# MMC5636 Introduction to Social Media

**Academic Term: Fall 2026**
3 **Credit Hours**

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Instructor Name: Kristin Blitch
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Phone Number: 352.682.4074
Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays from 8:00 PM – 9:00 PM ET on Zoom. By appointment, as needed - please reach out via email or cell to schedule.

## Course Description and Prerequisites

**Course Description:** This course focuses on social media best practices for content, frequency, visuals, and the mechanics behind each practice. Students will learn how social media influences public relations, marketing, customer services, and other aspects of business communications. The course explores the differences between the major social media channels, their evolution, and the current and future status of social media for business.

**Course Prerequisites – N/A**

## Course Expectations

This course is fully online; you must log in to Canvas with your Gatorlink username and password to access the materials and assignments. The course is organized into modules with due dates. Unless otherwise specified, each module begins on Monday at 12:00 AM ET and ends on Sunday at 11:59 PM ET.

**Time Commitment & Student Workload Expectations**
Expect to spend 10 to 20 hours per week per course watching or attending lectures, reading, working on assignments and projects, and engaging in discussions.

**Expectations for Writing Assignments: Writing Style**
To meet the academic rigor and standards of a graduate program, all students must use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition style in their courses when appropriate for the assignment. The APA 7th Edition Manual has a plethora of guidelines that include scholarly writing, publishing principles, elements and format for your papers, writing style and grammar, bias-free language guidelines, mechanics of style, in-text citing references, etc. For additional information on notable changes, see changes between APA 6th Edition and APA 7th Edition.

**Class Demeanor**
During live class sessions, students are expected to have cameras on and actively participate in class discussions. If you are unable to use your camera, a note must be sent prior to class.

**Attendance Policy**
Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies for information on absences, religious holidays, illness, and the twelve-day rule. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the Graduate Catalog and require appropriate documentation.

**Late Assignment Policy**
Late assignments will not be accepted unless it is a University excused absence, as stated in the attendance policies. ***Due to the university grading deadlines, no late work will be accepted for final projects or work due in the final week of class.*** Students should contact their instructors before submitting the assignment deadline if potential issues arise concerning submitting the final work.

1. Late Assignment Grade Reductions
    a. 0-24 Hours Late: 10% reduction in grade.
    b. Over 24 Hours (24 hours and 1 minute) to 7 Calendar Days Late: 20% reduction in grade.
    c. After the 7th Calendar Day: Work will not be accepted.
2. Late Discussions will not be accepted.

**Student Guidelines for Course Challenges**
A student with questions regarding course content such as assignments, assessments, instructional materials, lectures, meetings, course objectives, course module objectives, or other areas of the course, please adhere to the following guidelines: First, *approach the faculty member who is teaching the course* to ask for clarifications regarding the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc. Use the instructor's contact information to request an appointment where you can address any concerns and/or questions. If, after meeting with *the faculty member teaching the course,* you are still unclear on the course assignments, assessments, materials, lectures, meetings, etc., then the next step would be to contact online advising (onlineadvising@jou.ufl.edu) for additional guidance.

**Accessibility/Students with Disabilities Information**
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/It is important for students to share their accommodation letters with their instructors and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

**Course Evaluation**
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 receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
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/."

## Course-Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Compile the history of social media. (CO: 1)
2. Create and maintain personal and professional social media accounts. (CO: 2)
3. Create targeted content. (CO: 3)
4. Develop communication strategies around content. (CO: 4)
5. Identify social trends' impact and implementation. (CO: 5)
6. Analyze technological changes impacting social media. (CO: 6)

(CO = Course-Level Objective)

## Textbooks and Materials

**Required Course Textbook(s)**

Cline, E. (2012). *Ready Player One: A Novel* (1st ed.). Random House Publishing Group.

- ISBN-10: 0307887448
- ISBN-13: 978-0307887443

Fredberg, K. (2025). *Social Media for Strategic Communication* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publishing

- ISBN-13: 978-1071936733
- ISBN-10: 1071936735

**Required Software:** There is no required software to purchase for this course.

**Recommended Textbook(s)**

This textbook is recommended in all CJC Online classes to support student expectations for writing style.

