

# COMM 3558 SOCIAL MEDIA

## AUTUMN 2023

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### Course Overview

**Course Description and Objectives.** This course functions to help students (1) acquire theoretical and practical knowledge about social media and (2) understand the ways in which social media influence individuals, groups, and society. Over the semester, we will discuss a range of topics related to social media. Upon completion of this course, students will come to:

- Recognize the structure and governance of social media
- Distinguish the characteristics, functionality, and usage of social media from traditional mass media and other forms of computer-mediated communication
- Recognize the strategies that various entities (e.g., individuals, activists, organizations) adopt to use social media in achieving their goals
- Apply the strategies to use social media effectively to achieve your goals

**Mode of Delivery.** This course will be delivered **fully online, asynchronously**. No in-person meetings will take place. Students will access 100% of the instructional content made available on the Carmen Canvas course site. At the start of each week, all course content assigned for the week will be released on the Modules page on Carmen. Please see the Course Schedule table at the end of this syllabus for more information on the weekly activities and important dates.

**Credit Hour and Work Expectation.** This is a 3-credit-hour course. According to Ohio State policy, students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average. [ASC Honors](#) provides an excellent guide to scheduling and study expectations.

**Course Materials.** All course-related materials (e.g., videos, readings, assignment instructions) will be accessible through our Carmen Canvas course site.

## Assignments and Grading Policies

**Overview.** Your class performance will be evaluated based on the following grading categories.

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Weekly engagement activities	150	20%
Material quizzes	300	40%
Group campaign project	300	40%
Total	750	100%

The following grading scale will be used in this course:

A = 93%–100%	A– = 90%–92.99%	B+ = 87%–89.99%	B = 83%–86.99%
B– = 80%–82.99%	C+ = 77%–79.99%	C = 73%–76.99%	C– = 70%–72.99%
D+ = 67%–69.99%	D = 60%–66.90%	E = 0%–59.99%	

You can view your grades using the **Grades** button in the Carmen course navigation. Refer to instruction in this link: [how to view your grades on Canvas](#).

Please check your grades regularly to make certain that I have received all your assignments. If you have a question about a grade, email me through **Carmen mailbox**. Please do not post your personal concerns in a discussion forum.

**Engagement Activities (EAs, 15 pts × 10 = 150 pts, 20% of the overall grade).** In each week students individually complete an EA pertinent to the topic of that week. Each EA is worth 15 points, that is, 2% of the overall grade.

Week 1 focuses on introducing you to the course and does not involve substantive learning materials, so EA in Week 1 includes a) introducing yourself and responding to classmates (10 pts) and 2) a syllabus quiz (5 pts).

Starting Week 2, students individually submit their response to an activity that is relevant to the topic of that week. The purpose of these assignments is to allow students to react to and reflect on social media in their personal lives and engage with current events/topics in social media. Starting Week 2, there will be 12 opportunities to submit EAs. **I will drop your lowest 3 scores** at the end of the semester.

Your Week 1 EA and your 9 highest submissions in the following weeks combined constitute 20% of the final grade. Detailed instructions can be found on Carmen.

**Material Quizzes (MQs, 100 pts × 3 = 300 pts, 40% of the overall grade).** Throughout the semester, students will take three material quizzes through Carmen. Each quiz is worth 100 points. Three quizzes together are worth 300 points, that is, 40% of the final grade. The quizzes are **non-cumulative**. The materials quizzes are open-book and open-note.

**Campaign Project (CP, 40%).** In this assignment, students will work in groups to complete a social media campaign project. This project will require each group to decide on an entity (e.g., a non-profit), research that entity, and develop a strategic social media campaign for that entity using

techniques, strategies, and information conveyed in the assignment instructions. This project is broken down into smaller parts as shown in the table below. Each component of this project will receive a grade. For each component, the professor will provide further information about it in advance.

Steps	Description (One submission per group, unless specified as “individual”)	Percentage of Grade	Due (11:59 pm Sundays, unless specified otherwise)
1. Form groups	Survey <b>(individual)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicate in the survey your interest to inform group making.</li> <li>The professor will assign groups after the drop/add period of the course.</li> </ul>	1%	Week 1
2. Campaign pitch	Campaign Pitch <b>(individual)</b>	2%	Week 4 (Wednesday)
3. Pre-mortem	Make a work plan for the group, anticipate threats and issues, and propose solutions proactively	2%	Week 4
4. Research	Situation analysis + campaign objectives	10%	Week 7
	Peer review <b>(individual)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate each group member’s contribution in this part</li> </ul>	1%	
5. Planning	Media strategy	10%	Week 10
	Peer review <b>(individual)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate each group member’s contribution in this part</li> </ul>	1%	
6. Final deliverable	Final portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A final campaign portfolio that will be shared with the class.</li> </ul>	12%	Week 15
	Peer review <b>(individual)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate each group member’s contribution in this part</li> </ul>	1%	
Total	Weighted Grading: *Your grade of the campaign project components will be <b>weighted</b> depending on your level of contribution according to the ratings in the peer review, meaning that each individual member of the group may have their own grade for the project. **Free riders get 0 on the corresponding components of group work.	40%	

