

**Autumn 2019**  
**COMM 4554**  
**Implications of Social Media**  
**[HYBRID]**

Instructor: Golnoosh Behrouzian  
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Location & Time: Journalism 216  
Wednesday: 3:00 pm to 4:50 pm  
Office Hours: By appointment (3032 Derby Hall)

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course is designed to help students (1) acquire theoretical and practical knowledge about social media and (2) understand the ways in which social media influence important social domains. Specifically, we aim to address the following questions:

1. What are social media, or what does it mean when media are becoming “social”?
2. How are social media different from the traditional mass media and from the “older” forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC)?
3. How do social media shape our communication psychology and the way we connect to and build relationships with others and society?
4. What strategies should individuals and organizations adopt in order to use social media effectively? What are some of the pitfalls that individuals and organizations should avoid?
5. What are the global social and political implications of social media use and what can we expect for the future?

**Course Format**

This course is taught in “hybrid” format. We will meet once a week (Wednesdays) in person and the remainder of the course content will be accessed by you remotely through Carmen. The reading material will be posted online before each class session and it is expected that you read and become familiar with the content before class so that we may engage in a robust discussion about the topics. Attendance for the course is mandatory and will be recorded via sign-in sheets during the designated classes meetings.

**Course Readings**

All required readings will be made available through Carmen. There is no textbook for the course.

**Special Accommodations**

This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking assistance in a timely manner. Any student who feels he/she may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs, or contact the office for disability services (E-mail: ods@osu.edu; Phone: 614-292-3307) in Room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate your documented disabilities.

**Assignment submission guidelines**

All assignment submissions should be double (2x) spaced, in Times New Roman (or similar font), blue or

black font color. All documents should have 1-inch margins and be saved as DOC, DOCX, or PDF. No other format will be accepted and will result in daily grade deductions until proper format is received.

### Course Requirements (400 pts in total)

- Online Reading Quizzes- 8 total @ 10 pts each (80 pts)
- Midterm- 1 exam approximately half way through semester (100 pts)
- “Generation Like” Assignment (10 pts)
- Individual Social Media Analysis- (30 pts)
- Group Social Media Audit- (100 pts total; 90-5-5 )
  - Proposal- Company, social media platforms, layout of project (5 pts)
  - Breakdown of Group Member Responsibilities- (5 pts)
- Final Reflection Paper (10 pts)
- Participation (Carmen discussion posts)- 5 total @ 10 pts each (50 pts)
- Attendance (20 pts)

#### 1. Attendance: 20 pts

STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO COME TO CLASS AND ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN CLASS ACTIVITIES. You are allowed to use a maximum of ONE penalty-free absence. *You are NOT required to notify me of this absence.*

- Beyond the ONE penalty-free absence, students should submit a copy of official documentation (e.g., doctor’s note, CANNOT BE FROM MINUTE CLINIC) to avoid penalization. Each undocumented absence will result in a deduction FROM YOUR FINAL GRADE.
- Although emergencies involving family and friends can be distressing, such incidents cannot be used as an excused absence. Only emergencies that involve the student personally will be accepted as a valid excuse.
- FIVE OR MORE undocumented absences beyond the penalty-free absence may result in FAILURE of the course (even if all other assignments are completed), unless you present formal documentation that explains these absences.
- *The instructor does reserve the right to lower the participation grade of those who repeatedly cause distractions or do not pay attention to lectures/discussions during class.*

#### 2. Documentary and short answer assignment (“Generation Like”): 10 pts

- You will be responsible for watching an assigned documentary and answering questions related to the film. We will discuss the film during our class meeting.

#### 3. Online discussion prompts: 50 pts (10 pts x 5 discussions)

- Thoughtful engagement is an important part of the course, both in class and outside of the classroom. You will have the opportunity to participate in five (5) discussion prompts throughout the semester. You will be graded on how effectively you incorporate class material into your response and how thoroughly you answer the question posed in the discussion prompt.

#### 4. Online reading quizzes: 80 pts (10 pts x 8 quizzes)

- Students will be required to take online reading quizzes via Canvas (note the dates in the schedule).