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.).

- ISBN-13: 978-1433832161
- ISBN-10: 143383216X

*An example of a (mock) student paper in APA format is included in your actual course.*

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

# University and Course Grading Policies

**University 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 Conduct Code specifies the number of behaviors that violate this code and the possible sanctions. Click here to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is unacceptable, especially in academic communities. All academic work must be an original work of your own thought, research, or self-expression. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to, prohibited collaboration, consultation, and submission of academic work that has been purchased or obtained (see the UF Policy: Student Conduct Violation). In addition, self-plagiarism is also unacceptable. Self-plagiarism is defined as recycling or reusing one's own specific words from previously submitted assignments or published texts. Remember that plagiarism is unacceptable in any of your work, including all discussion board posts, journal entries, wikis, and other written and oral presentation assignments. It's important to always cite your sources in your assignments.

**Grading Criterion**

Your grade will be calculated based on the following:

**Lecture Participation/Lecture Discussion Papers (Total 5%)**

There will be both live and recorded lectures during the semester. Live lectures will take place on Mondays (when indicated on Canvas) at 6:30 PM ET. Live lectures provide students an opportunity to ask questions of the instructor and interact with peers. You are required to be an active participant during live lectures to help create an interactive experience.

Required live lectures will take place during the following weeks:

- Target Marketing
- Social Strategy, Content Calendars, & Tools
- Influencer Marketing

If you attended the live lecture and were an active participant, you do not need to do a write-up and will automatically receive a grade for attending. If you are unable to participate in live lecture, links will be provided to catch up and watch recordings. If you are unable to attend a live lecture, you are required to write a 400-word paper explaining what you learned from watching the lecture and quickly explain how you can apply what you learned in your professional life and your assignments during the week. Lecture discussion papers are due Friday by 11:59 PM ET via email (kblitch@ufl.edu).

You are also required to watch the recorded lectures during weeks when the lecture isn't live. If there is only a recorded lecture, you do not have to submit a lecture discussion paper.

**Weekly Textbook (*Ready Player One*) Quizzes (Total 5%)**

You will be asked to read selected pages from your textbook weekly; page requirements will be outlined in Canvas. A competency quiz will be available to coincide with your reading each week. Quizzes are required. Quizzes can only be completed once and will close on Sunday at 11:59 PM ET of each week.

**Discussions (Total 15%)**

Each week students will receive a prompt based on the weekly subject matter which requires a substantive and scholarly post of at least 200 to 600 words. The initial post is due by Thursday at 11:59 PM, ET. You are required to respond in a substantive and scholarly manner to at least two of your peers. Responses to the initial post are due on Sunday at 11:59 PM, ET., unless otherwise noted. Students are required to cite and reference at least one reading from the week in their initial discussion post. Responses to classmates' posts do not require citations. These discussions are to help better understand the course material and to help build a sense of team with classmates.

Optional discussions to discuss *Ready Player One* will occur twice during the semester

**Thought Papers (Total 25%)**

During outlined weeks of the semester, you will be assigned a thought paper that ties directly with the content taught in class that week. The topic/prompt will require you to write a 500 – 600-word response on Medium (if you do not have a Medium account you will need to create one for this course). You will submit the link from Medium on the Thought Paper Discussion board (listed as Discussions) in Canvas.

The responses to these questions will require thought, and the expectation is to apply the readings and your learnings from lecture. Thought papers are due on Sundays at 11:59 PM. To view the grading criteria rubric for thought papers, click the Settings icon (the 3 dots on the top-right corner) and select the Show Rubric button.

**Assignments (Total 25%)**

The assignments in this class will vary in style, but each will challenge and require you to utilize outside resources to complete. Examples of assignments include creation of target personas for a movie (final project selection), creation of social profiles for a fictional character. For one assignment, students will need to post from their social media account(s) weekly to analyze content part way through the semester. For another, students will be working with a small business to create a social media content calendar. Lastly, students take an online course to receive a HubSpot certification. Each of these assignments will help to enhance and develop your social media skills. Assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59 PM ET.

