

Course Syllabus

COMM 3558 Social Media (OL)

School of Communication | Summer 2020 | Section [21835]

Instructor: Dr. Golnoosh Behrouzian

E-mail: Behrouzian.1@OSU.edu

Physical Office: 3032 Derby Hall

Digital Office: [Carmen Zoom Meeting Room \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Office Hours: Mondays 12:30 pm – 2:30 pm or by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Kyla Brathwaite

E-mail: brathwaite.13@osu.edu

Digital Office: [Carmen Zoom Meeting Room \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Office Hours: 11am – 12pm Monday and Wednesdays

Assigned Students (Last Name): A through L

Teaching Assistant: Sophie Kjaervik

E-mail: [kjaervik.1@buckeyemail.osu.edu](#)

Digital Office: [Carmen Zoom Meeting Room \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Office Hours: 11am – 12pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Assigned Students (Last Name): M through Z

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. In this course, students will come to:

1. Understand implications of media becoming “social”
2. Increase their knowledge of the structure and governance of social media
3. Recognize strategies various entities (e.g., individuals, activists, organizations) adopt to use social media effectively
4. Learn about the characteristics, functionality, and usage of social media as distinct from traditional mass media and other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC)

COURSE FORMAT

This course is an **online course**, which means that students will access 100% of the class material, activities, and assessments online via the Internet. No in-person meetings will take place.

COURSE MATERIALS

All required readings and materials will be accessible through our Carmen site via the Files section. You can also access readings and materials by clicking through the links in the course modules.

Access to a computer/laptop, a high-speed Internet connection, current web browser with video-related plugins, Microsoft Office ([available to OSU student free of charge \(Links to an external site.\)](#)), and speakers/headphones. Students should not attempt to complete this course using a smartphone. This course is exclusively online. As a result, you must be comfortable working more independently than in an in-person classroom and using your computer, web-browser, and navigating Carmen. Additionally, you must ensure that your computer functions properly and that you use some form of data redundancy (e.g., cloud backups or physical duplication). Please see the technology policy below for more details.

COURSE POLICIES

Communication policy: Because of the size of our class and its online nature, the communication policies serve to facilitate timeliness, collaboration, and simplicity. Please

aim to adhere to the policy closely. Deviating from the policy may result in undue delays or us missing your messages altogether.

Things to **avoid**:

1. *Carmen mail/messenger & Carmen submission comments.* Both of these are unreliable and the instructors **will not** check them regularly.
2. *Weekend emails and messages sent around 5PM or later on weekdays.* Under most circumstances, we will respond to messages of this sort on the next business day.
3. *Sending emails that are not from your OSU email address.* 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.
4. *Unprofessional emails.* Please ensure that your email messages are professional and informative by including your course info in the subject line, a salutation, adequate yet concise body text, closing, and your full name.
5. *Emails that require immediate attention.* We aim to answer emails with 24 hours of receipt on business days. Be proactive and plan ahead.

Sources of course information: Because this is an online class, quick questions regarding the course cannot take place in person. Thus, I have set up a system for you to access various forms of information about the course. Start at the top of this list and work your way down to find answers to your questions. This will usually be the most efficient and quick way to get information about the course.

1. **First source for information:** Your first and most important resource are the course [discussion boards](#) available in Carmen, because it is likely that another student has asked your question and an instructor has already answered it. For general course questions, use the [General Course Questions discussion board](#). For assignment specific questions, use the specific discussion board for each assignment.
2. **Second source for information:** If you wish to remain anonymous or have sensitive questions, send your TA, Kyla Brathwaite (last name A-L) or Sophie Kjaervik (last name M-Z), an email. In short, your TA is your lifeline for this course. Your TA will have an intimate knowledge of your work and should be your resource for all questions and concerns regarding content, class scheduling, accommodations, or any other class related issues not addressed in the discussion boards.
3. **Third source for information:** If after referencing the discussion board and contacting your TA you feel that you still have questions or concerns, you may email the professor: behrouzian.1@osu.edu

Deadlines: Assume that all deadlines are in Eastern Time (ET).

