RTV4910 Evaluating News Quality in the Platform Era
Spring 2022
Thursdays 10:00-11:00 am

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Course Description
Is social media a popularity contest or a marketplace of attention? This project investigates how high-quality news performs on social media sites (i.e., Facebook and Twitter) in terms of user engagement. It has been argued that the current social media space is not designed to promote high-quality news but rather, to maximize user interest and engagement. At the same time, there is a contradicting view that high-quality information rises to the top through competition. Accurately understanding the current state of social media systems is a first step to discussing effective solutions. Therefore, this project seeks to measure news quality at the content level and examine how such quality differences relate to audience engagement on social media. Toward this goal, this project will create an evaluation protocol for measuring high quality news content. During the Spring 2022 semester, we will compile existing quality dimensions for news and test whether they function as a reliable and distinctive quality scale through a survey. This project is led by Dr. Jieun Shin and may involve collaboration with UF graduate students and faculty from other universities.

GRADING
Grades are *earned* via 6 modes

Attendance/ Participation	10%
Literature review	20%
Data collection	10%
Content coding	20%
R coding	10%
Write up the analysis	30%

Grading scale: A, 100-93; A-, 92-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80; C+, 79-77; C, 76-74; C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; E, 59 and below

Course Schedule

Schedule	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 (Jan 7)	Course Overview	✓ Download R ✓ Download R studio
Week 2 (Jan 14)	Module 1. R programming	✓ Data frame
Week 3 (Jan 21)	Module 2. Misinformation (part1)	✓ Literature Review

Week 4 (Jan 28)	Module 3. Misinformation (part2)	✓ Literature Review
Week 5 (Feb 4)	Module 4. News Quality (part1)	✓ Literature Review
Week 6 (Feb 11)	Module 5. News Quality (part2)	✓ Literature Review
Week 7 (Feb 18)	Module 6. Data collection (part 1)	✓ Data import into R
Week 8 (Feb 25)	Module 7. Data collection (part2)	✓ Data management
Week 9 (March 4)	Module 8. Content coding (part1)	✓ Codebook
Week 10 (March 18)	Module 9. Content coding (part2)	✓ Intercoder reliability
Week 11 (March 25)	Module 10. Data analysis (part1)	✓ Descriptive analysis
Week 12 (Apr 1)	Module 11. Data analysis (part2)	✓ Correlations
Week 13 (April 8)	Module 12. Discussion (part1)	✓ Write up the results
Week 14 (April 15)	Module 13. Discussion (part2)	✓ Write up the discussion section
Week 15 (April 22)	Final report	

Required Text
All required readings are in the Course Shell. There are no required textbooks.

Note.
1. Please ask class-related questions in the question forum, not in the "comments" section of an assignment. This way, you can share the answers with other fellow students.
2. For technical issues with Canvas, please contact E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/

OTHER CLASS POLICIES

- **Students with Special Needs:** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given

- specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/."
- **Academic Honesty:** The University of Florida Honor Code applies to all activities associated with this class.
- ✓ UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code.
- ✓ On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.
- ✓ You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines in detail at: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/seminars-modules/academic-integrity-module
- **Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx