have made specific prior arrangements with me.
7. **Attendance.** You are graduate students, so I’m assuming this is something you learned long ago. But please don’t miss more than one class. Your presence helps contribute to our class discussion and make it more productive for us all. If you have a repeated problem with attendance your final grade in the course will be penalized.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS:

Doctoral students taking the class at the 8000 level must additionally complete a 15 to 20-page research paper in which they synthesize research on a specific topic related to social media.

TEXTBOOKS:

- Shirky, Clay. Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations (2008).
- Briggs, Mark. Journalism Next. (2009) CQ Press.

OTHER ISSUES:

- A variety of additional articles will be assigned and will be available online or distributed to you via email or will be available using the UM drive. The UM drive is accessible from MyMemphis under the eCampus Resources tab (on the top left).
- **While not required, I strongly encourage all students to have a laptop computer and/or a smart phone (iPhone, Pre, Blackberry, etc.) and broadband home Internet access.** I realize this is an expensive proposition for some folks and I’m extremely respectful of student finances. However, I fundamentally believe that to be a good journalist or PR practitioner in the 21st century and to prepare for your future more generally, you should be a true Web native – reading, playing, connecting, and creating (yes, Facebook counts as “work” in this equation) online all the time. It’s how you develop a strong news sense and hone your skills as a producer of content. It’s worth the investment.

GRADING:

Personal Reflection Blog:	45 percent
Assignments:	45 percent
Attendance & Participation:	10 percent

TENTATIVE TIMETABLE

****Please note: Syllabus is subject to change.****

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

- Explanation of course objectives, expectations, syllabus
- Preparing for a changing profession: Why understanding social media and Web 2.0 matters
- Watch Social Media Revolution video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIFYPQjYhv8> and Googlezon video: <http://idorosen.com/mirrors/robinsloan.com/epic/>
- Quick intro to using Tumblr/Posterous, advantages/ disadvantages

Assignment: Set up your personal reflection blog using Tumblr or Posterous. This is where you will be recording your “travelogues,” or your experiences using the various new/social media we will be using in the class, as well as your reactions to the readings and class discussions. Please note one of these is due almost every week of the semester.

Your first post should answer the following questions:

1. What forms of social media do you currently use, and how do you use them? For example, do you use Facebook, and if so, for what purposes? When and about how often?
2. What do you hope to get out of this class?
3. Describe one of the main ways you think social media is changing journalism, advertising and/or public relations.

Here are a few examples of common social media tools you might use: Twitter, Flickr, Digg, Friendfeed, LinkedIn, Wordpress, YouTube, Posterous, Tumblr, MySpace, Foursquare, etc.

Week 2: Disruptive Forces Affecting Journalism, Advertising, and Public Relations

- Everyone is a media outlet
- Publish, then filter
- Two-way communication with audiences/customers
- Changes to business models and best practices

Read: Shirky Chapters 1-3

- “Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable”
<http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/>
- Johnson “Old Growth Media and the Future of News”
<http://www.stevenberlinjohnson.com/2009/03/the-following-is-a-speech-i-gave-yesterday-at-the-south-by-southwest-interactive-festival-in-austiniif-you-happened-to-being.html>
- Selected chapter from “Crush It” by Gary Vaynerchuk, and from Trust Agents by Chris Brogan

Assignment:

1. Personal reflection blog post on the readings. What was the most interesting/important thing you learned and why? How can you apply what you read to your life and work?
2. Choosing your “beat.” It is VERY IMPORTANT to choose wisely, so put some serious thought into this. [Note: I’m calling this a beat, which is a journalism term, but it should be quite obvious that your beat could be a client or industry that a PR or ad professional might be working with or for.] Choose a subject you are interested in and passionate about, personally or professionally. This could be anything from bowling to city/county consolidation to local bakeries to the Memphis hip hop scene to the aviation industry to a particular company, industry or cause you are interested in promoting and/or understanding. Consider your post-graduation goals, but be sure you genuinely care about

the subject. It will be critical for you to narrow your topic as much as possible. Explain what you chose and why in a second post on your reflection blog, as well as who you might think would be interested in reading it (hint: if you can't answer the last question with any specificity, your topic is probably too broad).

