

Social Media & Society

JRSM 4710-001

Spring 2025

Class Meeting: T/Th - 9:40 - 11:05 a.m. Meeman Journalism Building Room 100

Dr. Jasper Fessmann

He/Him

Office: Meeman Journalism Building Room 330

Office hours: Tuesday: 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.; 2.30-4.30 p.m.; Thursday: 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.; 2.30-4.30 p.m.

If you'd like to meet with me for the office hours listed, please first reach out via email or text (at 706.399.1079) prior to dropping by so I can make sure I'm available for you and not with another student. I'm also available via Team outside of the listed office hours upon request.

Email: jcfssmnn@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)*. ISBN-13: 978-1538129081.

Note: The book is available in the Tiger Bookstore. For the online version the publisher offers a 30% discount off the list price using the promo code **STUDENT30** when placing an order online at rowman.com.

Classroom Format

This class will be presented through lectures, discussions, multimedia, independent reading and case studies both in class and utilizing online platforms including Canvas and social media sites. This class will meet in person twice a week in room 100. Regular attendance and participation in class is expected and will affect your grade and extended absences may result in automatically failing the class. Part of being successful in this class is contributing to class discussions and activities. There will be many opportunities to contribute, engage or explore topics that may be confusing or unclear during class time, and I encourage each and every one of you to speak up when appropriate.

Class discussions taking place both online and in person should remain respectful and professional, and show respect to all people regardless of background, sex, race, or any other factor. Hate speech will not be tolerated in my classroom and I reserve the right to ask any student to leave if they violate this boundary. Remember: Public relations is all about creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships and our classroom should be no different.

This class is meant to serve as an introduction to strategic communication fundamentals, public relations and advertising. Our classroom discussions will include the pillars of advertising and public relations as well strategies for putting together integrated campaigns and succeeding in the field.

Students will upload all required assignments to Canvas, and feedback will be given to encourage

student improvement. Access to a computer or an electronic device will be required. Please be sure to read the instructions for each assignment carefully, as requirements for each assignment will vary. Assignments being turned in will all need to be submitted as a .doc, .pdf or .pptx file unless otherwise noted. Reach out in class or via email if anything is unclear to you.

All correspondence regarding the class needs to be addressed to jcfssmnn@memphis.edu. Please **include in any email the class designation JRSM 4710 so that I know which class you are writing about**. During weekdays I will usually respond to emails within 24-48 hours. If you have not received an answer after two days, please resend the email with a note that you are resending it. I will not respond on weekends but will address the concerns the following Monday.

Canvas will be used to administer the course communication, materials (e.g., PowerPoint files, additional readings, handouts, assignment guidelines, evaluation forms), and grades. For instance, an electronic file of this document is posted on canvas. Please check the site for announcements and/or threads of comments from classmates and the professor. Students will upload all required assignments to Canvas, and feedback will be given to encourage student improvement. Access to a computer or an electronic device will be required.

All individual assignments will be due Sunday nights at 11:59 p.m. central time unless otherwise noted. To allow time for response and clarification, please reach out with any assignment questions at least 48 hours prior to the deadline.

In class activities will take place during regularly scheduled class time and will not be able to be made up outside of class, regardless of the reason for missing. Students will have a few opportunities to make up any points they may miss from such in class activities through extra credit assignments.

In order to succeed in this course, it's imperative to attend class and stay engaged in all coursework. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or struggling to grasp course concepts, I encourage you to make an appointment during my office hours so we can work together to find a good solution. Remember that in order for me to help you, communication is key. Also remember that much more can be done if you reach out early on in the semester - if you wait until the middle of April, there likely isn't much we can do to turn things around.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis Canvas home page: <https://memphis.instructure.com/>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for STRM 3200 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course and Assignment Expectations

Course work will be accomplished every week, including readings, assignments and quizzes to check your learning and comprehension. Each assignment must be completed by its due date and time (Central Time), which may vary by assignment, so make sure to check each individual due date and time to ensure that you post by the deadline.

Quality of Work

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of strategic media 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 original, meaning it's yours. If you quote anything or get

information from any other source, it should be fully cited. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources.

Chat GPT / AI

You must obtain permission from the instructor before using ChatGPT or other AI tools to assist with assignments in this course. Once permission is granted, AI may only be used as directed. Assignment submissions may run through AI detection software. Unauthorized use may result in a failing grade or a request to resubmit an assignment. Be prepared to submit any prompts you used for assistance with your assignment as well as the original ChatGPT output and to be able to explain/show how you fact-checked and improved upon the AI's work.

Repetition of Courses and Coursework

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 resume and logo).