- Quizzes are *open-book*—the questions are designed to engage you with the assigned readings. All of the online quizzes will be available for you to take by Thursday afternoon and should be completed **no later than 11:59pm on the following Tuesday**. For example, Quiz #1, which will be assigned on 08/22/19, will be due no later than 11:59pm on 08/27/19.
  - **As there will be a sufficient amount of time and flexibility for you to complete each quiz, no make-up requests will be considered except for extenuating circumstances that are documented (see the make-up policy below).**
- 5. Midterm: 100 pts**
- The midterm will contain true-false and multiple-choice questions. Short answer questions may also be included.
- 6. Analysis of public figure on Social Media Platform: 30 pts**
- You will be asked to “follow” a prominent “public” figure (e.g., celebrity, politician, or businessperson) on ONE social media platform (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc). You will then write a 3 to 4 page (double-spaced) analysis on your findings. This should include: (1) a brief background on the person or event, (2) a summary of how/why social media was used, (3) the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of social media use, and finally, (4) your personal reflection on what could have been done differently. Your grade will be based on your application of the communication theories and frameworks discussed during our class lectures (AT LEAST 3 COURSE CONCEPTS MUST BE USED). I will be looking for a critical analysis that transcends a simple summary of the subject’s social media activity.
- 7. Group Social Media Audit: 100 pts TOTAL (90-5-5)**
- *In a team of six to seven members*, students will conduct a project in which they will analyze a local business on various social media platforms covered in the course. The project will be composed of **(1)** a group proposal consisting of the organization, the social media platforms chosen for analysis, and the problem that will be addressed (5 pts); **(2)** a break-down of the roles and responsibilities of each group member (5 pts); and **(3)** the final group project, one assignment per group (90 pts).
  - The purpose of this project is to familiarize you with the strategic elements of social media use. These new media frontiers are now an integral part of organizations’ business strategy, and yet there is a sort of universality to these new communication methods. In this project, you will be responsible for exploring how the organization engages with its public on social media; what strategies they are using well; which areas are lacking; what new tactics they should employ or capitalize on; and finally, what potentially threatens the reputation of the organization on social media. Throughout the course we will discuss various aspects of how organizations use social media and what elements are important in this form of communication. However, you will be responsible for delving into the details of the social media strategy and considering how these tactics influence the organization on a global scale.
- 7. Final Course Reflection Paper: 10 pts**
- At the end of the semester, students will choose and write a short reflection paper on the theories, concepts, and phenomena addressed in the course that they found most intriguing. More instructions will follow.

## Grading Scale

Final Letter Grade	Percentage	Points
A	93-100%	372-400
A-	90-92%	360-371
B+	87-89%	348-359
B	83-86%	332-347
B-	80-82%	320-331
C+	77-79%	308-319
C	73-76%	292-307
C-	70-72%	280-291
D+	67-69%	268-279
D	60-66%	252-267
E	Less than 60%	266 or less

## Course Policy

### 1. Respect for fellow students, professor, and the class community as a whole

- If you choose to come to class, you should give your full attention to any person who is speaking (whether it is the professor or another student). Do not engage in any distracting behavior.
- ***The instructor may ask students engaging in these or other disruptive behaviors class to leave.***

### 2. Academic integrity

Academic misconduct will NOT be tolerated in this course. The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. ***The sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course, suspension, or even dismissal from the University.*** Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so students should review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct at [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp). It is your responsibility to be aware of the rules of academic dishonesty. **When in doubt, be sure to consult your instructor before doing anything about which you are uncertain.**

### 3. Grading policy

- Late submission of assignments will be subject to **10% score deduction** for each late day. ***After the third late day, submissions will NOT be accepted.*** This policy also applies to uploading incorrect assignments or unreadable files.
- There will be no rounding-up of individual grades, no matter how close you may be, because it's not fair to other students.

#### 4. Make-up policy

Exams can only be made up in the event of serious illness, death in the family, a religious conflict, or pre-approved university activity (e.g., athletic event).

- For a religious conflict or university activity, the request must be made in advance; otherwise, make-up/rescheduling will not be allowed.
- In the case of an illness, students will need to present documentation from a medical professional stating that the student's illness prevented them from taking the exam on the date in question. Documents that are not dated and do not indicate the severity of the illness will not be accepted.
- Please note, illness involving relatives or others with close relations to the student will NOT be accepted as an excused medical emergency.
- Documentation is required in the case of a death in the family.