## Course Policies

**Deadlines.** Due time for all assignments is noted in the Course Schedule table at the end of this document. All deadlines are in Eastern Standard/Daylight Time (EST/EDT).

**Professionalism in Submissions: Corrupt or Incomplete Work Receives No Credit.** You must ensure that the work you submit is correct, uncorrupted, accessible, and complete. Submitting files

that are corrupt, the wrong version, the wrong format, missing components, the wrong file type, etc. is unprofessional. It is your responsibility to check on the integrity of your work immediately following submission. Your instructor or TA will **not** inform you if your work fails these standards. If the instructors cannot view your work when beginning to grade it, you will not receive credit for your submission. Standard lateness penalties apply to unprofessional work.

## **Late Assignments.**

### **1) Late Submission Penalty and How to Submit**

Unless noted otherwise, students may submit assignments late with a penalty. Penalties for late work increase cumulatively. Submitting work **one day after the deadline (including weekends)** yields a **–15% point penalty** for the submission. For each additional day after the deadline, you lose an additional –15% off the submission. This means if you submit an assignment late for a week (i.e., 7 days), even if the content you submit is perfect, you will still get a zero ( $7 \times 15\% = 105\%$ ). In other words, late submission will **not be accepted if it is late for a week or longer**.

If you have an emergency or illness that precludes you from meeting a deadline, please let us know that right away. Provided that the emergency is brought to my attention within 24 hours of the deadline and can be documented, late penalties may be waived.

### **2) Deadlines Will NOT Be Extended for Technological Problems**

In an online course, it is your responsibility to have consistent access to a reliable Internet connection and all required software noted above. You should build in extra time to resolve technical problems so that you are able to do that while still meeting deadlines. For assistance with tech issues, please contact OCIO (details provided below in section on technology). Deadlines will **not** be extended for technological problems.

**Turnaround/Feedback.** Grades and feedback of assignments will generally be given within one or two weeks after the deadline.

**Grade Appeals.** You may send your professor an email to instigate a grade appeal within **1 week** after the grade posting in Carmen. Appeals must have strong evidence-based arguments that reference specific components of the assignment's grading criteria. Appeals can result in an unchanged grade, a higher grade, or a lower grade. To initiate an appeal, please download and submit the form “COMM 3558 Grade Appeal Form” (in the “Get Started Here” module in Carmen, under “Resources”) via email to your professor.

**Course Leave.** If you become seriously ill or something happens to you that prevents you from participating in the course for an extended amount of time (e.g., mental illness, taking care of an immediate family member, childbirth, etc.), you may apply for course leave. You must let Dr. Liu know of your situation as soon as practical when you become aware of the need for leave (either the day you learn of the need or the next workday). If you qualify for leave, you can make up missed work up to 7 days prior to your leave request. Be proactive and let us know as soon as possible if you think you need leave. **The professor will not grant leave retroactively.** For example, if you qualify for leave in week 2 but request leave in week 5, you cannot earn credit for work due in weeks

2 & 3. Course leave is similar to OSU's Family and Medical Leave (FML; see here for [more information](#).) and the professor will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.

**Peer Interaction and Public Work.** The structure of this course incorporates public posting and peer interaction. If you are not comfortable with this, I recommend you drop this course as I will not make any accommodations to this structure.

**Tentative Nature of Syllabus.** This syllabus represents an agreement between the students and the professor, Dr. Bingjie Liu. Students enrolled in this class agree to the terms of the syllabus and understand that the policies, schedule, and deadlines outlined within it are subject to the professor's modification with notice via Carmen to students.

**Communication Policy.** There are several ways to ask questions or communicate about your requests to the professor and the TA.

When you have a question about the class, you should first check the syllabus.

**1) "General Course Discussion Board" on Carmen**

If the syllabus does not answer your question, the next thing to do is to check the two FAQ boards in Carmen—"General Course Discussion Board" and "Campaign Project Discussion Board"—to see if someone else has posed the question or expressed the concern you have. If not, then you are encouraged to post them yourself. We check these FAQ discussion boards regularly to respond to questions that students raise. Please note that all questions posted in this board are public, visible to other students. Therefore, please never post your personal concerns (e.g., about your grade) here.

