MMC 5427 – Fall 2017
Research Methods in Digital Communication
University of Florida, Online Masters in Digital Media
3 Credit Hours
Section 2A48

Instructor:

Kenny Zaron, M.S.
kzaron@ufl.edu (Please include "MMC5427" in subject line)

Connect Room: https://uflcoj.adobeconnect.com/mmc5427_fall17/

Course Time: Wednesdays 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m (Times on this syllabus are EST/EDT)

Contact Details

Please contact me through email at kzaron@ufl.edu. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours during weekdays. I also try my best to check messages on the weekends, but please plan on any email you send after 5 p.m. on Friday to be replied to on Monday.

Office Hours

I am available to schedule time to meet with you outside of class using the Connect platform between 6pm and 9pm on weeknights outside of Wednesdays when our class meets. If you wish to schedule a meeting with me, please send me an email.

Bio

I am currently a web application developer at UF-IFAS IT and have a lifelong passion for working with new technologies. Most of my current projects are in the .NET environment, but I also work in other languages and tools such as Java, PHP, and Perl. I have also worked for a local nonprofit and built their website, which eventually attracted First Lady Michelle Obama to visit their organization during the 2012 Obama campaign tour. I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees from UF.

Course Website

Your course website is hosted on Canvas (UF e-Learning). Visit http://elearning.ufl.edu/ and click on the blue e-Learning button to log in with your Gatorlink account. Our course will be in the Courses menu on the left navigation menu. You may have to click 'All Courses' at the bottom depending on how many courses you have taken at UF.

Contact the UF Helpdesk (http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/ or (352) 392-HELP (4357) if you have any trouble accessing our course or e-Learning in general.

Note: I make heavy use of the Canvas modules, where I have course materials grouped into separate modules for each week of readings and each assignment. If you are unable to find a file you need, chances are it can be found in the modules section.

Connect – Live Class Meeting

Our class meets live using the Adobe Connect platform. You can access the Connect room by using this link:

https://uflcoj.adobeconnect.com/mmc5427_fall17/

Meeting Time: Wednesdays evenings, 6pm to 9pm

Course Description

This course will help you think about how you use digital media and enable you to gain an effective working knowledge of methods and strategies to use when evaluating online communication tools. We often focus on discovering the meaning behind information through research and development. As a result of taking this course, students will learn how marketing on the web functions and how that relates to web design as well as the tools used to collect data on the web. You will understand Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and analytics tools, and how to successfully research and position your online marketing efforts. Finally, you will learn about communicating with consumers, stakeholders, and the general public in the online marketplace, as well as the costs, risks, and benefits associated therein.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will:
- Learn how to research a wide array of topics in digital communication media.
- Be able to manage website Analytics and SEO tools effectively.
- Use actual testing methods to determine what elements on a website are effective, which elements are ineffective, and why.
- Work with a real world client to create an SEO proposal for their business based on their industry and business needs.

Course Expectations

This course is taught through live meetings each week of the semester. Being an online platform, this requires students to actively engage with the content and participate consistently in order to build an enriching classroom experience. **As such, students in this course are expected to attend class lectures and participate in a constructive way.** You are also expected to communicate with both the instructor and classmates in a professional way, including using professional language when presenting in front of the class, in written assignments, in the class chat box, and in any email communications.

For class live meetings, students are expected to be on time and ready to participate in the material for that week. Participation occurs through communicating in the Connect chat box and through polling questions posed by the instructor during class time.

Students are expected to turn in assignments on time, stay current with assigned readings, and be a dependable contributor to group project(s).

Technical issues with uploading work for a grade is not an excuse. If a student is having technical difficulties with Canvas, there are other means to submit completed work. Student may email the document, .zip files, or even links to Dropbox folders to Instructor via UF email. Students should compensate for technical difficulties by not waiting until the last minute to submit work. For example, "I sent you a Dropbox link 5 minutes before the assignment due", accompanied by a non-working Dropbox link, is **not** an acceptable excuse for an issue turning in an assignment. You are all responsible adults taking courses in a technology-focused program, I expect you to be problem solvers!

Webcam Expectation

This course meets live on a weekly basis. **Students are expected to have a working webcam and microphone at all times for this course.** I strongly encourage you to test your equipment using the webcam software on your computer regularly to ensure that things are working properly. Due to the nature of this course (and the WDOC program) **I cannot make any exceptions for a student not having a functioning webcam and microphone.** Similarly, any pre-recorded presentation submissions must have functional audio and video to receive full credit. If you are having difficulty with your equipment, I encourage you to notify me and to seek out computing help resources, such as the UF Help Desk (http://helpdesk.ufl.edu/).

Required Text

There is no required textbook for this course. Because of the changing nature of the technologies we discuss, a traditional textbook is replaced by weekly readings that students are responsible for reviewing each week before class meets. The readings are curated for each week's topics and are found under the Canvas modules area, divided by each week's topic.

While each specific reading may not be addressed individually during class, the knowledge acquired by reading the assigned material will give students an enhanced ability to understand and participate in the class lecture and discussion each week. The final pages of this syllabus contain a calendar for this course, and the calendar of assigned readings for each week of class.