Questions about Grades

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-instructor understanding and quality of work.

Plagiarism policy

First offense: Redo for 50%, warning

Second offense: Automatic 0, no redo

Third offense: Automatic class fail

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

******Any instances of plagiarism may result in a note being added to your department file

Late work

*******Please note that the below late policy applies only to weekly assignments and projects. In class work, discussions, surveys, quizzes and exams will not be accepted late.

<24 hours late: -5%

24-48 hours late: -10%

1 Week late: -20%

2-3 Weeks late: -30%

I will not accept late work after three weeks, as at that point the work is no longer helpful to current course concepts. Waiting until the end of the semester and submitting everything at once is not an option.

If at any point you feel yourself falling behind, please reach out to me as soon as possible so we can work together to make a plan for you to get caught up. I'm happy to help each and every student catch up and not fall behind, but that help requires you to take on the responsibility of communication. If I don't know, I can't help you.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. You will be the most successful in this class if you attend regularly, participate in class discussions, and stay engaged with lectures and activities. I understand that life happens, so I will give you **three "no questions asked" absences** that will not count against you to account for sickness, car troubles, funerals, football games or any other reason – **DO NOT provide me with an excuse**. However, any student who **misses 4 or more classes for whatever reason [except official university sanctioned excuses] will lose 50 points per missed class (4 = -50, 5 = -100 total etc.)**. I may, after due warning, prohibit further attendance in the courses in such cases. You are expected to arrive promptly for class, fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Anyone arriving more than 10 minutes late for class will be noted as absent, and his or her class participation grade will suffer as a result. In class activities done in your absence cannot be made up.

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, students can request an updated scale.

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 = 600 - 699 points

F = 0 – 599 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

For larger assignments, rubrics have been provided in Canvas. Use these rubrics to help guide you to success!

Assignments

Quizzes, Midterm & Final	250 points
In Class Activities & Reflection Papers	250 points
Individual Assignments	250 points
Impact Report	250 points
Total: 1,000 points	

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.

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. Quizzes will be worth 25 points each, and exams will be worth 50 points each.

Reflection Papers

A reflection paper requires you to write your opinion on a topic, supporting it with your observations and personal examples. As opposed to presenting your reader the opinions of other academics and writers, in this essay you get an opportunity to write your point of view. It is YOUR opinion, and it is your job to express your thoughts in a manner that will be comprehensible and clear for all readers that will read your paper. For our class, you need to summarize and discuss the last two units/weeks and reflect on what you have learned about global strategic communications. The key here is that I want to see how the lectures have changed your perspectives on as well as showing me clearly that you paid attention.

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, overall professionalism, creativity, and quality. More details will be provided in class and on Canvas.

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 public relations 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) 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 20- 26: Introductions, Course Outline, Social Media Opinions

Readings/Media: Get textbook!

Assignments: Social Media Survey

Week 2, January 27 – February 2: The Positives & Negatives of social Media

Readings/Media: Chapters Two & Three, See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz One; Platforms & Society Assignment

Week 3, February 3 - 9: Social Media & Journalism

Readings/Media: Chapter Four, See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz Two

Week 4, February 10 - 16: Social Media & Journalism

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz Three; News Story Coverage Assignment

Week 5: February 17 - 23: Social Media & Business

Readings/Media: Chapter Five, See Canvas

Assignments: None

Week 6: February 24 – March 2: Social Media & Business

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz Four

Week 7: March 3 - 9: Social Media Analytics & Performance

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Midterm (due Sunday the 9th)

Week 8, March 10 - 16: Spring Break! No Class.

Week 9, March 17 – 23: Social Media & Crisis

Readings/Media: Chapter Six; See Canvas

Assignments: Questions for Impact Paper

Week 10, March 24 - 30: Social Media & Politics

Readings/Media: Chapter Eight, See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz Five; Survey

Week 11, March 31 – April 6: Social Media & Politics

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Twitter Chat Due

Week 12, April 7 - 13: Social Media & Activism

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Impact Paper Due

Week 13, April 14 - 20: Social Media & Entertainment

Readings/Media: Chapter 10; See Canvas

Assignments: Quiz Six; Content Creator Assignment Due

Week 14, April 21 - 27: Social Media & Interpersonal Relationships

Readings/Media: See Canvas

Assignments: Survey

Week 15: April 28 – May 4: Wrap Up

Readings/Media: None

Assignments: None

Week 16: May 4-11: Finals Week

Readings/Media: None

Assignments: Final due May 6th.

This schedule will change as needed to suit course needs. Professor reserves the right to change the syllabus. Any changes will be communicated in class and on Canvas.

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.