Late work: Students may submit all assessments except group discussions late with a penalty. Group discussion boards will close after the due date and, thus, this work must be completed within the week the discussion board is open and cannot be submitted late. Penalties for late work increase cumulatively. Submitting work 1 second after the deadline

yields a -2% point penalty for the submission. For each additional hour after the deadline, you lose an additional -2% off the submission.

Unenrollment: OSU does not recognize unenrollment as a valid excuse for missing work. If you become unenrolled from the course for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact me and establish alternative means to submit work prior to the specified deadline. If you suspect that this policy will affect you, I recommend saving the syllabus to your local computer or printing it out for reference.

Professionalism: You must ensure that the work you submit is correct. 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. We will not inform you if your work fails these standards. If we cannot view your work, you will not receive credit for your submission. Standard lateness penalties apply to unprofessional work.

I will not tolerate disruptions to my online classroom including threatening behavior or inappropriate language/derogatory speech. I expect that all students in this course will maintain civility, professionalism, and decorum while in the classroom and in our online interactions. I reserve the right to dismiss any student who is non-compliant with this policy. Additionally, I reserve the right to report disruptive students to the Dean of Students and/or University Police.

Technology: Students must use technology outside of the classroom because this is an online delivered course. Students must regularly check their OSU email account, the Carmen course page for information, materials, updates, and to participate in group discussions. Students must maintain access to a computer/laptop, a high-speed Internet connection, current web browser with video-related plugins, and speakers/headphones throughout the course of the semester. The instructor will link lectures through the [Carmen modules](#) for each week.

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://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours> ([Links to an external site.](#)), and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

Technical failure does not constitute an excuse for submitting work late. This rule is more important with online courses. You are, per course requirements, obligated to have regular access to a working computer/laptop and high-speed internet access. It is your responsibility to make sure your devices are in working order, which includes hardware and software. Technical problems which are documented by the University's Office of the Chief Information Officer will be permitted as these are outside of your control. You can view the status of OSU's systems on [this page \(Links to an external site.\)](#). If you experience a problem with an OSU system (email, Carmen) which OCIO have not reported, it will be your responsibility to raise a ticket with them. Only after they confirm your situation was out of your control will the instructor make an accommodation. Note that a situation like this is extremely rare. If you find yourself experiencing a technical issue that impacts your ability to take part in essential class activities, your first response should be to make alternate

arrangements (e.g., a computer lab). You should email the course TA only when this is not possible.

Dr. Behrouzian will hold office hours through Ohio State's conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. Dr. Behrouzian's digital meeting room can be accessed during posted office hours at this link: [Office Hours](#). 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 in the virtual office hours room. A guide to accessing Carmen Zoom is available [online here \(Links to an external site.\)](#) and students can [access support for Carmen Zoom here \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Grade appeals: You may send your TA 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.

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 the instructor 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, we will allow you to 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. We 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 \(Links to an external site.\)](#)) and the instructor 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 instructor, Dr. Golnoosh Behrouzian. 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 instructor's modification with notice via Carmen to students.

COURSE ASSESSMENTS

Exams: Students will take two exams through Carmen. Each exam is worth 20% of the final grade for a total of 40% of the final course grade. I will administer both exams during the regular semester (weeks 5 and 12). Both exams will cover only material in the unit of the course immediately prior to the exam (i.e., exams are not cumulative).

The exams will rigorously test your knowledge about the course topics. I have designed the exams to be difficult for two reasons. First, the difficulty will motivate you to keep up with the

material each week and to study as you would for a standard, in-person exam. Second, all exams are open book and open notes. The exam material will come from the lectures and the assigned readings/materials. The exam questions are applied rather than definition-based. This means you will not only need to know the definition of concepts, but also how to apply/identify those concepts in real-world examples. Exams may contain multiple-choice, true-false, and matching questions. Students will have 60 minutes to complete each exam and exams will contain approximately 25 questions. The time limit will greatly constrain the ability to look up individual answers. Students must be knowledgeable of the course material to perform well on the exam within the allotted time and must complete exams during the specified time window. Students will only have one attempt to complete each exam. I do not allow group work on the exams and doing so constitutes academic misconduct. Please prepare well and do not wait until the last minute to start an exam, as technological issues can occur (see technology policy below for more details). If students have questions about the exams generally, they should use the [General Exam Discussion Board](#) available in Carmen.