Additional Recommended Readings/Resources

1. Search Engine Marketing, Inc.: Driving Search Traffic to Your Company's Web Site by Mike Moran and Bill Hunt
2. http://SEOmoz.org
3. http://unbounce.com/blog/

4. http://searchengineland.com/
5. http://searchenginewatch.com/

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

I approach each week's material from an introductory perspective and provide information that gives an understanding of the topic that everyone can engage in. I do not expect that students have a pre-existing knowledge of the topics covered in this course. Reading the required materials for each week's class is enough for students to be able to participate in and understand each class lecture/discussion.

Teaching Philosophy

I believe that learning occurs best when students are in a comfortable environment and are presented with information that benefits them in a practical way. I also believe that learning occurs best when students are actively participating in discussion instead of listening passively. The best way to recall information later on is to have been actively thinking about and discussing that information for yourself. Active engagement, in my opinion, is the key to understanding new concepts. I find this to be particularly true in technology related courses like ours where new concepts can be complicated, and use unfamiliar terminology and thought-processes.

Course Policies:

Attendance & Class Participation Policy

Much of our class time will be spent in discussion. **You may be called upon during class to share your thoughts about the topic being discussed**. Completing the readings before each class and paying full attention during the online discussions will be crucial in being able to participate fully. Students are expected to continuously engage in the chat during class by reacting to and discussing the material presented. **Logging into Connect and not participating will result in a loss of attendance and participation points for that class meeting.**

This portion of your grade should be the easiest to complete as you should be interested in the topics already and want to engage in discussions on the topics. There is no way to participate in discussion without attending the online class time. **As such, any <u>unexcused</u> absence (one without a response paper submitted on time) will result in a 10-point deduction in your overall participation and discussion grade.**

Attending class while engaging in another activity is not considered full participation and a response paper will need to be submitted to earn credit for the week (ex. being out to dinner, still engaging in work activities, etc).

Please note that failure to have a working webcam/mic on a regular basis can result in a lower attendance and participation score because it takes away from the class experience.

Students are not to attend class from a cellular device, as the adaptation of the Connect platform on mobile devices does not allow for students to participate in the class discussion and view the lecture material and presenter simultaneously and effectively. As this is a live course, live participation is expected, just as if you were attending this class in a traditional setting. Set aside time for this class when it is scheduled to meet each week for the semester as if you were attending in person.

Make-up policy for Attendance & Participation: If you miss class, you will need to watch the class recording for that week and submit a response paper to me via Canvas mail before 5pm on the day of the following class. For example, if you missed class on Week 2, your response paper should be in my inbox no later than 4:59pm on the Wednesday before class on Week 3.

I understand that sometimes students may have conflicts with their work schedules and class. **Please email me ahead of time if you plan on missing class so that I know to expect your make-up reaction paper** (see below). If this is going to be an ongoing issue, please make sure you also get permission from Vonne Smith.

Late Work & Make-Up Policy

Deadlines are critical to this class. All work is due on or before the due date. Extensions for deadlines will only be given for preapproved emergencies. Minor inconveniences such as family vacation, losing your documents (I strongly suggest all students take advantage of a cloud storage platform such as Dropbox, OneDrive, etc. for all of their coursework), or minor illness are not valid reasons for extensions. In case of a medical emergency, written proof from your doctor submitted in a timely manner will be required to receive an extension.

The penalties for late work are:

- Less than 1 hour late   - 15 points
- 1 hour to less than 48 hours late   - 25 points
- Over 48 hours late   Not Accepted

If a student submits an assignment late, the assignment will still be graded according to the same point scale, but with the lateness penalty already deducted. For example, a paper submitted over 1 hour but less than 48 hours after the deadline that normally would have earned 90 points would result in a final score of 65 points.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalogue at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Technical issue policy: Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up. Contact UF helpdesk (352) 392-HELP.

Assignment Submission

All coursework for this class aside from reaction papers will be submitted through Canvas. For presentations, your presentation slides will be due in Canvas before class when you are scheduled to present. Reaction papers are to be submitted to the instructor via Canvas mail before their deadline.

Deadlines

This class, like others, involves many deadlines. Below is a short list of those deadlines:

Presentation Slides	5PM Wednesday the day of your presentation
Response Papers	5PM Wednesday following the class missed
SEO Assignment	5PM Wednesday Week 5
Situation Analysis	5PM Wednesday Week 8
Usability Testing Assignment	5PM Wednesday Week 10
Final Presentation Slides	5PM Wednesday Week 16
Final Report	5PM Wednesday Week 16

Grading

The work in this class will be distributed into your grade as follows:

- Class attendance and participation in class discussions: 10%
- Discussion leader presentations: 15%
- SEO Assignment: 10%
- Usability Testing Assignment: 10%
- Group SEO/Analytics Presentation: 15%
- SEO and Google Analytics Final Project: 40%
    - Situation Analysis…10%
    - Peer Evaluation…5%
    - Final Presentation… 10%
    - Final Report on SEO/Analytics Outcomes…15%

Grading Scale

Grades are rounded up to the next percentage point at .51% or above. For example, an 89.49 would result in a final grade of B+, whereas an 89.51 would round up to 90%, resulting in a final grade of A-. When the grade falls at a .50, I will carry the grade to the next decimal point for rounding purposes.