Week 3: Blogging

- Basics of blogging using Wordpress
- Why journalists and public relations practitioners blog
- RSS feeds
- Discussion of your blog topics, feedback from the class
- What makes blogging social?
- Blogging vs. Journalism (please make it stop)

Read:

Briggs Chapters 1 & 2

- “Why beatblog?” by Patrick Thorton, Beatblogging.org
<http://beatblogging.org/2009/04/25/bcni-philly-why-beatblog-and-why-news-should-be-social/>
- Technorati State of the Blogosphere 2009 <http://technorati.com/blogging/article/day-1-who-are-the-bloggers1/>
- Li, Dan Why Do You Blog: A *Uses-and-Gratifications* Inquiry Into Bloggers' Motivations. Conference Papers -- International Communication Association; 2007 Annual Meeting, p1-1, 1p
- Rosen, Jay. Bloggers vs. Journalists is Over
http://journalism.nyu.edu/pubzone/weblogs/pressthink/2005/01/21/berk_essay.html

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog reaction to the readings. A)What did you find interesting or important? How was it relevant to your personal or professional life? B)Do you agree with Rosen that bloggers vs. journalists is over?
- Set up blog on Wordpress, including “About Me” and “About This Blog”
- Develop a list of other blogs or Web sites that meaningfully cover the same or similar topic to you. Summarize some of the key features of each blog or site using bullet points, and describe what you like/don't like about them. You are essentially analyzing the competition/collaboration partners. Can you identify an unfilled niche for your blog, or something you can do differently or better?
- Set up blogroll, using above list
- Set up Google Reader and select at least 10 RSS feeds to monitor related to your beat (can also use your list)
- Set up Google Alerts

Week 4: Microblogging (Twitter)

- Using Twitter for reporting/finding information/monitoring a topic or issue
- Using Twitter for promotion
- Twitter and conversation – Getting to know people

Read:

Briggs Chapter 4

- “How to Verify a Tweet” by Craig Kanalley in Twitter Journalism:
<http://www.twitterjournalism.com/2009/06/25/how-to-verify-a-tweet/>
- Selected chapter from Chris Brogan's Social Media 101

The following two links are resources you should skim over and bookmark for reference:

- “Basic Twitter Links for Journalists” by Patrick LaForge:
<http://palafo.com/2009/06/20/basic-twitter-links-for-journalists/>
- Twitter Guide Book” by Mashable <http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/>

Assignment:

- Set up Twitter account (if haven’t already)
- Live Tweeting an event (related to your beat) See handout. Don’t forget the hashtag!
- Over the course of the next week, identify at least 10 individuals who often tweet about your beat blog topic, and create a list for them. Offer at least one thoughtful and meaningful response to at least one of them.
- Reflect on your personal reflection blog a)One way you think Twitter is most relevant or useful to you personally and professionally b)Evaluate the way the 10 individuals above are using Twitter effectively, or not
- Use widget to show your Twitter feed on your blog

Week 5: Crowdsourcing, Collaboration, and Networking

- Using social media can help you develop sources of information, get feedback, find answers to questions, and nurture contacts (and even...make friends)
- Feedback via social media can help you understand what your audience/customers want and how to serve them

Reading: Shirky Chapters 5 and 6

Briggs Chapter 3

10 Rules for Increasing Community Engagement [http://mashable.com/2009/12/16/community-engagement/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:%20Mashable%20\(Mashable\)&utm_content=Google%20Reader](http://mashable.com/2009/12/16/community-engagement/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:%20Mashable%20(Mashable)&utm_content=Google%20Reader) by Leah Betancourt (Mashable)

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog: React to readings
- Leave at least one comment on another student’s reflection blog
- Crowdsourcing assignment (see handout for details). You will be using crowdsourcing to develop your next Wordpress blog post on your beat.

Week 6: Telling and Sharing Your Story With Photos

- Some introductory basics
- When to use photographs
- Flickr, Picasa, Facebook, and other photo sharing tools

Read: Briggs Chapter 4

Resource: 10 Great Photoshop Tutorials on YouTube <http://mashable.com/2010/04/11/youtube-photoshop-tutorials/>

Assignment:

- You will need to produce 5-10 GOOD photographs on a subject/at an event related to your beat. (You will want to take many more and select from those). Upload photos to Flickr and Picasa using appropriate hashtag. Share them using Twitter. Leave comment on at least one other students’ photo.
- Personal reflection blog post on your experiences taking and uploading the photographs. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of the sites you’ve used? How can you continue to use photos to enhance your beat blog?