Reading Quizzes: Between the first and second exam, there will be two short reading quizzes that will each assess your knowledge of material for select modules (no more than one model per quiz). These two quizzes are each worth 10% of your grade, for a total of 20% of your final grade. The format of the quizzes is similar to the exams (i.e., questions will be multiple-choice, true-false, matching, or fill in the blank). Each quiz will consist of approximately five (5) questions, each worth two (2) points.

Weekly Group Discussions: For 8 weeks throughout the 12 week semester, students will participate in online group discussions responding to an assigned prompt for the week. You will post your own original comment by Wednesday and respond to at least two (2) other comments by Friday. I will assign students randomly into groups of approximately 11 individuals. Group discussion participation constitutes 12% of the final grade. There are 8 opportunities to participate in the group discussions and each discussion will constitute 1.5% of the final grade (.5 for initial post, .5 1st response, .5 2nd response). Grading is effort based. I expect each student to be actively involved on the discussion boards each week. [This document](#) shares further tips on how to earn top grades for your discussion participation. Because this course is online, the discussion boards also serve as a social space in which students may express agreement, disagreement, ask for clarification, or generate new information for the group's consideration.

Critical Reflection Assignment (CRA): Once during the semester I will deliver a prompt to students to engage in an in-depth critical reflection on an issue related to the social media topic in the course that we are currently discussing. This reflection will require you to do some brief research, share a summary of what you learned, and then share your critical opinion publicly on a group discussion board. Students' opinion in this assignment must in some way be informed by a course concept/topic. More specific information as well as a grading rubric will be available for this assignment. The CRA will constitute 15% of the final course grade. If students have questions about the CRA, they should use the [CRA Discussion Board](#) available in Carmen.

Final Reflection Paper: There is no final exam for this course. Instead, you will write a 3-5 page paper reflecting on your experience in the class. This document will help guide you on how to approach this paper. Standard APA formatting applies to the paper: 1) Double-spaces; 2) 12-point font (black or blue ink); 3) 1-inch margins. Cover page and reference page are NOT required and will not count towards page limit.

Syllabus quiz: Students will take one quiz this semester that covers the syllabus. Since we will not meet face to face at the start of the semester, this quiz will help motivate students to understand the policies and expectations in the course from the start of the semester. The other purpose of the quiz is to familiarize students with using the Carmen quiz system because this is how students will take exams in this course. Students may take this quiz as many times as they would like and the highest grade earned will be recorded. The quiz will constitute 3% of the final course grade.

C-REP extra credit: All students may participate in the Communication Research Experience Program ("C-REP"). C-REP is designed to give students direct exposure to the topics, goals, methods, and ethical issues of communication research. Each C-REP credit is worth 1%. You may earn a maximum of 2% for this course.

Participation can take the form of:

- Completing two hours of C-REP research studies, OR
- Completing two C-REP alternative written assignments, OR
- Completing a combined total of two hours of research studies and alternative writing assignments.

You should NOT wait until the last minute to sign up for participation. It is wise to complete this as early as possible, when demands on your time are the lightest. Please take the time to read the detailed C-REP Student Guide posted on the course website listed under Important Documents/Links. Please direct any questions regarding C-REP to the contact person identified in the Student Guide.

GRADING

The grade for this course is based on 2 exams, 2 reading quizzes, participation in 8 group discussions, 1 critical response assignment, 1 reflection assignment, and 1 syllabus quiz.

Item	Total Percentage of Final Grade
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Reading Quiz 1	10%
Reading Quiz 2	10%
Weekly Group Discussions (8)	12%

Critical Reflection Assignment	15%
Final Reflection Paper	10%
Syllabus Quiz	3%
C-REP Extra Credit	Up to 2%

I will use the standard OSU grading scale and I will not round grades. If this course is required for you to graduate or to avoid academic probation/expulsion, you should perform at your best to avoid an undesirable outcome. Be proactive in working to earn the grade you want and understanding what this requires of you.