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	E	below 60%

Current UF grading policies for assigning grade points:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

Course and Assignment Details:

Weekly Class Discussion Meeting:

This course meets live each Wednesday of the semester (excluding holidays as noted in the syllabus calendar) for 3 hours from 6pm to 9pm. For the initial hour-and-a-half of each class, the instructor will discuss the week's topic. During this time, students are expected to engage in the online chat about the material being covered, ask questions as they arise, and participate in any in-class activities. The instructor may facilitate in-class or break-out activities during this time to determine that students have mastered the concepts. The remaining time will usually consist of an individual or group presentation(s). **On weeks when we have extra time, groups may be allowed to meet during class time to work on their project/presentations if time allows.**

Individual Assignments

Note: I expect that students read through ALL available documentation in the course shell for each assignment, including but not limited to the assignment's written description and grading rubric. Not reading ALL of the available documentation for an assignment is not an acceptable reason to request grade reconsideration after an assignment has been submitted!

Assignment Submission Document Format

All assignment submissions should be in Microsoft Office or compatible document format. PDF files should only be submitted as supplemental to your assignment submissions. This also applies to your group reports and presentations.

Make-up Assignment: Response Paper (when you miss class)

In lieu of missing a class (and having communicated with the instructor prior to class that you will be absent), students are required to submit a response paper in order to keep the 10 attendance and participation points for that day. **Keep in mind that I take attendance each class, and also mark down when a student is late or leaves early. It is your responsibility to turn in a response paper to me before the next class for any portions of class that you miss. <u>I will not request or remind students to turn in response papers for class time that they have missed.</u> The responsibility falls on you to turn one in on time. Failure to turn in a response paper will result in 10 points deducted from your final attendance and participation grade. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy!**

<u>**Three (3) or more absences without an on-time response paper submission will result in a 0% grade for your attendance and participation grade for the semester.**</u>

Response Paper Description & Requirements

Response papers can be broken into subcategories: lecture, break-out activities (or discussion depending on the day), student presentations, etc., depending on what happened in class that day. In this manner, if you were only absent from a portion of class, you will write in response to the portions of class that you missed. If you missed the whole class, you'll include all relevant sections.

For the main portion of your paper, you should reflect on the content presented during class discussion, and write your thoughts on the material. For any break-out activities, you can briefly write about your results, your experience, what you learned, or any reflection on the topic. For student presentations, you should write a response that communicates to me that you watched the entire presentation and expresses what you learned from it.

For all sections of a response paper, I am not only looking for you simply to create a summary of what was discussed, but to also add your own thoughts and reactions to the material. The goal is for me to be able to see that you not only watched the class you missed, but also understood the material that was covered that day in full.

Length: Each section does not have a minimum length, but the paper as a whole should be **no less than 2-3 pages for a full missed class** (partial papers of course, can be shorter) to show that you watched the entire class and understood the material for that day. This is required for you to have the knowledge necessary to progress in the course and meet the learning objectives.

Format: Response papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word document format using 12 sized font and single spacing. **Response papers are to be written in paragraph format** (i.e. not bulleted lists of each section) using full sentences and proper grammar. The top of your document should include the date of class missed and your full name.

Due Date / Deadline: Response papers are due 5pm before the beginning of the class following the class that a student missed. **Late response papers <u>will not be accepted</u> without explicit permission from the instructor in advance of the missed class in question (see the late policy for examples of reasoning that would grant an extended deadline).** Otherwise, papers that are not submitted before the 5pm deadline following the class meeting missed will result in a deduction of 10 points from the student's overall attendance & participation grade for the semester.

Submission Method: Response papers must be submitted to me via Canvas mail as an attachment to a message. Your subject should read: "MMC5427 – Response Paper – [Date of class missed]. Submission via Canvas mail allows both you and I to have a record of when your paper was submitted. Email submission should only be used if absolutely necessary.

Grading: Response/makeup papers are graded on a pass/fail basis. If a student sufficiently covers the material missed according to the above guidelines, they will receive full Attendance and Participation credit for the class meeting missed.

Discussion Leader Presentation (Individual)

For this assignment, students are tasked with preparing a 25-minute presentation on an assigned topic. Students will sign up for their presentation weeks at the beginning of the term. As discussion leader, students should prepare to **facilitate thought and debate about the topic** having read the materials and identified **case studies or examples** about the topic. These examples can be relevant websites, blogs, social media influencers, or magazine/newspaper articles about the topic.

