MMC 3630 --
Social Media & Society
Fall 2025

Instructor: Matt Cretul, Ph.D.
Course Section/Number: UFO1 - 14467
Room: Course held online through elearning/Canvas
Office Hours: Virtual (Meeting links will be posted in Canvas) Tue & Thurs 12p-1p
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Course Objectives and Goals

This course is designed to explore the impact of social media on our lives from a personal and professional perspective. Social media is impacting how we engage with family, friends, coworkers, and businesses. It impacts how and which media we consume. It turns casual fans into fanatics. It helps keep us better informed. And it provides us with information on what is going on in politics, sports, business, news, entertainment, and weather. But social media is also dividing us and creating vast echo chambers of ideology used to spread dissent, hatred, and propaganda. In this course, we will look at each of these dynamics….and more. By the end of the semester, students will develop a greater understanding of the prevalence of social media in all aspects of their lives, and the theoretical attempts to understand its effects.

Objectives

1. Explain the fundamentals of social media and the theories that attempt to explain their effects
2. Understand how traditional media theories incorporate social media
3. Compare and contrast social media and traditional media
4. Discuss how to use social media to enhance traditional media strategies
5. Understand different types of social media channels
6. Discuss ways companies use social media for marketing and audience engagement
7. Describe professional social media etiquette
8. Debate ethical decision-making for social media
9. Understand how social media has impacted multiple industries in profound ways

Textbooks

- Social media is a rapidly changing area and the skills students needed just a few years ago are already outdated. For this reason, few textbooks are as up-to-date as needed to cover the skills you will need for a job when you graduate. Therefore, all the material you will need for this course comes in lectures and online readings.

- To access, select "e-Learning in Canvas," and log in using your Gatorlink ID. If you have problems with Canvas or any computer problems, please contact the UF Helpdesk by email (helpdesk@ufl.edu) or by phone (352-392-4357).

University-Provided Student Resources

The most up-to-date university policies and procedures regarding: class attendance and make-up exams, disability and accommodation, the university's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, in-class recording, as well as campus health and wellness resources can all be accessed at: https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/

Academic Policies:

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.
- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the "Get Started With the DRC" webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including a link to the University grades and grading policies.
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

    1. The email they received from GatorEvals

    2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals

    3. The central portal at https://my-ufl.bluera.com

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

- **The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.:**

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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

- **In-Class Recording:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. Th only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational

presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Academic Resources:

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- Academic Resources: 1317 Turlington Hall, Call 352-392-2010, or to make a private appointment: 352- 392-6420. Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/ for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/discover for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.

Grading

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found here:

Grading Components		Grading Scale	
		A	**(930-1000)**
200 points (Midterm)		**A-**	**(900-929)**
+ 200 points (Final Exam)		**B+**	**(870-899)**
+ 150 points (Online Discussion Leader Assignment)		**B**	**(830-869)**
+ 250 points (Social Media Diary Assignment)		**B-**	**(800-829)**
+ 100 points (Online Discussion Participation)		**C+**	**(770-799)**
+ 100 points (Video introduction)		**C**	**(730-769)**
= 1000 points total		**C-**	**(700-729)**
		D+	**(670-699)**
		D	**(630-669)**
		D-	**(600-629)**
		E	**(below 599)**

Assignments

(Individual rubrics for each assignment, including how the assignment will be graded, are available on Canvas)

Online Discussion Leader – This will be your chance to lead a virtual Canvas-based discussion during one of the weeks of your choosing. You will be responsible for directing and driving discussions, referring to points made in the lecture (even if you may not agree with a point, you can offer your point of view just make sure to have sources to back up your position), and interacting with your classmates (and me if I engage) to offer responses to their posts. There will be a sign-up discussion pinned in Canvas, with no more than two discussion leaders per week.

==You MUST have your week selected by the start of week 3 (9/1) or there may not be a week available for you to sign up for, which means a zero for your assignment grade.==

In advance of the week you choose, it would be worth it to do a bit of research to understand the topics being discussed, as well as material to add to the discussion if needed. In weeks where you are not a discussion leader, your role will be to respond to the leader's prompts with a video where you share your **original (non-AI generated or augmented)** thoughts/comments that provide value and add to the topic(s) being discussed. I understand the course is asynchronous, so this assignment will extend a week past the calendar week you signed up for.

Social Media Diary – Starting week 5 (the week of 9/15) you will be asked to keep a diary of your social media usage beginning Mon. 9/15 through Wed. 10/15. This includes all social media accessed from your tablet, mobile device, smart TV, or any other means not listed. Once you have completed capturing your usage data, you will begin analyzing it for any trends that may stand out (usage times, durations, specific platforms, etc.). You will then detail your usage and trends in a report (visual aids and written analyses) along with offering critiques and observations. The assignment will be due on Sun. 11/2 @ at 11:59 pm. ==It is recommended and HIGHLY ADVISED that you utilize the screen time feature on your devices and not rely on manually capturing your usage.==

Midterm/Final Exam – The midterm and final will be a mixture of multiple-choice answers, fill-in-the-blank, & medium answer questions. They will test your knowledge and understanding of the subjects covered during the semester. The midterm will take place the week of 10/13 and will cover weeks 1-8, while the final exam will take place during the week of 12/8 and cover weeks 10-16 (with some bleed-over from weeks 1-8). The exams will be open for 48 hours and you will have a set amount of time during that window in which to take them. More information on each will be given during the semester.

Online Discussion Participation – While I do not have a post limit or minimum, I expect you to play an active role in taking part in the weekly discussion. I will monitor the discussion threads throughout the semester and will take note of who is/is not participating. You don't have to be active EVERY week, but you do most weeks. It's ok to take a week or two off, but any more than two weeks without a post will result in a loss of points on the assignment. I look at this as a virtual class discussion as if we were meeting in person.

Video Introduction – This is your chance to introduce yourself to your classmates. By the end of week 2 (Sunday 8/31 @ 11:59 pm), you should upload a 2–3-minute video introducing yourself and any relevant information you feel comfortable passing along (year in school, major, hobbies, favorite movies, artists, pets, general location, e.g., city, state, country, work experience, social media experience, etc.). This helps everyone put a face to a name and makes the discussion participation a bit more personal.

Fall 2025 Topic, Reading & Assignment Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to amend and change the lecture schedule and class plan as needed.

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS
Week #1	8/21	Course Intro/What is Media & Communication
Week #2	8/25	What is Social Media
Week #3	9/1	Media Theory/Media Effects
Week #4	9/8	Digitally Mediated Communication
Week #5	9/15	Social Cognitive Theory
Week #6	9/22	Agenda Setting/Framing/Priming
Week #7	9/29	Social Media Literacy
Week #8	10/6	Social Media & You
Week #9	10/13	**Midterm**
Week #10	10/20	Social Media & Sports
Week #11	10/27	Social Media & Entertainment
Week #12	11/3	Social Media & News
Week #13	11/10	Social Media & Politics/Government
Week #14	11/17	Social Media & Advertising
Week #15	11/24	**Thanksgiving Break**
Week #16	12/1	Flex week
Week #17	12/8	**Final Exam**