JOUR 4270 & 5330
STRATEGIC SOCIAL MEDIA

Overview
This course explores social media from the perspective which is most critical and fundamental: the social. Ultimately, to understand the strategic and effective uses of social media, one must first understand who uses social media, how and why they use it, and how the medium itself can be exploited through the implementation of proven sociological and social psychological theories.
and concepts. The strategic implementation of social media is not guesswork; it results from the careful and well-planned development of theory- and evidence-based language and tactics. This course is very practical and applied and will be useful to any professional who needs to use social media as an instrument of influence, persuasion, education, and information. Hence, this course will cover the following:

- Major platforms in terms of attributes, audiences, strategic usefulness, and pros/cons
- Social media messages and campaigns based on well-understood social theories
- The use of social media as a tool for all types of organizations
- Social media management and measurement tools to evaluate effectiveness
- Social media dynamics such as collective behavior & social movements, citizen journalism, and social media justice

**Reference Textbooks: (Not required but recommended)**


*All required readings will be provided by the professor.*

**Assignments/Course Structure**

This course consists of 1000 points for coursework:

- Work Teams (via DISCUSSIONS) (5 x 100 pts) - 500 points total
- Pitch Presentations (via ZOOM in Canvas) (3 x 100 pts) - 300 points total
- Minute Papers (4 x 50 pts) - 200 points total

\[ 500 + 300 + 200 \] = 1000 points total

**Coursework**

**Work Teams.** Throughout the course students will work together in five (5) work teams to apply the material they have learned through the readings and from the videos to solving real-world problems and exploring industry challenges. Students will be expected to actively participate in every work team within their respective groups. Such class activity will provide students with experience in presenting results and ideas to stakeholders and to communicating technical and high-stakes plans and concepts to clients and peers. Students’ critical and creative thinking skills will also be stretched and improved. These work teams will be conducted via the Canvas Learning Management System’s *Discussions* feature online, thus enabling students to work together both synchronously and asynchronously. Full instructions as well as guidelines for the work teams can be found in Canvas in the document *Wintermester Work Teams.*
Pitch Presentations. Throughout the course students will work together in their work teams online to apply the material they have learned through the readings and from the Video lectures to solving real-world problems and exploring industry challenges. Students will be expected to take turns presenting as well as rotating responsibilities and tasks within their respective groups. Such course activity will provide students with experience in presenting results and ideas to stakeholders and to communicating technical and high-stakes plans and concepts to clients and peers. Students’ critical and creative thinking skills will also be stretched and improved.
Minute Papers. To test students’ ability to apply concepts, theories, and tools to industry and real-world scenarios and situations, students will be required to develop their own ideas and thoughts in response to a scenario or challenge presented by the instructor. Students should write approximately 2 pages, double-spaced, for these assignments. While other aspects of classwork expect students to learn teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, this exercise asks students to draw on their own experiences and ideas. **Students are permitted to work ahead on the minute papers and submit them early.**

Attendance and class participation. Since the vast majority of all learning and coursework occurs during class time, students are required to be present in class for all sessions and to participate with enthusiasm while supporting their workgroup members and fellow students in general. Students who miss a class without a medical excuse will lose points for that class session. Only students with a prior approved absence or a medical excuse will be able to make up a missed class. Students who monopolize class time or behave disrespectfully towards other students or the instructor will find themselves marked down in class time points. Students who become threatening or disruptive will be dismissed from the class with a zero.

Class Policies

Professionalism: College provides an opportunity to develop skills that are needed in career settings. Consequently, your work should be the very best you can submit. Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and conform to standard rules of English grammar, spelling, and punctuation, in APA or ASA stylized notation, but not a mixture thereof. All students should communicate respectfully with one another as well as with me. While a student is presenting their ideas, speaking up in class, or otherwise contributing, all other students are expected to be supportive and attentive. Laughing, looking at your cell phone, chatting with other students, or otherwise diverting one’s focus from the main activity of the class will result in docking of points from a student’s class participation grade. Unsupported or/and harsh criticism, flippant comments, interrupting others who are presenting, and similar disrespectful and disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in lost points from the class participation grades. Students who are extremely disruptive or uncooperative in class will be ejected from the class session and given a zero for all class activities and work for that class. No make-up opportunity will be given.

Attendance and Participation: Since this course is held on campus and critical learning activities occur during each class period, activities that cannot be recreated outside of class, each student is expected to attend and to fully participate in each class session. Any unexcused absence from class will result in a zero for the attendance and participation grade as well as for any graded activities conducted in class that session, with no make-up opportunity given. A doctor’s note or medical excuse will be required for a make-up. The granting of make-up work as well as the specific nature of any make-up work is at the instructor’s discretion. Further, any student caught signing in for another student so as to represent them as present during any particular class session when they in fact are not will result in both students receiving zero points for any work during that class session. A second offense will result in disciplinary action being taken.
Cheating: Any students caught cheating or attempting to cheat will be subjected to the full range of UNT’s disciplinary action for academic fraud up to an including failure of the course and suspension or dismissal from the university.

Late assignments: All assignments are due on the assigned without exception unless otherwise noted. DO NOT EMAIL ASSIGNMENTS unless specifically instructed. Assignments turned in after the deadline will be considered late and will not be accepted. By accepting late work, I would be negating and minimizing the hard work of students who’ve sacrificed to ensure they’ve met the course’s requirements. Submitting quality work on time is a major requirement of every job you will ever hold; learning to properly manage your time and workload is a key life skill to learn right now. If you have difficulty managing your workload and studies as a student, then I earnestly encourage you to make an appointment with me so that I can work with you to help you develop good study skills and time management habits that will serve you well as a student and future professional.