**2) Zoom Office Hours**

Both the instructor and the TA hold regular office hours weekly. No appointment is needed during the regular office hours. If the schedules do not work for you, please email to schedule a meeting with one of us.

**3) Contact Your Professor and TA**

**a. Whom to Contact?**

Dr. Bingjie Liu should be your first and primary contact point. However, expect the content to be visible to the TA as well, as she may forward your email to the TA to handle your particular questions or requests, depending on their nature.

**b. How to reach Dr. Liu?**

**i. Email her via Carmen "Inbox" (Primary)**

The best way to reach Dr. Bingjie Liu is to email her in Carmen Canvas using the "Inbox," because it automatically includes the course information and your information.

**ii. Email the Professor via OSU Email (Secondary)**

In cases when Carmen is not usable (e.g., system is down for technical reasons), the secondary way to reach the professor is to email her at [liu.11321@osu.edu](mailto:liu.11321@osu.edu). When you do so, please make sure to include the **course name** (e.g., COMM

3558 Social Media), **your name**, and **your purpose** in the email subject line. Consider this example: **“COMM 3558 Jane Smith Schedule an Appointment.”** Emails that fail to meet this requirement may result in late response.

**c. To reach our TA, email him via OSU Email**

Sometimes I may direct your request to the TA and ask you to contact him directly. The best way to reach your TA is to email him at [montes.54@osu.edu](mailto:montes.54@osu.edu). Even if you prefer to message on Carmen, let Enoch know you have sent him a message on Carmen.

**4) Professor's and TA's Response Time**

We do our best to reply to all emails in a timely manner (typically within 24 hours; in some cases, within 48 hours). If you do not hear back from us within 48 hours (business days only), please feel free to nudge us. Emails sent after hours (e.g., around or after 5 pm) or on weekends should not expect a reply until at least the next business day.

**5) Expectations on You**

- a. It is important that you use and regularly check your **OSU email account** and make sure you have regular access to the **Carmen**.
- b. Always use your OSU email account when sending an email. Messages to our OSU accounts from non-OSU email services are regularly marked as spam and since their OSU cannot confirm their delivery, you may not use them as evidence of communication attempts.
- c. Close the email with your full name. Each of your instructors is engaging with hundreds of students this semester. Making your identity clear as the sender of a message will aid us in communicating with you more efficiently.
- d. Do not use the “comment” function in the assignment submission page to communicate with your professor. It does not notify anyone and will likely be missed.

**6) Tips for Emailing Your Professor and Peers**

- a. Know your audience and purpose. Thinking about who will read your email and why you are sending the email will make writing easier.
- b. Stick to one or two topics per email. Reading long texts can be overwhelming; stick to the point.
- c. Ask for a response (if you need one). Using a question in the body of the email or adding a farewell line that simply states “a response is appreciated” is a way of requesting a response.
- d. Revise your work. Checking for proper spelling and punctuation is essential. Remember that an email doesn't use the same conventions as a text.
- e. Think before you click. Check your syllabus or talk to a peer before sending an email. Sometimes the answer to your question is found in your syllabus. For sensitive issues, try your professor's office hours instead of sending an email.

## **Course Technology**

**OSU IT Service Desk.** For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://it.osu.edu/help>, and support for urgent issues is available 24 × 7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743
- **Email:** [servicedesk@osu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@osu.edu)

**Carmen Canvas.** Carmen Canvas, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit [my.osu.edu](https://my.osu.edu). Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>

**Carmen Zoom.** Office hours will be held remotely through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room. More information on Carmen Zoom can be found here: [Carmen Zoom](#)

**Turnitin.** Students at The Ohio State University are accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Therefore, you should be familiar with the guidelines provided by the [Committee on Academic Misconduct \(COAM\)](#) and [Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct](#) to meet the academic expectations concerning appropriate documentation of sources. In addition, OSU has made Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention system, available to instructors. Turnitin will generate originality reports when you submit your work, which will be evaluated in compliance with [Section A of OSU's Code of Student Conduct](#). For more information about Turnitin, please see the [vendor's guide for students](#). Note that submitted assignments become part of the OSU database.

## University Policies and Guidelines

**Academic Misconduct.** All work should be your original work. You must use citations when presenting ideas that are not your own using [APA style](#). You must complete all submitted work by yourself. You may not reuse work from a past or current semester. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

**Disability Services.** Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.



The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614-292-3307, [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu).

**Sexual Misconduct/Relationship Violence.** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu).

**Diversity.** The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

**Copyright Disclaimer.** The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Students must consider copyright law before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

**Student Life Issues.** As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10<sup>th</sup> Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at <https://988lifeline.org/>.