The topics for these presentations mirror what we discuss in class. However, I am not looking for students to give a presentation that repeats what I present on the topic as an instructor. **I am looking for you to become knowledgeable about the topic you are presenting on. The goal of this presentation is for you to take the 'next step' in researching new ideas, trends and best practices regarding your topic and present them to the class in order to further everyone's knowledge and understanding of the subject beyond what you learned during class.**

I understand that some small parts of your presentation may quickly review something brought up in class previously, but overall I expect you to take your experience, research the topic, and present **new ideas, information, and case studies.**

This is not opportunity to summarize the readings. Everyone in the class will already have done the readings well before your presentation takes place. You may use the readings as reference, but they do not count as research towards your grade.

Discussion Leader Presentation Structure & Requirements

Discussion Leader presentations have a minimum length of 25 minutes. As little as 5 minutes of your presentation should be about the readings or previously covered information. The remaining 20 minutes should focus on new material you present to the

class based on additional research you find, and should allow a few minutes for Q&A at the end. **If you include videos in your presentation, limit them to less than 5 total minutes of your presentation** and give the class time to watch before discussing.

Presentations will be done live with you presenting on your webcam. Please review the webcam requirement policy and make sure that you are completely prepared to present live on camera **before** your presentation.

Submission: Your presentation should be accompanied by a **PowerPoint file which needs to be submitted on Canvas no later than one hour before class (5:00 pm) on the day you present.** After this point, the assignment will be considered late, even if you present on time! Using Prezi through a screen share is also acceptable, although I recommend uploading a PowerPoint file, as it is friendlier to your bandwidth and allowing you to have a stable audio/video connection while you are on camera. If you decide to screen share using Prezi or any other medium, I still require you to submit a PDF copy of your presentation before the 5pm deadline or it will be considered late.

Recommendation: The Connect platform tends to work best when students upload their presentation slide files (PDF works, but does not display as well as PowerPoint files will) directly to the share pod in the classroom. This will automatically fit your slides to the window and allow you to view any notes you write for each slide without needing a second window open. There are more tips for presenting in this class under the "General Course Information" module in eLearning in the file **"Tips for Presenting in Adobe Connect & General Presentation Tips.pdf".**

Research Requirement: I require that the final slide(s) of your presentation contain the sources your researched that are referenced in your presentation. 5 points will be deducted from your presentation for not including your sources, and I will still require students to provide me their sources used in order to receive a grade for their presentation. Please do not lose easy points for forgetting to include your sources!

Research is a critical component of all assignments in this course, including these presentations. Your are required to have a **minimum of 5 high quality sources of research for your presentation. This is a minimum requirement, and not an indicator of a well-researched presentation.** Sources need not all be scientific in origin, but should be notable authorities on the topic. If you have any doubt if a source would be considered high quality, you may contact me well in advance of your presentation and I will review it.

Grading: You may find a detailed rubric for your discussion leader presentations in Canvas in the modules section. Students will be graded on how well their presentation is researched, and how effectively they present new ideas and information to the class.

Dates & Topics: Send your instructor top three topic/date preferences after the first class. You will need the presentation topic schedule from Canvas to do this, which will not be available until after the conclusion of the first class. I will schedule presentations based on the priority of requests made, the availability of student's schedule, and finally on a first-come, first-served basis if any conflicts remain. If a student demonstrates a

specific need, it may outweigh another student's topic/date request, even if it was received earlier. All scheduling will be done at the instructor's discretion.

If you have a specific and valid reason why you cannot present on your assigned presentation date, I need to hear from you via email within 24 hours after presentation assignments are distributed. Otherwise, all topic and date assignments are final.

Students will be assigned a presentation topic within 5 days after the first class.

Presentations should include case studies and real-world examples of the topic in action to share with the class. **Find an example of when a company used a platform effectively or ineffectively. Why did it work or not work? (Be careful to avoid pure marketing and locate actual case studies instead.) One of the best ways to learn about how to operate in the current marketplace is to look at what others have done and understand why their efforts were successful or unsuccessful.**

Late Policy: Due to this assignment being a presentation, you must present your discussion leader presentation on time. In order to keep the course on track and cover all of the material, **it will not be possible for students to make up their individual presentation for late credit**. If a student is unable to present on their assigned date, they must contact the instructor well in advance to arrange a pre-recorded showing of their presentation. **No exceptions will be made to this policy, barring extreme circumstances.**

Pre-Recording Presentations: Students need to select presentation dates where they will be able to conduct their presentation in person during live class. However, if you are unable to be in class for your presentation for a valid reason (**and obtain instructor approval well in advance**), it is possible to pre-record your presentation.

Pre-recorded presentations must be submitted with your presentation slides and a **separate** video file of you conducting your presentation in front of your webcam, as you would normally be if you were present in class. There are absolutely **no exceptions** to this requirement (refer to the webcam expectations on page 3 – you must have a working webcam for this class, so it is my expectation that you should be able to record yourself speaking and be able to share that video file with me).

If you have any questions about the requirements for pre-recording a presentation, please contact me well ahead of your deadline and I will be glad to assist you.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Assignment

After learning about SEO in class, students will evaluate real web SEO data in order to understand how to process and make decisions from it.

Description: You will read a case study on a company's SEO data and conduct analysis to determine what approach the company should take in future campaigns to achieve the highest amount of success. You will need to back up their conclusions with

sound reasoning and data. More instructions will be given when the assignment is handed out after the class discussion on SEO.

Components: Students will write a 2-3 page paper responding to a set of questions regarding the data and information presented to you in the case study that takes a position and comes to a conclusion using analysis and insight into the data.

Submission: This is an individual assignment to be submitted through Canvas.

Grading: You may find a detailed rubric for your SEO assignment in Canvas in the modules section.

Usability Testing Assignment

The usability testing assignment gives students a chance to understand the importance of conducting a usability test on websites before launching them into production and to gain experience in successfully conducting a usability test. Students will use their own portfolio websites as the site to be tested for this assignment. In this way, you will gain experience conducting a usability test and receive valuable feedback that can be used to improve your professional portfolio site.

Students will conduct a live usability test with two different people using their own websites built in their previous classes, and see first-hand if their sites are 'getting the job done'. Students will begin this assignment by reading a usability test script to each subject, and then asking them to complete a number of tasks on their site (examples would be: having the test subject identify what field the student is in, locating and downloading the student's resume, finding and viewing work samples the student may have, finding the student's contact information, etc.)

I strongly recommend that students use their personal portfolio websites for this assignment if possible. By testing your portfolio site, not only will you learn about how to usability test, but you will also gain valuable feedback for your portfolio site that will hopefully help you in a future job search.

Components: For this assignment, students will need to complete the following:

- Write a one-page introduction for the test you will conduct in this assignment:
  - Identify **four tasks** on your portfolio site that users will need to complete.
  - Explain why those goals are important success markers for your site.
  - Record what your expectations are going in to the test. Do you expect that users will have difficulty completing your tasks? Why or why not?
- Create a usability testing script (complete with individual scripts for your four tasks) based on what you have learned during class.
- **Find two test subjects** (not directly related to you) and have them complete your test. Record their thoughts and actions throughout the test. Did they have any trouble navigating components of your site that you weren't directly testing? Did they provide valuable feedback? Were they able to complete the tasks? Etc.

- Provide a written account for each test subject of the results of each of the 4 tasks. Do not simply say "yes they were able to do it" - provide a detailed description of what happened during each test.
- Write a (minimum) 1-page conclusion that summarizes your findings from the test, what changes you will be considering for your site going forward, and the meaning behind your test results and how that compared to your expectations going in to the assignment.

Grading: You may find a detailed grading rubric for your usability testing assignment in Canvas in the modules section.

Group Assignments

Group Selection

Students will form groups during the first two weeks of class. These groups will work together for the SEO/Analytics Client Project and the group SEO/Analytics presentation.

Presentations & Participation

For both group presentations in this class, I expect that all members of your group present a portion of each presentation. If a student is unable to be present in the live class for their part of their group's presentation (along with notifying me well in advance) I expect that the student is able to pre-record their section of the presentation and share that file with me a minimum of 24 hours before their presentation begins. While I am flexible, I require that students are able to present for each presentation in order to receive a proper grade. Barring an extreme circumstance, a student's failure to present along with your group in some form will result in that student receiving a zero.

Group SEO/Analytics Presentation

Each group will give a 30-minute presentation about a more in-depth topic related to SEO or Google Analytics in order for the class to gain additional preparation for their final project. The topics will be given in week two and will depend on the prior level of SEO/analytics knowledge that everyone in the class has at the beginning of the semester. Some sample topics could include bidding on Google Adwords, understanding the Google Analytics dashboard, etc. Most importantly, you will **include two or three relevant case studies** that discuss trends, best practices, etc. The sharing of any industry leaders, blogs or videos (videos may last no more than 7 minutes total) that are related to the topic is encouraged. **Presentations are due by 5:00pm on the day your group is scheduled to present.**

Note that this presentation is completely separate from both your individual discussion leader presentations and your group project report & presentation.

The structure and approach for this group presentation is similar to your individual discussion leader presentations. Groups are expected to conduct quality research on their topic and present their ideas, case studies, and research to the class.

Grading: You may find a detailed rubric for your Group SEO/Analytics presentation in Canvas in the modules section.

SEO and Google Analytics Final Project

Each group will select a small business/non-profit/organization with the goal of assisting with their SEO and Google Analytics. Students should not currently be working for the company/organization that is selected. At the end of the second class, I will allow time for students to draft a sample memo to send to the client, along with presenting a detailed handout of student expectations (e.g., that you will be in contact, virtually) and client expectations (e.g., that you are not their personal Web designers).

Note: I require that you do not pick a business that is restricted from advertising on Google Adwords. You may view Google's list of restricted business types here: https://support.google.com/adwordspolicy/answer/6008942?hl=en#res. This policy is in place so that you may gain the full experience of working with a client and creating a project plan, and not because of any personal views or opinions of the instructor.

Additionally, this project will require you to build a Google Adwords campaign for your client. However, **you and your client are not required to fund the account**. Google provides an avenue for creating a functioning Adwords account without needing to enter billing information. Instructions for this will be provided for you on Canvas.