However, real emergencies do occur and we cannot foresee them. In such a case, please contact me as soon as possible and send a thorough email describing the situation. Emergency situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The instructor’s records will be the final and only determination of grades.

Course Objectives
After taking JOUR 4270, each student will be able to meet these objectives:

☐ Differentiate and distinguish the most oft-used social media platforms as well as their key functions.

☐ Analyze the different demographic groups, audiences, and users of the most popular social media platforms.

☐ Analyze and navigate ethical and privacy-related concerns as well as the legal dilemmas in social media strategic communications.

☐ Critique and analyze the sociological and social psychological phenomena that explain and predict human behavior in social media as well as in the real world.

☐ Identify the key reasons why strategic social media strategies fail versus succeed.

☐ Identify the appropriate audience, social media platform, and message for accomplishing a given goal.

☐ Measure the effectiveness of an applied social media strategy or campaign.
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COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Module One: Foundations of Social Media

12/17, Monday
First Day of Class.
Video: Social Media Revolution
Work Team #1: Access yours in Discussions. Online problem-solving: a) Identifying typical users; and, b) Finding special social media populations

12/18, Tuesday
Video: Social Media Demographics: Who Uses it? Why?
Work Team #2: Gender; Race & Ethnicity; Socioeconomic Status ($$ & Education)

12/19, Wednesday
Video: The Psychology of Social Media: How Ideas Spread on Social Media
Work Team #3: Challenging beliefs & attitudes; Persuasion; Influence

Assignment: Minute paper #1 due 12/19/2018 by 11:59pm

12/20, Thursday
Video: Social Media Social Networks: The Power of Connectivity
Work Team #4: Sharing, Likes, Following; Interactions,
Module Two: Strategy & Implementation of Social Media

1/2, Wednesday  
**Dr. Bell’s Video lecture:** Public Relations: Crisis Communication

Work Team strategizes drug company PR disaster
1. Students’ groups work to assess the situation: the leak, the media, the Internet
2. Prepare possible alternative responses to the news/media/Internet
3. Develop formal organizational corrective action(s) & recommendations to the senior executives & Board of directors
4. By end of Module, each group has 10 minutes to pitch their solution to the crisis, including strategic social media strategy, plans for handling the media, moving forward as an organization

**Work Team #5: Crisis communication: Solutions**

**Assignment: Minute Paper #2 due by 1/2/2019 by 11:59pm**

1/3/19, Thursday  
**Dr. Bell’s Video lecture:** Post PR Crisis: Rebranding & Marketing

Work Team strategizes drug company’s emergence after the international PR disaster. Corporate house-cleaning of executives & high-profile, responsible parties; change in the Board; new company ethical stance & oversight; commitment to community & underprivileged
1. Students’ groups work to review causes of original PR crisis.
2. Focus on immediate and future challenges to re-emergence, rebranding & marketing the new organization; possible public perceptions
3. Develop organizational re-branding & marketing strategy using social media platforms. Weigh pros & cons.
4. By end of class day, each group has 10 minutes to pitch their new rebranding & marketing campaign And how they’ll strategically use social media to achieve organization’s goals moving forward

1/4/19, Friday

Dr. Bell’s Video lecture: Post PR Crisis: Advertising
Work Team continues to strategizes drug company’s emergence after the international PR disaster with an aim to develop a new advertising campaign via social media. Recall corporate house-cleaning of executives & high-profile, responsible parties; change in the Board; new company ethical stance & oversight; commitment to community & underprivileged

1. Students’ groups work to brainstorm advertising ideas & concepts
2. Focus on immediate and future market & consumer perceptions & attitudes when considering strategy. Integrate new advertising campaign with existing PR, rebranding & marketing plans from previous day’s exercise.
3. Develop integrated organizational campaign combining advertising, re-branding & marketing strategy using social media platforms. Weigh pros & cons.
4. By end of class day, each group has 10 minutes to pitch their new integrated marketing & advertising campaign And how they’ll strategically use social media to achieve organization’s goals moving forward

Assignment: Minute Paper #3 due by 1/4/2019 by 11:59pm
Module Three: Measuring Success: Social Media Analytics:

Mini-Video lectures for each class followed by tutorials

1/7/19, Monday                      Social Media Actions Analytics
• Likes, shares, emotions
• Retweets, status updates, etc.

1/8/19, Tuesday                     Social Media Text Analytics
• what people are saying, why, its meaning & applications for industry, society & government
• emotive & personality analytics

1/8/19, Tuesday                      Assignment: Minute Paper #4 due by 1/8/2019 by 11:59pm

1/9/19, Wednesday                   Hyperlink Analytics
• a measure of inter-organization communication
• validation/endorsement of relationship
• way to access further targeted web resources

1/10/19, Thursday                  Mobile, Location & Search Engine Analytics
• phone/tablet apps
• mobile sites of desktop version
• bots, web spiders, metasearch engines
• GPS data for market segmentation, advertising, etc.

1/11/19, Friday                     Social Media Social Network Analytics
• Identifying influencers & network leaders
• Identifying overlapping networks
• Social media relationships’ impacts on real-world
decision-making and behavior
- Identify powerful & weak subgroups, demographics & ties
- Exploring virality, social movements, revolutions, protests & other collective behavior

1/12/19, Saturday  
Assignment: Final Pitch #3 due by 1/12/2019 by 11:59pm

THE END