

# Social Media & Society

JRSM 4910-001

Spring 2024

Class Meeting: M/W - 12:40 - 2:05 pm MJ 100

## Prof. Taylor Ackerman, MA, APR

She/Her

**Office:** Meeman 332

**Office hours:** Monday, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 11 a.m. – noon; 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, 11 a.m. - noon

If you'd like to meet for the office hours listed, please reach out via text (731-225-7656) prior to dropping by so I can make sure I'm in my office. I'm also available via Zoom outside of the listed office hours upon request.

**Email:** [tckerman@memphis.edu](mailto:tckerman@memphis.edu)

## 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.

### Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Luttrell, R., & Wallace, A. *Social Media & Society: An Introduction to the Mass Media Landscape* (2021).

Additional articles required for class will be shared on Canvas.

### Classroom format

Our class will meet in person in room 100 in the Meeman Journalism building twice a week. Attending class is imperative and necessary for your success in this class, as a large part of your grade will depend on in-class activities and discussion.

This semester, we'll be discussing how social media impacts our society - how we get our news, how businesses communicate, politics, entertainment, activism, interpersonal relationships, and more. In order to do this, we'll rely on thoughtful class discussions, lectures, slide decks, activities, and assignments. Your learning will be assessed through discussions, activities, assignments, quizzes, and an impact report that will require interviews surrounding a specific topic related to social media. All assignments will be turned in through our course shell in Canvas.

### Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis online learning home page: <http://memphis.instructure.com>

2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. Click on the link for JRSM 4910 to enter our course

### **Course Requirements**

This course will require access to technology, diligence in engaging with each week's course content including readings, bringing forward thoughtful discussion, application of course material to real world examples, and communication with the instructor and other classmates. At times, you will work in a group during in class activities. Class discussions should always remain respectful, supportive, and open to hearing differing perspectives or ideas. Hate speech or aggressive language towards another student will not be tolerated at any time and could result in being asked to leave the class. If it were occur more than once, you could be dropped from the class for misconduct.

### **Course & Campus Resources**

**Support:** If at any point in the semester you are struggling with the course load or a specific assignment, please reach out to me for a meeting so we can work to get you back on track. I'm happy to help in any way I'm able, but you must be an advocate for yourself. It's impossible for me to help if I don't know there's a problem.

School in general can be stressful, and I know that you have many things going on outside of this course. I am here to help make sure that you have everything possible that you need to succeed as well as encourage you. However, this requires open communication from you as early on in the semester as possible. I am happy to meet with you outside of class, hop on a Zoom call, or provide support over email. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you find yourself falling behind, feeling overwhelmed, or struggling. Please remember that the earlier I'm aware of the problem, the more likely it is that we'll be able to get things turned around (unfortunately, there's little we can do the last few weeks of class.)

**Meeman Lab Availability:** Open labs 9:30-4:30 Monday-Friday. In addition to Meeman, labs are available in the Tech Hub and the Library.

#### **Resources specific to physical health, wellness and needed resources:**

[Mental health Services](#)

[UofM Student Health Center](#)

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

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

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

#### **Academic Services:**

[Writing Center](#)

[Tutoring](#)

#### **Communities & Inclusion:**

[Multicultural Affairs](#)

[LGBTQ+](#)

## Grading

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class points will be calculated and rounded up to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below. If additional points are added or subtracted from this possible point total, an updated scale can be provided upon request.

**A+** = 967 – 1,000 points, **A** = 934 – 966, **A-** = 900 – 933 points  
**B+** = 867 – 899 points, **B** = 834 – 866 points, **B-** = 800 – 833 points  
**C+** = 767 – 799 points, **C** = 734 – 766 points, **C-** = 700 – 733 points  
**D** = 699 – 600 points  
**F** = 599 and fewer points

**Grading Philosophy.** A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification  
B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally  
C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision  
D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality  
F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirements

## Assignments

Quizzes, Midterm & Final	<b>250 points</b>
In Class Activities & Discussions	<b>200 points</b>
Individual Assignments	<b>250 points</b>
Impact Report	<b>300 points</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,000 points</b>

## Assignment Breakdown

More in-depth guidelines posted to Canvas.

**Discussions & In Class Activities:** Since much of this class will be reliant on course discussions and in class activities, attending class is imperative. Students will participate in class discussions and activities in order to get a deeper understanding of the class material and have an understanding of different viewpoints on social media's role in society. We will do a few activities together as a group in class. Students must be present in class to participate, and any activities done in class cannot be made up or turned in late. There will be a limited number of extra credit opportunities that will be available to students to make up for unavoidable class absences. At this time, the plan is for discussions to only take place in person.

**Quizzes & Exams:** Quizzes will be completed every couple of weeks to make sure you are keeping up with the course content, as well as one midterm and one final that will be comprehensive. While you are welcome to use your notes or textbooks if you are drawing a blank on something (it happens to the

best of us), you will need to make sure you are connecting with the course material as the quizzes/exams will be timed and it will be impossible to look up every answer. You will have a total of two attempts for each quiz and exam. You are permitted from working with another student on the quizzes, and doing so will result in an automatic zero on the quiz and warning. If it happens a second time, you could be dropped from the course. All quizzes and exams will be completed through Canvas.

**Social Media Impact Report:** In order to demonstrate both what you've learned in class over the semester and demonstrate your strong storytelling abilities, you will be required to complete a social media impact report. In order to complete the report, you will be required to interview six different people on issues pertaining to social media and society. Once you've conducted your interviews, you will use your journalistic abilities to create a report that makes a case about social media's impact on our society.