This is a very large project. **I strongly advise that you do not wait to begin working on this project.** Waiting until the last minute to work on this project will prohibit you from being able to do the comprehensive work necessary for a high grade.

If at any time your group has a question about any part of this project, I encourage you to contact me. I am more than happy to assist you with guidance throughout this project, and highly recommend that you use me as a resource over leaving a question your group may have unanswered.

By Week 4, (before the start of class) your group needs to contact me with your client's name, contact information, and confirmation that they are on board (a forwarded email from the client will suffice). **Failure to meet this deadline will result in a 20 point deduction from your Situation Analysis assignment final grade**.

On Week 8, you will submit a situation analysis, which involves **research** on the client's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. You will also write about their competition, what the company has tried before, their SEO/Analytics goals, etc. In addition, you will include a section that talks about how you would go about increasing their SEO, the Google Analytics goals that you will set up, and how the company can

increase their online presence. It is expected that you do additional research on SEO and Google Analytics and cite your sources in APA format at the end of your proposal. Specific guidelines will be posted on Canvas.

If time permits during this week of class, each group will be asked to talk about their client and their situation analysis in front of the class. This will be an informal way for the other students to learn about what other groups are doing. No formal presentation is required for this activity. Students will simply be asked to tell us a little bit about their client and their business needs and upcoming challenges related to the project.

Throughout the term it is expected that you maintain contact with your client and work on their analytics goals. **This is not a last-minute assignment. You will be unable to build a quality proposal if you wait until the last minute to start your work.**

In order to receive a grade for your final report, I require that you have your client fill out a form for providing feedback about your group and the project experience. **It is your group's responsibility as a whole to have this form turned in no later than 5pm on the day after the final day of class (when your peer evaluation form is also due).**

Before class on Week 16, you will submit a report that details what you and your partners did throughout the semester, your goals, the outcomes, etc. You will also write about suggestions for future SEO and Google Analytics efforts.

During class on Week 16, you will present this information to the class in the form of a presentation. I encourage you to invite your client to class and send them a link to our Connect room for them to attend. It is very rewarding for your client to hear the presentation portion of your project as well as receiving your proposal report. It is my hope that you gain real-world experience from this assignment and have something to add to your portfolio after graduation from this program, as well as a potentially helpful professional reference from your client!

Grading: You may find a detailed rubric for the Situation Analysis, Final Project Report, and Final Presentation in Canvas in the modules section.

Peer Evaluations

By 5:00pm Thursday after the last day of class, you must submit a peer evaluation form for your group members using the template provided on Canvas. I will use the information you provide in your evaluations to evaluate how each group member performed during the semester. **Failure to submit a peer evaluation by the 5:00pm Thursday deadline will result in your individual grade for the final project report being deducted by 10 points (your other group members' scores would be unaffected).** No exceptions can be made to this policy.

Grading: Peer evaluations will be graded with your group member's evaluations of you accounting for 90% of the total score, and your own self-evaluation accounting for 10% of the total score. Please also note that in extenuating circumstances, I reserve the right to alter the final score if I feel strongly about comments that your partners have written.

Please take both the scoring of the peer evaluations and the comments you leave within very seriously. Your comments and scores will remain confidential.

UF & General Policies

My "Open Inbox" Policy

I encourage students to contact me with any questions they have about anything relating to this class or any difficulties they encounter throughout the semester. As this is an online course, I call this an "open inbox" policy. If you encounter any issues during the semester that may affect your performance in the class, please contact me and I will do my best to work with you in order to help you be successful.

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

Students with Disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) so that reasonable accommodations may be implemented. DRC is located in room 001 in Reid Hall or you can contact them by phone at 352-392-8565.
University counseling services and mental health services: 352-392-1575

University Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

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."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 352-392-1261.

COJC Academic Honesty Policy

All graduate students in the College of Journalism and Communications are expected to conduct themselves with the highest degree of integrity. It is the students' responsibility to ensure that they know and understand the requirements of every assignment. At a minimum, this includes avoiding the following:

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when an individual presents the ideas or expressions of another as his or her own. Students must always credit others' ideas with accurate citations and must use quotation marks and citations when presenting the words of others. A thorough understanding of plagiarism is a precondition for admittance to graduate studies in the college.

Cheating: Cheating occurs when a student circumvents or ignores the rules that govern an academic assignment such as an exam or class paper. It can include using notes, in physical or electronic form, in an exam, submitting the work of another as one's own, or reusing a paper a student has composed for one class in another class. If a student is not sure about the rules that govern an assignment, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification from his instructor.

Misrepresenting Research Data: The integrity of data in mass communication research is a paramount issue for advancing knowledge and the credibility of our professions. For this reason any intentional 14 misrepresentation of data, or misrepresentation of the conditions or circumstances of data collection, is considered a violation of academic integrity. Misrepresenting data is a clear violation of the rules and requirements of academic integrity and honesty.

Any violation of the above stated conditions is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program and will result in revocation of the degree if the degree previously has been awarded.