**Midterm Project (Total 10%)**
For your midterm project, you will be analyzing the social media marketing efforts for an event from a company/brand of your choosing (you may choose your own company). Once you have selected your event, your paper must be at least 5 – 7 pages, in which you detail, discuss and analyze the social media efforts for your chosen event. Examples of marketing events include: Refinery29: 29Rooms, Red Bull: Stratos, Jetblue: The Ultimate Icebreaker. You will use the knowledge gained in the first six weeks of the course to provide research, analysis, and suggestions on ways to improve the social media efforts for the event. Students will provide their chosen company/brand by week 3 via email (kblitch@ufl.edu). Companies are first come, first served.

**Final Project (Total 15%)**
For the final project, you will create one 7 – 10 page social media marketing plan/strategy for the release of a movie (list will be provided). Your final project will detail the plan/strategy through the three phases of the movie release (event): pre-event, during the event, and post event. You will use what you have learned throughout the course and apply your knowledge to develop your social media marketing plan/strategy. As part of your final project, you will submit an executive summary of the marketing plan, including visuals, to be posted on Medium.

We will discuss the book, *Ready Player One*, during discussions throughout the semester.

| Assignments/Assessments | Weight (%) |
|---|---|
| **Course Orientation:** These assignments are required; however, they do not count toward the final grade.<br>• Student Introduction<br>• Course Evaluation | 0% |
| **3 Lectures (Participation)**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 5% |
| **13 Ready Player One Quizzes**<br>Worth up to 5 points each. | 5% |
| **15 Discussions**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 15% |
| **5 Thought Papers**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 25% |
| **6 Assignments**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 25% |
| **Midsemester Project**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 10% |
| **Final Project**<br>Worth up to 100 points each. | 15% |
| **TOTAL** | **100%** |

| Grade | Percentage |
|---|---|
| **A** | **92.5-100%** |
| **A-** | **89.5-92.4%** |
| **B+** | **86.5-89.4%** |
| **B** | **82.5-86.4%** |
| **B-** | **79.5-82.4%** |
| **C+** | **76.5-79.4%** |
| **C** | **72.5-76.4%** |
| **C-** | **69.5-72.4%** |
| **D+** | **66.5-69.4%** |
| **D** | **62.5-66.4%** |
| **D-** | **59.5-62.4%** |
| **E** | **0 – 59.4%** |

The only passing grades for graduate students are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, and C. Letter grades of C-, D+, D, D- or E are not considered passing at the graduate level. However, the grade points associated with these letter grades are included in grade point average calculations. See the Graduate Catalog and UF graduate school grading policy for more information.

**Student Privacy**
Federal laws protect your privacy regarding grades earned in courses and on individual assignments. For more information, please see the Notification to Students of FERPA Rights.

## Technology Requirements

**Software Use**
All faculty, staff, and students at the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate. We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to uphold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

**Software**

- Microsoft Office 365.
- UF Apps – access UF software applications from any device from any location at any time.
- Adobe Reader
- Zoom

## Technical Support

If you have technical difficulties with your course, don't hesitate to contact the UF Computing Help Desk by filling out an online request form or calling 352-392-4357 (HELP).

If your technical difficulties cause you to miss a due date, you must report the problem to the Help Desk and then email your instructor. Include the ticket number you are given from the Help Desk in an email to the instructor to explain the late assignment/quiz/test.

**IT Support**
For all Technical assistance questions, please get in touch with the UF Computing Help Desk.
Phone: 352-392-HELP (4357)
Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu

## Communication Policies

**Announcements**
You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

**Email**
You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 24 hours).

**Video Conferencing**
You are responsible for attending course video conferencing meetings. If you cannot attend the video conferencing meeting, please advise the instructor and/or your team at least 24 hours in advance (exceptions can be made for legitimate emergencies). You are expected to demonstrate netiquette and etiquette communication expectations during these meetings.