The report can be delivered through a variety of different methods: A traditional paper/story, a video, podcast, slide deck, or other multimedia channel.

Reports will be graded on the diversity of interviews you completed, how well you were able to tell an overall story/demonstrate your position, your contribution to the topic at hand, overall professionalism, creativity, and quality. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

Because of the weight and importance of this assignment, there will be in class check-ins leading up to the assignment to make sure you're on the right track.

**Individual Assignments:** Students will work independently on a few assignments in order to demonstrate understanding of course concepts and social media as a whole. Additional details will be provided on Canvas.

## Miscellaneous Policies

**Late Work:** In the fields of strategic media and journalism, deadlines are imperative. As such, learning to work within deadlines for this course will be expected. In class activities/discussions cannot be made up, and surveys, quizzes, and the exams will not be accepted late. Individual assignments will accepted with the following policy:

- <24 hours late: 5% off
- <48 hours late: 10% off
- <One week late: 20% off
- One to three weeks late: 30% off
- Over three weeks late: No credit

**Communication:** Students should reach out to the professor via email ([tckerman@memphis.edu](mailto:tckerman@memphis.edu)) if they are experiencing trouble or have questions. Do not wait and let things snowball. I will make every effort to respond with 48-hours during the work week. If a message is sent over the weekend, additional response time may be required.

## Course Schedule

- Week 1, January 16 - 21: Welcome to the Course & Introductions  
Readings/Media: Get the Textbook!  
Assignments: Introduction Survey
- Week 2, January 22 - 28: Social Media Definitions & Differences  
Readings/Media: Chapters Two & Three, See Canvas  
Assignments: Social Network Reflection  
Quiz 1  
In Class Activity: The Network Debate
- Week 3, January 29 - February 4: Social Media & Politics  
Readings/Media: See Canvas  
Assignments: In Class Activity
- Week 4, February 5 - 11: Social Media & Politics, Democracy, Free Speech  
Readings/Media: Chapter Eight  
Assignments: Social Media Politics Assignment  
Quiz 2
- Week 5: February 12 - 18: Social Media & Journalism  
Readings/Media: Chapter Four  
Assignments: Social Impact Project Pitches
- Week 6: February 19 - 25: Social Media & Journalism  
Readings/Media: See Canvas  
Assignments: News Story Coverage  
Quiz 3
- Week 7: February 26 - March 3: Review & Set Up for Success  
Readings/Media: No New Readings  
Assignments: Midterm  
In Class Review Activity  
One on One Discussion for Impact Project Due
- Week 8, March 4 - 10: Spring Break! No Class.
- Week 9, March 11 - 17: Social Media & Businesses  
Readings/Media: Chapter Five, See Canvas  
Assignments: In Class Activity  
Quiz 4
- Week 10, March 18 - 24: Social Media & Businesses, Crisis, Relationship Building  
Readings/Media: See Canvas  
Assignments: Impact Project Due
- Week 11, March 25 - 31: Social Media & Interpersonal Relationships  
Readings/Media: See Canvas  
Assignments: Social Interaction Reflection  
In Class Activity
- Week 12, April 1 - 7: Social Media & Social Dilemmas  
Readings/Media: See Canvas  
Assignments: Quiz 5
- Week 13, April 8 - 14: Social Media & Activism

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: In Class Activity

**Week 14, April 14 - 21: Social Media & Entertainment; Special Topics**

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: In Class Activity

Final Reflection

**Week 15: April 22 - 28: Review & Wrap Ups**

Readings/Media: No New Readings

Assignments: Final Exam

Final Review In Class Activity

## ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

### Professional Values and Competencies in JRSM 4910

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

### How professional values and competencies will be met

#### *Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)*

- Learn about how the myriad uses and presentations of images and information shift in a new media landscape.
- Develop an understanding of the variety of tools and technologies available in social media.
- Hone written and verbal communication skills with a variety of content productions.
- Apply knowledge of best practices and core values of journalism, public relations, advertising and creative mass media.
- Learn about the ethical implications of social media use, such as concerns surrounding privacy.

#### *Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)*

- Interact with other students, professors, and professionals worldwide to enhance understanding of the collaborative power of social media.
- Thorough and supported contributions to class discussion.
- Read and critically reflect on contemporary texts that explore and highlight how social media are changing the use and presentation of images and information.
- Understand the importance of diversity on social media, and ways in which that can be

- improved or enhanced.
- Craft their own version of different types of social media content.

## How assessment of student learning will be met

### *Awareness*

- Grow awareness of the variety of social media tools and technologies.
- Articulate and appraise ethical concerns on social media.
- Acknowledge how social media builds, sustains, and dismantles different versions of community.

### *Understanding*

- Express interest in the process of creating content.
- Distinguish between different platforms and channels, and when each is most appropriate to use given a particular audience.
- Explore the reality that not everyone is online or engaged with social media, and the impact that has on using it for messaging.
- Delve into issues of diversity and inclusion, using statistical knowledge to support arguments and suggestions for improvement.

### *Application*

- Creation of multiple types of content, including written, audio, and video, for a variety of social media platforms.
- Recognize the role of social media in the creation, production, and reaction to the news.
- Develop skills in a specific platform that allows for overseeing social media content creation.

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or Squarespace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, 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
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### **Email**

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

### **Electronic devices**

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

### **AI/Chat GPT**

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

### **Attendance**

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

### **Course repetition**

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You 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. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

### **Academic integrity**

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and 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, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws 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 and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). 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.

### **Online SETEs**

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; 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 seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. 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.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

### **AP Style and grammar**

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

### **Disability and accommodations**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

### **Student support**

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.