

## **PUR 6934: Public Relations and Digital Social Advocacy**

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### **Course Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to explore and develop the theoretical and practical implications of social advocacy for the profession of public relations with emphasis on the use of digital media. Social advocacy is defined as the deliberate effort of groups of people to mobilize for or against institutions, governments, causes, and/or public figures.

### **Course Goals**

1. Explore the theory and practice of social advocacy, particularly through the use of digital media.
2. Understand the antecedents, process, and effects of digital activism.
3. Understand the tools and forms of digital activism.
4. Evaluate historical theoretical and practical knowledge about social advocacy in the context of public relations practice.
5. Evaluate theoretical and practical knowledge about digital social advocacy in the context of current public relations practice.
6. Examine instances of digital social advocacy by analyzing international and issue-specific applications.
7. Conduct original research on a current social cause and analyze how digital media have been used in the public relations management of the cause.
8. Design an original digital social advocacy organization including public relations strategic plan and accompanying digital media products.

### **Course Description**

This course is designed to be interactive and produce original content by and among the students. Because digital social advocacy is in a nascent stage, there are no formal lectures or tests. And, since one of the unique advantages of digital media is that they create linked networks, this class builds upon that advantage through interactive discussion and critique among students in the class.

### **Course Format and Assignments**

Students are divided into small teams. For Modules 1-3, each student is expected to independently read all of the course material each week by the specified deadline. Each student then posts comments to the discussion group to answer the weekly instructor prompt including a

link to an example of relevant online content beyond the class material (and a brief explanation of the relevance). Next, each student comments on a post from a team member. For Modules 4-6, teams divide up the week's readings (one article per student). Each student prepares an extended abstract that includes a link to an example of relevant online content beyond the class material (and a brief explanation of the relevance), posts the abstract to the discussion group, and comments on the abstract posted by another team member.

Each student also will write an original research paper analyzing how digital media have been used in the public relations management of a social issue/cause of their choice.

Finally, each student will create an original digital social advocacy organization, develop its public relations strategic plan, and design supporting digital media.

### **Required Textbooks**

Earl, J. & Kimport K. (2011). *Digitally enabled social change. Activism in the Internet age.* Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Joyce, M. (2010). (Ed.). *Digital activism decoded. The new mechanics of change.* New York: International Debate Education Association.

Gerbaudo, P. (2012). *Tweets and the streets. Social media and contemporary activism.* New York: Pluto.

### **Requirements for Class Work:**

Requirements for assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

"Students requesting accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation."

### **Grading Scale and Percentages**

Grading policies adhere to UF's guidelines that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

#### Discussion Group:

Answer Posts to Instructor Prompt and Responses to Team Member's Post (30 percent; 15 percent instructor grade, 15 percent peer grade)

Extended Article Abstracts and Responses to Team Member's Extended Abstract (30 percent; 15 percent instructor grade, 15 percent peer grade)

#### Peer Critique:

Peer Critique of Posts to Instructor Prompt and Responses to Team Member's Posts (**due February 21**)

Peer Critique of Extended Abstracts and Responses to Team Member's Abstract (**due April 18**)

### Research Paper

Research Paper Proposal (**due Feb. 3**, no formal grade)

Research Paper (**due April 30**, 20 percent)

### Digital Social Advocacy Project

Digital Social Advocacy Project Proposal (**due Feb. 3**, no formal grade)

Digital Social Advocacy Project (**due April 30**, 20 percent)

### **Netiquette Policy**

Netiquette policies for all class interaction adhere to UF's guidelines that can be found at:

<http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf>

### **Guidelines for Discussion Group Assignment—Modules 1-3—Instructor Prompts**

#### Format

Students are grouped into small teams. Each week, an instructor prompt will be posted by Monday, 9:00 a.m. Each student posts his or her answer by 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, to the instructor prompt about that week's readings. I suggest posting your comments as close as possible to the 8:00 p.m. deadline so no one may benefit from reading earlier posts. Each student's post must include one link to online content that is relevant to and useful for understanding the assigned readings for the week and the student's answer to the prompt. Each student's answer to the prompt is limited to 750 words (not including the linked information and a one-sentence description of the linked material). Each student then reads and comments on one of his or her team member's comments and linked material by Thursday, 8:00 p.m. Comments on another student's answer and linked material are limited to 250 words.

#### Content

A well-organized answer to the prompt demonstrates the following:

- (1) You mastered all of the assigned material for the week well enough to provide an *accurate* and *comprehensive* answer to the prompt.
- (2) You understand the material well enough to find one link to online content that is *relevant* to and *useful* for understanding the assigned readings for the week and your answer to the prompt.

In the responses to another student's answer and linked material, you should provide a constructive assessment of the *accuracy* and *comprehensiveness* of the other student's answer to the prompt. Comment on the *relevance* of the linked material to the student's answer and whether or not (and why) the linked material is a *useful* example for understanding the week's readings and the student's answer to the prompt. If needed, suggest constructive feedback for how to improve the answer to the prompt and the selection of linked material.