#### 5. In-class laptop/tablet use and lecture notes

- Students may bring their own laptop computers/tablet devices to class for note-taking purposes or use the computers in the classroom. ***I will NOT make full class lecture notes available.*** This is intended to (1) minimize distractions during class and to (2) prevent unauthorized distribution and misuse of lecture materials outside the class (which may constitute academic misconduct). ***It is important that students make every effort to attend class and take notes during class.*** If a student, for any reason, misses class, it is his or her responsibility to obtain notes from someone else in the class; I will be happy to answer specific questions about missed content during office hours.

#### 6. Health and Wellbeing

- 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](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkun Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24 hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445 / National: 800-273-8255); or text (4hope to 741741); or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

## Course Schedule

*This syllabus presents a contract in the works. You will notice that specific readings have not been posted for each week. Social media is a dynamic topic and there is new research being conducted every day. Events that happen over the semester may require me to modify and/or add material throughout the course; therefore, specific items listed in the table may be subject to change. If changes/adjustments need to be made, I will make announcements in advance.*

Tentative Schedule  
August 21-December 4

Week	Online Readings (Completed before class)	Reading Assessment	In-Class Activities	Assignments Due
1 (8/21) "What is Social Media?"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Syllabus</li> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>		Syllabus Day  Intro to Social Media	
2 (8/28) "What is Social Media?"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul> Film: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Generation Like"</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 1</b> DUE: 8/27	Audit subjects introduced	"Generation Like" short answers due 8/30 @ 11:59pm
3 (9/04) "Why Social Media?"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion 1</b> DUE: 9/03		Join Audit group by 9/06 @ 11:59pm
4 (9/11) "Social Media and Affordances"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 2</b> DUE: 9/10	Assign Social Media Analysis (SMA)	
5 (9/18) "Social Media and Interpersonal Use"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion 2</b> DUE: 9/17  <b>Quiz 3</b> DUE: 9/17	Group discussion about SMA	
6 (9/25) "Social Media: Implications for Social and Psychological Well-being"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 4</b> DUE: 9/24	Path model activity	
7 (10/02) "Social Media Ethics & Organizations"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion 3</b> DUE: 10/01		Social Media Analysis due 10/04 @ 11:59pm
8 (10/09) MIDTERM WEEK	Midterm	Midterm		
9 (10/16) "Social Media & Organizations"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion 4</b> DUE: 10/15	What is an Audit?	Group responsibility & topics due 10/18 @ 11:59pm
10 (10/23) "Ads, PR, SWOT, & Social Media"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 5</b> DUE: 10/23		
11 (10/30) "Crises on Social Media"	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 6</b> DUE: 10/29	Discuss Audit/group meetings	
12 (11/06)	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Canvas module</li> </ul>	<b>Quiz 7</b> DUE: 11/05		

"Elections and Fake News on Social Media"				
13 (11/13) "Social/Political movements on Social Media"	Readings: • <i>See Canvas module</i>	<b>Discussion 5 DUE: 11/12</b>  <b>Quiz 8 DUE: 11/12</b>		<i>Audit due 11/15</i>
14 (11/20) "Careers in Social Media"	Readings: • <i>See Canvas</i>			
15 (11/27) THANKSGIVING	NO CLASS	<i>NO CLASS</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>	<i>NO CLASS</i>
16 (12/04) Out of class work day	No Class: REFLECTION PAPER	No Class	No Class: REFLECTION PAPER	<i>Reflection Paper due 12/11 @11:59pm</i>

**An important note on the midterm exam:**

Because the exams should be administered and graded in a fair manner for everyone enrolled in this course, alternative arrangements will be made only for extenuating PERSONAL circumstances (e.g., personal emergencies, medical emergencies) that can be formally documented either (1) PRIOR to the exam or (2) within 24 hours of the exam schedule. Pre-purchased trip tickets or car-pool arrangements for going home will NOT be considered as valid excuses for an alternative arrangement.