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Florida Code of Conduct
https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code

If you have additional questions, please refer to the Online Graduate Program Student Handbook you received when you were admitted into the Program.

Netiquette: Communication Courtesy

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy and professionalism in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf

Getting Help

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:
- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- https://elearning.ufl.edu/help.shtml

** Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help for:
- Counseling and Wellness resources
    o http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx
    o 352-392-1575
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints to submit a complaint.

Course Evaluations

Students are highly encouraged to provide feedback on the quality of 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/.

Class Demeanor

Mastery in this class requires preparation, passion, and professionalism. Students are expected, within the requirements allowed by university policy, to attend class, be on time, and meet all deadlines. Work assigned in advance of class should be completed as directed. Full participation in online and live discussions, group projects, and small group activities is expected.

My role as instructor is to identify critical issues related to the course, direct you to and teach relevant information, assign appropriate learning activities, create opportunities

for assessing your performance, and communicate the outcomes of such assessments in a timely, informative, and professional way. Feedback is essential for you to have confidence that you have mastered the course material, and for me to determine that you are meeting all course requirements.

At all times it is expected that you will welcome and respond professionally to assessment feedback, that you will treat your fellow students and me with respect, and that you will contribute to the success of the class as best as you can.

Course Schedule

*This class covers topics that change quickly. Therefore, as the semester goes on, I may find more relevant and timely articles. If the reading list is ever updated, students will be notified in advance.

Any readings marked with "(Canvas)" should be accessed by logging in to Canvas and finding the document in its Module in the "Modules" section

WEEK ONE – 8/23 – COURSE INTRO & OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL MEDIA

- Explanation of course requirements and assignments
- Introduction and overview of research tools for digital media

Email individual discussion leader date requests AFTER class.

WEEK TWO – 8/30 – AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- Audience Development & Goals of Interactive Media Use
- Discovering, reaching, and retaining your target audience.

READ:
- Canvas: Audiences Module:
  - Selling (Digital) Millennials.pdf
    - Selling (Digital) Millennials: The Social Construction and Technological Bias of a Consumer Generation
  - Social Listening.pdf
    - Social-Listening: 5 Ways To Really Engage With Your Social Media Audience

WEEK THREE – 9/6 – SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION

- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – Understanding who you want or need to reach and how to target them using optimization tools.

REQUIRED READING:
- Google Webmaster Guidelines - Watch video and read the guidelines.
- Canvas (SEO Module): Search Engine Marketing Glossary.pdf - Look through the terms and become familiar with the ideas. This is a good resource to refer back to later on during this course!
- Canvas (SEO Module): Secret Power of the Adwords Search Terms Report.pdf
- Canvas (SEO Module): How Not To Do Local SEO In A Post-Pigeon Era.pdf

WATCH:
- "What is Search Engine Optimization / SEO"
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hF515-0Tduk

RECOMMENDED READING:
- Canvas SEO Module:
  - SEOmoz-The-Beginners-Guide-To-SEO-2012.pdf
  - Dont_Risk_Your_Rankings_With_Unethical_SEO.pdf
- Visit SEOmoz (http://SEOmoz.org) for more readings
- Unbounce Blog http://unbounce.com/blog/
  - http://unbounce.com/ppc/the-definitive-adwords-audit-guide/
- Internet Retailer http://www.internetretailer.com/
- Search Engine Land http://SearchEngineLand.com

WEEK FOUR – 9/13 – SURVEYS

- Surveys – Using surveys for both formative and evaluative research

READ:
- Canvas (Surveys Module):
  - Overcoming Challenges Online surveys.pdf
    - Overcoming the Challenges that Come with Conducting Online Surveys
  - Strategies for Improving Data Reliability for Online Surveys.pdf
    - Strategies for Improving Data Reliability for Online Surveys: A case Study

DO:
- Access Qualtrics through the eLearning portal http://elearning.ufl.edu and explore how you might use it to answer a research opportunity/problem. Create a mock survey and explore the different options for creating questions.

ASSIGNMENT DUE: <mark>Submit client information and confirmation that they agree to participate in your group project. One student may submit for each group.</mark>

WEEK FIVE – 9/20 – WEB ANALYTICS

- Web Analytics (i.e. Google Analytics) – Measuring, collecting, analyzing and reporting Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing Web usage.

READ:
- Google 101: How Google crawls, indexes and serves the web.
- Google Analytics – social reports
- Canvas (Analytics Module):
  - PBS Turns to Google Analytics.pdf
  - Landing Page Mistakes You'll Never Make Again.pdf

RECOMMENDED:
- https://moz.com/blog/how-to-stop-spam-bots-from-ruining-your-analytics-referral-data
- https://brianclifton.com/blog/2015/05/29/removing-referral-spam/
- https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/create-google-analytics-custom-report-ht
- https://blog.kissmetrics.com/google-analytics-for-visitor-insights/

ASSIGNMENT DUE: <mark>SEO Assignment by 5:00pm</mark>

WEEK SIX – 9/27 – USABILITY TESTING

- Usability Testing – Creating reliable testing procedures to discover problems with your website design and behavior flows from a user's perspective

