MMC 6726: Social Media and Emerging Technology Syllabus

Spring 2026

Class Format, Time, & Location

In-person classes
Monday (WEIM G030) 1:55 PM – 4:55 PM

Professor & TA Information

Professor	Email	Office location
Dr. Jeongmin Ham	jeongminham@jou.ufl.edu	2076 Weimer Hall

Course Description

From AI influencers and virtual reality worlds to interactive games and emerging social platforms, new technologies are transforming how we connect, communicate, and create. This course explores these shifts through the lens of human experience: how people perceive, engage with, and are influenced by evolving media environments. Students will engage hands-on with various technologies, from AR filters to creative AI tools, and critically examine their social and psychological implications. Intertwining industry perspectives with academic research, the course invites both creative makers and critical thinkers to question what it means to live, work, and imagine in a technology-driven world. Whether students plan to pursue professional or research paths, they will leave with a deeper understanding of how emerging technologies shape audiences, identities, and ideas.

No coding skills or prior technical experience are required for this course.

Prerequisites

- Enrollment is limited to students with graduate standing or by instructor permission.
- MMC 5006, MMC 5427, MMC 5636

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze how emerging technologies (e.g., social media, AI, VR, AR, and games) shape human perception, identity, and social interaction.
- Evaluate both industry practices and academic research related to audience engagement, design, and technological innovation.
- Apply theoretical frameworks from media psychology, communication, and advertising to real-world technological contexts.

- Critically assess ethical, social, and cultural implications of emerging technologies and their uses in communication and media.
- Design and facilitate experiential learning activities that explore human interaction with technology.
- Develop and articulate original ideas through written, oral, and creative projects that bridge theory and practice.
- Collaborate in discussions that synthesize scholarly perspectives with practical insights from the media and technology industries.
- Produce a culminating project that demonstrates integrative understanding of course concepts.

Course Preparedness

We will be talking about media and technology that is used in our daily lives. Class content will be super relevant and (hopefully) interesting! The best way to succeed in this class is to show up regularly, review the course materials, and participate in weekly activities and discussions. Finally, check email and Canvas frequently for the latest class information and updates.

Required Materials

Technological Devices

To participate in our in-class activities and discussions, you will need access to a device such as a laptop, smartphone, or tablet. These devices will be essential for certain interactive components of the course.

If you do not have access to any of these devices, please reach out to me via email. I am more than happy to help accommodate your needs to ensure you can fully engage in our class.

Assignments

- **Weekly Discussion Leader:** Each student will serve as a discussion leader once during the semester. Discussion leaders are responsible for selecting one technology or media example for the class to experience or test during their assigned week. The discussion leader will facilitate a 30–60 minute activity that engages classmates directly with the technology, followed by a guided discussion linking the experience to theoretical or conceptual ideas from the course. The discussion leader will also post three to five guiding questions on Canvas prior to class.

- **Weekly Discussion Posts:** For all weeks in which they are not leading discussion, students will submit a short written reflection (approximately 300–400 words) that responds to the assigned readings.

- **Mini Paper: Emerging Trend Analysis:** Students will identify and analyze a current trend within the social media or emerging technology space. Students may either (a) reflect on the trend from their own experience and its implications for audience engagement and design, or

(b) propose how the trend could be studied in academic research, outlining potential theoretical frameworks or research questions.

- **Final Project and Showcase Presentation:** Students will complete one of three culminating projects, determined by their degree program and professional goals. All students will present their work during the Final Showcase (last week of the semester).
    - **PhD Students: Full Research Paper** – A complete conceptual or empirical research paper (approximately 20–25 pages) suitable for submission to a conference or journal.
    - **Research and Theory Master's Students: Research Proposal** – A detailed proposal (approximately 10–15 pages) that includes a literature review, theoretical rationale, research questions or hypotheses, and proposed methodology.
    - **Professional Communication Master's Students: Applied Project** – A strategic or creative project (e.g., campaign concept, prototype, interactive experience) demonstrating innovative use of emerging technology, accompanied by a written paper linking design decisions to theory and audience understanding.

- **Participation and Engagement:** Students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive prepared, and contribute actively to discussions and group activities.

- **SONA Research Participation:** Students are required to participate as research participants in two studies posted on SONA during the semester. If participation is not possible, an alternative reflective assignment will be provided.