A 93.00-100% B 83.00-86.99% C 73.00-76.99% D 60.00-66.99%

A- 90.00-92.99% B- 80.00-82.99% C- 70.00-72.99% E 0-59.99%

B+ 87.00-89.99% C+ 77.00-79.99% D+ 67.00-69.99%

OSU POLICIES

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; 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

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 ([Links to an external site.](#)) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th 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 suicidepreventionlifeline.org ([Links to an external site.](#)).

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 <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml> ([Links to an external site.](#)). Students may learn about additional services offered on the OSU main campus by visiting <http://ssc.osu.edu> ([Links to an external site.](#)).

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below is tentative and subject to change. Refer to the weekly modules for the most up to date material list. All materials, readings, and videos are available via the modules.

Typical weekly structure: I release new content on Saturdays. MOST assessments for the week are due on Fridays by 5:00 PM ET (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED). Initial Discussion posts are due on Wednesday by 5:00 OM and two responses are due by Friday 5:00 PM. The Reflection paper falls during Finals Week and will be due on Monday 8/3 by 5:00 PM.

Week	Date	Topic	Lecture Video	Material or Reading	Due
1	5/13	What Do We Mean by Social Media?	Videos 1-1, 1-2	Syllabus; boyd & Ellison (2008, excerpt); Perrin & Anderson (2019); Humphreys (2016, excerpt); Rosen (2012); Two Step Flow video; Diffusion of Innovation video; History of Social media video	
2	5/18	The Ruling of Social Media	Videos 2-1, 2-2	Obar & Wildman, 2015; Spar (2001); Tufekci (2016); Sonali & Karr video; Instagram's Algorithm video	Syllabus quiz; Group Discussion 1
3	5/25	The Technological Basis of Social Media	Videos 3-1, 3-2	Walther and Jang (2012); Fox and McEwan (2017); Golbeck & Aral (article); Deepfake video (WSJ); Nuñez (2019)	Group Discussion 2
4	6/1	The Social Basis of Social Media	Videos 4-1, 4-2	O'Sullivan & Carr (2018); Baym (2015); Jensen (2015); Patulny (2020); Context collapse video	Group Discussion 3
5	6/8	Interacting with the Publics	Videos 6-1, 6-2	Murthy (2018) excerpt; Mundt, Ross, & Burnett (2018); Tufekci (2017) Ch. 1	Exam 1
6	6/15	Organizing through Social Media I	Videos 7-1	Tufekci (2017) Ch. 2, 3; Framing TedTalk; 5 Filters of the Mass Media Machine video; Ciampaglia & Menczer, 2018	Group Discussion 4; CRA1 due
7	6/22	Organizing through Social Media II	Videos 8-1, 8-2	Tufekci (2017) Ch. 5; Garrett (2016); All Hail the Algorithm video; AI can be biased video	Quiz 1 (Week 6 material)

8	6/29	Social Media and Social Support	Videos 12-1, 12-2	Cook, 2020; Bazarova, 2020; Gonzales, Lynch, Kwon, & Fritz (2016)	Group Discussion 5 Quiz 2 (Week 7 material)
9	7/6	Selective-self presentation	Videos 13-1, 13-2	Walther et al. (2015); Smith & Sanderson (2015)	Group Discussion 6
10	7/13	Body Image via Social Media	Videos 14-1, 14-2	Fox & Vendemia (2016); Yeshua-Katz & Martins (2013); Selfie Filters video	Group Discussion 7
11	7/20	Disinhibition and Deindividuation	Videos 15-1, 15-2	Sutton TEDTalk (2018); Xiao (2019); Suler, 2005	Group Discussion 8
12	7/27				Exam 2 (Week 8-11 material)
13	8/3				Reflection Paper Due MONDAY 8/03 @ 5 PM