Week 7: Telling and Sharing Your Story With Video

- Some introduction to how to do video

- When to use video
- Examination of YouTube, Vimeo, Blip.tv, Ustream, Livestream and other social video sharing services

Read: Briggs Chapter 8

Assignment:

- Video related to your beat using department Flip cameras, uploaded to YouTube and shared via social media
- Personal reflection blog post: Reflect on your experiences producing and sharing video. Also, identify videos made and posted on your subject or topic on YouTube and analyze if they used video effectively.
- Leave a comment on a video related to your beat.
- Leave a comment on another students' video

Week 8: Location, Location, Location

- Intro to Foursquare, Gowalla, Loopt, Yelp, etc. and their journalistic and persuasive communications applications
- Mobile: The future?
- Look at visualizations and consider possible secondary uses for data, like weeplaces

Read: Briggs Chapter 5

- 21 Unique Location Examples from Foursquare, Gowalla, Whrrl, and MyTown by Jason Keith <http://socialfresh.com/foursquare-case-studies/>
- 7 Ways Journalists Can Use Foursquare <http://mashable.com/2010/05/14/journalists-foursquare/> by Shane Snow
- Mobile Internet Access is Now Mainstream http://www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org/news_blog/comments/20100707_mobile_internet_access_is_now_mainstream_pew_research_shows/
- Resource to bookmark: <http://www.journaliststoolbox.org/archive/mobile-journalism/> Mobile Journalism from SPJ Journalism Toolbox

Assignment:

- Reflection blog post: On readings and reflect on using Foursquare for one week. What kinds of potential do YOU see for journalists/public relations practitioners?
- How could location-aware applications enhance YOUR beat blog?
- Leave at least one tip
- Write a review for Yelp

Week 9: Data and Mapping

- Learning to create a map using Google Maps
- How and why journalists and public relations practitioners might use data and maps
- How mapping and data can be social: Searchable databases, Document Cloud, services like Map My Run, etc.

Reading: Briggs Chapter 9

- “The "Lack of Vision" thing? Well, here's a hopeful vision for you” Dan Conover, Xark http://xark.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/05/the-lack-of-vision-thing-well-heres-a-vision-for-you.html
- “Government Online” Pew Internet <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Government-Online.aspx>
- 5 Ways to find, mix and mash your data <http://www.10000words.net/2009/11/5-ways-to-find-mix-and-mash-your-data/>

- How the Semantic Web Can Connect News and Make Stories More Accessible by Matt Baume <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=31&aid=185843>

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog post on readings, what you found most interesting or important
- Mapping assignment (see handout)
- Find a source of data relevant to your beat. Describe why it is relevant and how you might utilize it.

Week 10: Two Way Street: Journalism as Conversation

- Theory of conversation
- Cultivating community
- Blog Comments

Reading: Briggs Chapter 10

- Selections from Journalism as Conversation by Doreen Marchionni: <http://blog.sasquatchmedia.com/>
- Continuing the Participatory Revolution by Steve Yelvington <http://www.yelvington.com/content/continuing-participatory-revolution>
- Why Comments Suck (And Some Ideas on Unsucking Them), Xark http://xark.typepad.com/my_weblog/2009/05/why-comments-suck-ideas-on-unsucking-them.html
- If you can't manage comments well, don't offer them <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/people/robert/201003/1836/>
- Selected reading on use of Twitter by Comcast and MLGW to engage with customers.
- Selected chapter from Social Media 101 by Chris Brogan

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog: a)reflect on readings b)do you think news organizations should allow comments? Why? How should they handle them? c)how should a company such as FedEx or an organization such as the Red Cross handle comments on its Web site/blogs?
- Leaving comments in at least three different social media forms related to your beat

Week 11: Social Media Demographics And Uses and Gratifications

- Who is using social media? Are there any differences in how different groups use social media?
- Bridging and bonding social capital
- How or why are people using social media, and how should that shape your strategy in using it effectively?

Reading:

- How social media can help journalists reach ethnographically diverse groups: <http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=58&aid=186491> by Angie Chuang, Poynter
- Viewing American Class Divisions Through Facebook and MySpace <http://www.danah.org/papers/essays/ClassDivisions.html> and MySpace and Facebook: How Racist Language Frames Social Media (and Why You Should Care) <http://www.zephorio.org/thoughts/archives/2010/07/21/myspace-and-facebook-how-racist-language-frames-social-media-and-why-you-should-care.html> by danah boyd
- How Black People Use Twitter by Farhad Manjoo, Slate: <http://www.slate.com/id/2263462> and response by Jessica Faye Carter

<http://jessicafayecarter.com/a-response-to-farhad-manjoods-how-black-people-use-twitter/>

- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog post: a) What was most interesting/important aspect of the readings for you? How will you use the information personally or professionally? b) What do you think of what Manjoo had to say and the response by Carter?
- Research and describe the demographics of the target audience of your blog.
- Start working on project for your beat blog on WordPress (see handout for details)

Week 12: Building Audience

- Learn the basics of SEO, understanding your metrics

Read: Briggs Chapter 11

- Selected chapter from *Social Media 101* by Chris Brogan and *Engage* by Brian Solis
- The missing Google Analytics manual by Bryan Eisenberg
<http://www.grokdotcom.com/2009/02/16/the-missing-google-analytics-manual/>
- What Web Analytics Can - And Can't - Tell You about Your Site's Traffic and Audience
<http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=31&aid=188162> by Dorian Benk
- Wall Street Journal
http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703940904575395073512989404.html?mod=WSJ_hps_LEFTTopStories#project=COOKIESLIDE1007&articleTabs=article vs. Jeff Jarvis: <http://www.buzzmachine.com/2010/07/31/cookie-madness/>

Assignment:

- Personal reflection blog post. A) what can be gained by a good understanding of analytics? B) Can chasing page views and other metrics have any negative aspects? What does it mean for news judgment?
- SEO practice exercise
- Begin charting your blog analytics (final summary will be due at end of semester)

Week 13: Web Curation and Linking

- What is curation, and why does it matter?
- How has gatekeeping and agenda setting changed in the 21st century?
- Why is linking so important on the Web?

Reading:

- Littau, J., Brown, C., Hendrickson, E. and Oyedeji, T. "Curated Creativity: The relationship between Twitter use and blog productivity." Presented at the AEJMC conference, Denver, 2010.
- Curation, and Journalists As Curators by Mindy McAdams
<http://mindymcadams.com/tojou/2008/curation-and-journalists-as-curators/>
- Watch Rosen, Jay "The Ethic of the Link"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIMB9Kx18hw>
- Content is No Longer King. Curation Is King by Scott Rosenberg
<http://www.businessinsider.com/content-is-no-longer-king-curation-is-king-2010-6>
- The Link Economy vs. the Content Economy by Jeff Jarvis
<http://www.buzzmachine.com/2008/06/18/the-link-economy-v-the-content-economy/>
Related video: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/video/2008/jun/24/jarvis.future2>
- What is link journalism? Publish2 <http://blog.publish2.com/what-is-link-journalism/>

- Why Does the BBC Want to Send It's Readers Away? The Value of Linking
<http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/05/why-does-the-bbc-want-to-send-its-readers-away-the-value-of-linking/>
- The case against linking http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/links_in_text.php

Assignment:

- Personal reflection post. A)react to readings B)Do you thinking linking has value, or should it be limited or avoided? Why?
- Linking/curation exercise related to your beat
- Work on blog project

Week 14: Privacy: The Big Bugaboo

- The privacy debate: Just how concerned should we be? How do we evaluate the relative advantages of privacy vs. openness?
- How are social media shaping our society in terms of what we share and what we keep private?
- How should journalists and public relations practitioners respond to/anticipate/handle public concerns about privacy?
- Are social norms surrounding privacy changing, and if so, how?
- Who is responsible for protecting privacy?

Read

- Facebook's Move Ain't About Changes in Privacy Norms, by danah boyd:
http://www.zephorio.org/thoughts/archives/2010/01/16/facebooks_move.html
- Oversharing on Oversharing by Jeff Jarvis
[http://www.buzzmachine.com/2010/06/21/oversharing-on-oversharing/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+buzzmachine+\(BuzzMachine\)](http://www.buzzmachine.com/2010/06/21/oversharing-on-oversharing/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+buzzmachine+(BuzzMachine))
- The Web Means the End of Forgetting, Jeffrey Rosen, NYT magazine
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/25/magazine/25privacy-t2.html>
- Facebook's Gone Rouge, by Ryan Singel
<http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2010/05/facebook-rogue>

Assignment:

Reflection post

Prepare for class debate

Week 15: Bringing It Home – Review and Small Group Presentations

- Review of main themes of the course
- Each group will present an article on an issue related to social media or a form of social media that we did not have time to discuss in class

Reading: Finish Shirky Book

10 Questions for Journalists by Matt Thompson

<http://www.rjionline.org/projects/thompson/stories/journalism-overload/index.php>

Assignment:

Concluding Reaction Post

Finish beat blog project

DEPARTMENT-WIDE POLICIES

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the University.

CELLPHONES:

You must turn them off during class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to 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). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

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

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at (901) 678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that

class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.