**Student Academic Services.** Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Students can obtain information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors at <https://advising.osu.edu/>.

**Religious Accommodations.** It is Ohio State's policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief. Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing **no later than 14 days** after the course begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative



accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

**Campus Free Speech Policy.** Our [Shared Values](#) include a commitment to diversity and innovation. Pursuant to these values, the university promotes a culture of welcoming differences, making connections among people and ideas, and encouraging open-minded exploration, risk-taking, and freedom of expression. As a land-grant institution, the university takes seriously its role in promoting and supporting public discourse. To that end, Ohio State is steadfastly committed to protecting the First Amendment right to free speech and academic freedom on its campuses, and to upholding the university's academic motto — "Education for Citizenship." The [Campus Free Speech policy](#) adopted in May supports this commitment.

## Course Schedule

\* The schedule below is tentative and subject to change.

\*\*All materials, readings, and videos are available via the modules on Carmen.

\*\*\*Typical weekly structure: I will release new content on Monday morning.

\*\*\*\*Assignments are due **Sundays at 11:59 pm** unless otherwise indicated.

\*\*\*\*\*EA = Engage activity; MQ = Material quiz

Week	Date	Topic	Materials	Assignments	Campaign Milestones
1	8/22	Introduction to the course	Welcome video; Syllabus	EA1-1. Self-introduction (due Wednesday) & response; EA1-2. Syllabus Quiz	<b>Step 1.</b> Survey of your interest and experience
2	8/28	What Do We Mean by Social Media?	boyd & Ellison (2008); Perrin & Anderson (2019); Humphreys (2016); Rosen (2012); Two Step Flow video; Diffusion of Innovation video; History of Social Media video	EA2	Wait for instructor to create groups
3	9/4	The Ruling of Social Media	Obar & Wildman, 2015; Spar (2001); Tufekci (2016); Sonali & Karr video; Instagram's Algorithm video	EA3	Getting to know your group members
4	9/11	The Technological Basis of Social Media	Walther & Jang (2012); Fox & McEwan (2017); Golbeck & Aral (article); Deepfake video (WSJ); Nuñez (2019)	EA4	<b>Step 2.</b> Individual campaign pitch due Wed by 11:59 pm; <b>Step 3.</b> Pre-mortem due Sunday 11:59 pm
5	9/18	The Social Basis of Social Media	O'Sullivan & Carr (2018); Baym (2015); Jensen (2015); Patulny (2020); Context collapse video	EA5 MQ1	Launch group project Meet, discuss, work
6	9/25	Interacting with the Publics	Murthy (2018); Mundt et al. (2018);	EA6	Meet, discuss, work

			Tufekci (2017), Ch1		
7	10/2	Organizing through Social Media I	Tufekci (2017) Ch2, 3; Framing TedTalk; Ciampaglia & Menczer (2018)	EA7	<b>Step 4.</b> Research + peer review
8	10/9	Organizing through Social Media II (autumn break: 10/12–10/13)	Tufekci (2017) Ch5; Garrett (2016); All Hail the Algorithm video; AI can be biased video	EA8 MQ2 open Mid-term course evaluation	Meet, discuss, work
9	10/16	Selective-Self Presentation	Walther et al. (2015); Smith & Sanderson (2015)	EA9 MQ2 due	Meet, discuss, work
10	10/23	<b>Campaign Project Consultations</b>			<b>Step 5.</b> Media strategy + peer review
11	10/30	Body Image via Social Media	Fox & Vendemia (2016); Yeshua-Katz & Martins (2013); Selfie Filters video	EA10	Meet, discuss, work
12	11/6	Authenticity and Social Media Savvy	Authenticity video; Rhee video	EA11	Meet, discuss, work
13	11/13	Disinhibition and Deindividuation	Sutton TEDTalk (2018); Xiao (2019); Suler (2005)	EA12	Meet, discuss, work
14	11/20	Thanksgiving Break			
15	11/27	Social Media and Social Support	Cook, 2020; Bazarova, 2020; Gonzales et al. (2016)	EA 13	<b>Step 6:</b> Final portfolio + peer review
16	12/4	Wrapping up (Final begins on 8 <sup>th</sup> )		MQ3 Teaching evaluation	

**Tentative nature of this syllabus.** This syllabus is an agreement between the instructor Dr. Bingjie Liu and the student. Events that transpire over the semester may require me to modify the syllabus. In the event I need to modify the syllabus, I will announce the modification via an email to the class and Carmen. However, it is your responsibility to keep up with any such modifications and be aware of current policies, deadlines, etc.

**By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described in the syllabus.**