WATCH:
- UX prototyping tutorial: Paper prototyping techniques: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS00UIo12Xk

READ:
- Canvas (Usability Testing Module): Usability Testing Demystified.pdf
- Canvas (Usability Testing Module): 4 forgotten principles of usability testing.pdf
- https://www.nngroup.com/articles/task-scenarios-usability-testing/
- https://medium.com/user-research/user-research-basics-creating-a-test-and-script-bef65496292c#.4cgrk8qf5

WEEK SEVEN – 10/4 – COMMUNICATING WITH MOBILE USERS

- Communicating effectively with mobile users and best practices
- Marketing opportunities and the second screen phenomenon

READ
- Canvas (Mobile Module):
  - Google AMP Is Speeding Up the Web.pdf
  - Loreals Redken robust mobile strategy.pdf
  - What You Need To Know About Facebook Mobile Ads.pdf
- https://developers.google.com/mobile/articles/analytics_end_to_end (Note: For the purposes of this class, I do not expect you to understand the code parts, just focus on the analytics parts.)

WEEK EIGHT – 10/11 – MESSAGE TESTING

- Message testing – How do you know who's reading your online media and how are they reacting to what you say?

READ:
- Canvas (Message Testing Module):
  - media interventions.pdf
    - Jordan, A., Piotrowski,J.T., Bleakley, A., & Mallya, G. (2012). Developing media interventions to reduce household sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 640(1), 118-135.
  - comparing website visitors.pdf
    - Mazaheri, E., Richard, M., and Laroche, M. (2011). Online consumer behavior: Comparing Canadian and Chinese website visitors. *Journal of Business Research*, Volume 64, Issue 9, September 2011, Pages 958–965

ASSIGNMENT DUE: <mark>Situation Analysis by 5:00pm (One group member can submit on behalf of the rest of the group)</mark>

WEEK NINE – 10/18 – REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

- Reputation management and environmental scanning

READ
- http://www.adweek.com/news/technology/data-points-social-faux-pas-142062
- https://blog.kissmetrics.com/guide-to-reputation-management/
- Canvas (Reputation Management Module):
  - Online reputation the only asset worth protecting.pdf
  - Reputation Management Is Becoming Increasingly Important Socialnomics.pdf

WEEK TEN – 10/25 – INFORMATION AGGREGATORS

- Opportunities and struggles for content creators on the web in dealing with third party aggregators.

READ:
- Canvas (Aggregators Module):
    - Spain set to introduce new law against aggregators.pdf
    - Media, old and new, takes heat for Boston coverage - Chicago Tribune.pdf
    - Reddit launches 'pressiquette' guidelines for journalists.pdf
    - FromInformatonToAudiences-January2012.pdf

ASSIGNMENT DUE: <mark>Usability Testing Assignment by 5:00pm</mark>

WEEK ELEVEN – 11/1 – EYE & CLICK TRACKING

- Mapping effective design with Eye Tracking and Click Tracking technologies

READ:
- Canvas (Eye Tracking Module): Eye Tracking and Web Usability – A Good Fit.pdf
- http://www.fastcompany.com/3019886/buyology/eyetracking-and-the-neuroscience-of-good-web-design
- http://www.economist.com/news/technology-quarterly/21567195-computer-interfaces-ability-determine-location-persons-gaze

REMINDER: <mark>Remember to pace yourself on your final project!</mark>

WEEK TWELVE – 11/8 – CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- Managing customers through effective brand management and customer management techniques.

READ:
- Canvas (CRM Module):
    - Effective social media analytics.pdf
    - Effects of the Recession on Public Mood in the UK.pdf
    - Social CRM a Tough Worthy Goal.pdf
- http://hootsuite.com/features/custom-analytics
- http://mashable.com/2012/05/05/adobe-digital-selves/
- http://mashable.com/2012/03/28/google-adobe-social-media/

WEEK THIRTEEN – 11/15 – CROWDSOURCING

- Crowdsourcing - Harnessing the power of online communities using mashups to create measurable change

READ:
- Canvas (Crowdsourcing module):
  - Kickstarter Serves Up Potato Salad By The Numbers.pdf
  - The Dynamics of Micro-Task Crowdsourcing.pdf

WEEK FOURTEEN – 11/22 – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

- No Class – Enjoy your holiday!

WEEK FIFTEEN – 11/29 – BIG DATA/DATA SECURITY

- Big Data, Data security, privacy and ethical issues of collecting data online.

READ:
- Canvas (Big Data Module):
  - LinkedIn connects big data human resources.pdf
  - Big Data consumer analytics and the transformation of marketing.pdf

WEEK SIXTEEN – 12/6 – FINAL PRESENTATIONS

- Final presentations
- Students will present their SEO/Analytics process and outcomes to the class

DUE BY 5:00PM WENDESDAY 12/6:
- **Final Report**
- **Class Presentation**

DUE BY 5:00PM THURSDAY 12/7:
- **Peer Evaluations**

Disclaimer:
This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are possible and should be expected.