Grading

Assignments	Percent of Total Grade
Weekly Discussion Leader	15%
Weekly Discussion Posts	15%
Mini Paper: Emerging Trend Analysis	20%
Final Project (with Showcase Presentation)	40%
Participation & Engagement	5%
SONA Research Participation	5%

Grading Scale

93.00 and above = A
90.00 – 92.99 = A-
87.00 – 89.99 = B+

77.00 – 79.99 = C+
73.00 – 76.99 = C
70.00 – 72.99 = C-

60.00 – 62.99 = D-
59.99 and below = E

83.00 – 86.99 = B	67.00 – 69.99 = D+
80.00 – 82.99 = B-	63.00 – 66.99 = D

Policies, Procedures, and Resources

In addition to the academic policies and campus resources available at https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies, the course-specific policies, procedures, and resources are outlined below.

Course Materials and Attendance:

Our course is an in-person course. Lecture, discussion, activities, and presentations will occur in the classroom. Attendance and participation are expected. You are responsible for getting notes from a classmate if you are unable to attend class.

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor. The instructor is only responsible for these instructional materials.

Please review UF's Attendance Policies carefully to fully understand the attendance expectations for this course.

Late Work:

Timely submission of assignments is important for staying on track in the course. Late assignments are not accepted unless an emergency can be documented or the situation falls under contingencies outlined in UF's Attendance Policies. Assignments submitted after the deadline without approved documentation will receive a grade of zero.

If you anticipate any issues meeting a deadline, please reach out as early as possible. I'm happy to work with you when communication is timely and clear. If advance notice is not possible due to a genuine emergency, documentation will be required as soon as reasonably possible.

Honor Code:

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 (https://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. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism:

Original writing is essential to ethical communication. Cheating is any action that violates University norms or an instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Such actions

may include using or providing unauthorized assistance or materials on course assignments or possessing unauthorized materials during a quiz.

Plagiarism involves the representation of another's work as your own, for example: (a) Submitting as one's own any material that is copied from published or unpublished sources such as the Internet, print sources, or video programs without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Paraphrasing another's views, opinions or insights without proper acknowledgement or copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination, paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. (d) Presenting work created for another course as original work in this class.

UF requires faculty who find evidence of plagiarism to submit a report to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please read the UF Student Honor Code for more information.

Grade Challenges:

Grades will not be discussed via email, telephone or in class. If you disagree with a grade given on any assignment, you must appeal the grade during my office hours or in an appointment with me. In this appeal, you must clearly state the problem and give a clear, concise explanation as to why you feel the grade is inaccurate. You must appeal assigned grades within two weeks of your receiving that particular grade. After two weeks, all grades are final.

Respect for Others' Ideas:

Appropriate and professional classroom conduct is expected at all times. Respect and common courtesy toward your classmates and your professor are required. Be respectful of the range of opinions of everyone in the class.

Email Policy:

As email has become a favored way to communicate in academia and industry, you must learn to use it appropriately. Thus, when emailing me, address me formally. I will generally return it within 24 hours of receiving it on weekdays or by Monday evening if I receive it on the weekend. If you need to discuss something in length, visit my office hours or email me to set up a time to meet.

Accommodations:

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.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to

look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://my-ufl.bluera.com. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

Recording the Professor:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational 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 delivered by any 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 presentations 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 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.

Tentative Nature of the Syllabus:

I reserve the right to change deadlines throughout the semester. Furthermore, I reserve the right to change and or move around scheduled lectures in order to facilitate for potential unplanned events. If changes in the schedule are necessary, students will be held responsible for such changes, which will be announced in class ahead of time.

Additional Campus Resources for Health and Wellness:

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

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.

Additional 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.

Public Speaking Lab: (Dial Center, 501 Rolfs Hall). Offering online and in-person help developing, organizing, and practicing oral presentations. Contact email: publicspeakinglab@clas.ufl.edu.

MMC 6726 Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
Week 1	1/12	Introduction to Class and Syllabus + What Counts as "Emerging Technology"?
Week 2	1/19	*Holiday: No Class*
Week 3	1/26	Platform Affordances & Social Media as an Ecosystem
Week 4	2/2	Player Psychology & Game Design
Week 5	2/9	Narrative Worlds & Fandoms
Week 6	2/16	Virtual Reality & Immersion
Week 7	2/23	Augmented Reality & Spatial Storytelling
Week 8	3/2	Artificial Intelligence
Week 9	3/9	Influencers, Avatars, and Virtual Beings
Week 10	3/16	*Spring Break: No Class*
Week 11	3/23	Social Presence, Identity, and Emotional Responses
Week 12	3/30	Ethics: Deepfakes, Privacy, and More
Week 13	4/6	Independent Work & Feedback Day
Week 14	4/13	Peer Review & Workshop Day
Week 15	4/20	Final Showcase