## Instructor Communications

**Email Policy**
Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. For course-related questions, please post on the Canvas FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email me directly.

**Assignment Feedback Policy**
I will provide feedback/grades on submitted assignments within two weeks of the due date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which I will communicate to you if necessary.

## Course Policies

**Video 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. 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 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.

**Privacy**
If your course includes live synchronous meetings, the class sessions will all be recorded for students in the class to refer to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilized a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate agree to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. Please see UF's Information Technology policies for additional

information.

**Challenging Topics**
In this course, we may cover subjects that may be sensitive and/or challenging. As in all our courses, we do this not to indoctrinate but to instruct, to prepare you to be the most effective and successful media professional or scholar you can be. We encourage you to understand all concepts presented in class, but we know that what you personally believe is your choice. If you want to discuss anything regarding this, don't hesitate to contact me directly.

## Academic and Student Resources

### Academic Resources

- E-learning Technical Support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 (HELP) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

- Career Connection Center: Career assistance and counseling. Reitz Union, Phone: 352-392-1601.

- Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance concerning using the libraries or finding resources.
  UF Library Services for Distance Students
  Ask a Librarian – chat with librarians online.
  CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.

- Writing Studio: Provides one-on-one consultations and workshops tailored to specific classes (graduate and undergraduate). 302 Tigert Hall, Phone: 352-846-1138.

### Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, call 352-294-2273, or visit the 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 and 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 the UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

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

# Student Fees and Service Entitlement

**Student Fees**

There are fees mandated by the state and one local fee that ALL students must pay per credit hour. Visit the University Bursar for up-to-date fee rates.

- Capital Improvement Trust Fund Fee
- Technology Fee
- Student Financial Aid Fee [not applicable for certificate programs]

**Student services and entitlements**

The student services that the distance student is entitled to are comparable to those of the resident student and should include the following:

- Eligibility for financial aid and financial aid advising [not applicable for certificate programs]
- Student complaints and concerns
- Student counseling and advising
- Student organizations
- Technology assistance

## Course Schedule

| Week Number | Topic and Assignments |
|---|---|
| **1** | History of Social Media, Discussion 1, Thought Paper 1, Social Activity 1 |
| **2** | Integrated & Inbound Marketing, Discussion 2, Assignment 1, Social Activity 2, Ready Player One Quiz 1 |
| **3** | Social Networks, Discussion 3, Assignment 2, Social Activity 3, Ready Player One Quiz 2 |
| **4** | Niche Platforms, Discussion 4, Thought Paper 2, Social Activity 4, Ready Player One Quiz 3 |
| **5** | Social Profiles, Voice, & Brand, Discussion 5, Assignment 3, Social Activity 5, Ready Player One Quiz 4 |
| **6** | Best Practices, Discussion 6, Thought Paper 3, Social Activity 6, Ready Player One Quiz 5 |
| **7** | SEO & SEM, Discussion 7, Social Activity 7, Ready Player One Quiz 6 |
| **8** | ROI, KPI, & Social Listening, Discussion 8, Midsemester Project, Social Activity 8, Ready Player One Quiz 7 |
| **9** | Target Marketing, Discussion 9, Assignment 4, Social Activity 9, Ready Player One Quiz 8 |
| **10** | Social Analytics & Monitoring, Discussion 10, Assignment 5, Ready Player One Quiz 9 |
| **11** | Social Privacy & Anonymity, Discussion 11, Thought Paper 4, Ready Player One Quiz 10 |
| **12** | Social Strategy, Content Calendars, & Tools, Discussion 12, Assignment 6, Ready Player One Quiz 11 |
| **13** | Influencers & Message, Discussion 13, Thought Paper 5, Ready Player One Quiz 12 |
| **14** | Crisis Situations & Ethics, Discussion 14, Ready Player One Quiz 13 |
| **15** | Thanksgiving Break |
| **16** | Future of Social Media, Discussion 15, Final Project |

**The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.**