Trends in Media Technologies

MMC 3260 | Spring 2026 | 3 credits | Class #:13395 section: UFO

Instructor: Ray Martinez Email: raymondmartinez@ufl.edu TA: Gary Ritzenthaler	Class meeting hours: N/A Room: N/A Office Hours: W, F 5-6 pm ET

"The medium is the message" -- Marshall McLuhan.

This course prepares you to thrive amid rapid technological and social change by examining how core internet and media technologies are built, how they work, and how they reshape everyday life. We will trace the history and structure of the internet and the World Wide Web, unpack how platforms and search engines move and rank information, and introduce the underlying concepts behind modern Artificial Intelligence, including data, models, and automation. The course is organized around three strands: learning how the internet and AI technologies function; analyzing trends and social impacts, such as bias, labor, and misinformation; and completing an independent project. Over the semester, you will plan, design, and build a self-hosted WordPress.org website, gaining practical experience with domain registration, hosting, site architecture, basic analytics, and digital strategy. By the end of the course, you will be able to explain key internet and AI systems in clear language and use that understanding to make informed, ethical decisions about media technologies in your academic, creative, and professional work.

Note: Because this is an online course, more details, including the course assignments, are available on the course site in UF eLearning (Canvas). Please review all that material, not just the material in this document.

Course Objectives

The course has three parts: (1) practical Internet and AI skills; (2) discussion of Internet and AI trends and issues; and (3) independent study of current topics related to the Internet and its use. This course leads to the following objectives:

- Learn the history and structure of the Internet and the World Wide Web, and explore current issues, future trends, and the impact of AI on its evolution.
- Build your skills in long-term project planning and the process for planning and building a quality website using WordPress, potentially with AI-assisted tools.
- Build your skill in "thinking multimedia" and planning user experiences for interactive projects in an AI-enhanced digital space.

- Understand the foundations of web analytics and key elements of digital marketing, including AI-driven automation and insights.
- Develop core career skills in AI prompt literacy, fact-checking AI outputs, and applying AI ethics to real-world communication tasks.

Class Meetings and Office Hours

This class is 100% online. Most required assignments take place in UF's eLearning platform (Canvas) and related tools. Office hours will be held from 4-5 pm ET on Wednesdays and Fridays. Your professor is also happy to meet by appointment.

Your attendance and participation are significant parts of your final grade. Participation is essential, so please enter your weekly journal entries and schedule check-in meetings when needed.

Readings, Tools, and Course Materials

- **Textbooks:** There is no printed textbook. The Canvas pages for this course should be considered the textbook.
- **Course Videos:** Most modules will require you to watch instructional videos. Please ensure your computer meets the College of Journalism and Communications requirements for video playback and access to LinkedIn Learning.
- **Core Tools:** This course will use WordPress, Google Analytics, and various AI platforms, including ChatGPT/Bing Copilot and Claude, for specific assignments.

Tech Help

- **Canvas Issues:** Contact the UF tech helpdesk at http://helpdesk.ufl.edu./.
- **Siteground Hosting:** Contact Siteground support at https://www.siteground.com/support.
- **WordPress Issues:** Check the resources at https://wordpress.org/support/ before emailing your professor.

Course Workload

For this three-credit class, you should expect to spend up to 3 hours per week watching course videos and reading assignments, and up to 6-9 hours per week studying, completing quizzes, working on your project, and completing other AI-related tasks and assignments.

Assignments

Here are the major graded elements for this course.

1. **Quizzes & Weekly AI Tasks: 30%**
   a. Nearly every module will have one or more small quizzes or assignments to test your knowledge. This category also includes weekly AI tasks, such as using a chatbot to research a topic, critiquing AI output, or keeping a journal of your AI prompts.
2. **Project: 40%**
   a. A semester-long independent study project is a significant part of your grade. The project's goal is to research an Internet-related topic in depth and build a website for it. The project requires the use of AI for at least one meaningful element (e.g., text generation, design ideas, metadata). Students must submit an "AI usage log" detailing the prompts used and how the AI output was implemented or discarded.
3. **Discussions and Participation: 20%**
   a. Participation is crucial and includes class discussions, project journal entries, peer reviews of AI use, and check-in meetings with your professor.
4. **Final Exam: 10%**
   a. The final exam will be proctored and will cover the entire semester. It will include scenario-based questions on AI ethics and require you to submit a personal AI policy statement.

Deadlines

- All quizzes are due before 11:59 pm on a Sunday.
- Project assignments are usually due on Friday before 11:59 pm.
- Deadlines are set in Canvas for 11:59 p.m. Your inability to upload at the last minute is not a valid excuse for lateness.
- Late assignments will receive a full letter grade deduction for each day they are late.
- Assignments will not be accepted by email unless the instructor requests them.

Grading

Grades will be awarded based on the following scale.

Grade	Range		
A	100 %	to	94.0%

A-	< 94.0 %	to	90.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to	87.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to	84.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to	80.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to	77.0%
C	< 77.0 %	to	74.0%
C-	< 74.0 %	to	70.0%
D+	< 70.0 %	to	67.0%
D	< 67.0 %	to	64.0%
D-	< 64.0 %	to	61.0%
F	< 61.0 %	to	0.0%

UF and Course Policies

- **Accommodations:** Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center (https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/) and provide documentation to the instructor as early as possible. Accommodations are not retroactive.
- **Students in Distress:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or call 352-392-1575.
- **Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals.

- **Academic Policies** can be viewed here: https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/

Academic Honesty and AI Ethics

Academic integrity is a fundamental value of the University community. Any instance of academic dishonesty will be reported and result in a failing grade for the assignment or, depending on the severity, the entire course.

Given the integration of AI in this course, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting work done by another person.
- Collaborating with other students to complete quizzes.
- Submitting work you completed for another course.
- **Failing to give credit for any idea, media resource, text, or code you use for an assignment, including output from an AI generator.**

The rules on plagiarism apply to all online sources, images, content, and AI-generated material. When you turn in work for this class, you are expected to credit anything you get from another source, whether it is an image, code for a project, or ideas for written work from a person or an AI. If you have any questions, it is always best to check with your instructor first. It is highly recommended that you complete the Academic Integrity module and watch the "Avoiding Plagiarism" video to understand these expectations.