#### Grading

The instructor will give feedback to each team as a whole by 11:59 p.m., Sunday. **The first week (Module 1) of posted answers to the instructor prompt and team member responses will not be formally graded so you may meet your team members, get comfortable with the protocol for the assignment, and receive instructor feedback before a formal grade is assigned.** For the remaining weeks, each group will receive one numerical grade with written comments for the team based on the italicized criteria above and the constructiveness of the team members' critiques of one

another. At the conclusion of Module 3, there will be a separate **peer critique** of each of your team members. For this peer grade, each student will assign a numerical grade to every other student in his or her team. This numerical grade will assess the performance of each team member in terms of his or her contribution to the team grades for discussion group assignments for Modules 2 and 3.

### **Guidelines for Discussion Group—Module 4-6—Extended Abstracts**

#### Format

Students are grouped into new small teams. Team members divide up the week's readings by having each team member select a different article among the course readings for that week. Each student writes and posts an extended abstract for his or her article. Each student posts his or her extended abstract by 8:00 p.m., Tuesday. I suggest posting your comments as close as possible to the 8:00 p.m. deadline so no one may benefit from reading earlier posts. Each student's extended abstract must include one link to online content that is relevant to and useful for understanding the abstracted article. Each student's extended abstract is limited to 750 words (not including the linked information and a one-sentence description of the linked material). Each student then reads and comments on one of his or her team member's extended abstract and linked material by Thursday, 8:00 p.m. Comments on another student's extended abstract and linked material are limited to 250 words.

#### Content

The extended abstract is written in third person (The purpose of this study was...). Each section below begins a new paragraph even if the paragraph is only one sentence. The extended abstract begins with the citation for the research article, correctly formatted for APA, and *accurately* and *succinctly* summarizes the following components:

#### Citation

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- Purpose—what did the study set out to examine?
- Review of literature—what were the major theories, themes, historical trends, concepts, and/or variables relevant to the study that were discussed?
- Hypotheses and/or research questions—what were they?
- Methodology—how were the data collected (survey, interviews, content analysis, historical analysis, etc.?)
- Data analysis—how were the data analyzed (quantitative--what statistical tests were performed?; qualitative--how were themes analyzed?; historical—what evidence was provided?)
- Conclusions—what did the data suggest?
- Discussion/Implications—what did the article contribute to the theoretical body of knowledge on social advocacy and/or a better understanding of social advocacy in practice?

#### Link

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#### Grading

The instructor will give feedback to each team as a whole by 11:59 p.m., Sunday. **The first week (Module 4) of posted extended abstracts and team member responses will not be formally graded so you may meet your team members, get comfortable with the protocol for the assignment, and receive instructor feedback before a formal grade is assigned.** For the

remaining weeks, each group will receive one numerical grade with written comments for the team based on the italicized criteria above and the constructiveness of the team members' critiques of one another. At the conclusion of Module 6, there will be a separate **peer critique** of each of your team members. For this peer grade, each student will assign a numerical grade to every other student in his or her team. This numerical grade will assess the performance of each team member in terms of his or her contribution to the team grades for the discussion group assignments for Modules 5 and 6.

## **Guidelines for Digital Social Advocacy Research Paper and Proposal**

### Purpose

The purpose of this research paper is to analyze how digital media were used in relation to social advocacy about a selected cause.

### Selecting the Case

First, think about the social causes you are passionate about and narrow the focus to a specific **cause/event(s)** and **time frame** that is feasible to study. You need to pick a cause/event(s) for which there is enough digital discussion in the public sphere for you to have enough background information to write the paper.

For example, if you are interested in civil rights, the Trayvon Martin/George Zimmerman case in Sanford, FL, raised issues related to the civil rights of young African-American males that were discussed and debated extensively through digital media. The time frame needs to be limited to a realistic period for a research paper of this scope. For example, one might be tempted to try to examine the first instance of social media conversation/news media coverage about the shooting of Martin to post-trial social media activity/news media coverage up to one week after the verdict. However, this time frame is too broad. A more realistic time period might be from the announcement of the verdict until the day after the "Justice for Trayvon" marches in selected cities throughout the United States.

### Data Collection

Second, gather secondary information about the case you are examining. Your references must come from a variety of digital sources—e.g., news coverage, editorials, blogs, videos, interviews, conversation on social networking sites, popular music, or any other form of digital discourse in the public sphere. In situations where enough time has transpired, there may be scholarly articles about the case similar to the scholarly articles included in the class readings. However, the case must be recent enough to have used digital media as the primary communication strategy.

### Data Analysis and Writing the Chronological Narrative

Third, write a chronological narrative of your case by analyzing how digital media were used by various people/groups to share information, collaborate about social advocacy goals and objectives, and mobilize for collective action.

Using the example of the Martin/Zimmerman case, digital secondary resources would be analyzed to document the post-verdict public discourse in digital media and tell the story of how people were mobilized to plan and participate in the marches.

### Format

Your paper should conform to the following guidelines—10 to 15 pages (not including references), **double-spaced**, one inch margins, 12-point type. You should use APA style for in-text citations and your reference page.

**A written proposal of your research project is due Feb. 3.** This is a one-page summary of your proposed cause/event(s) and time frame. On a separate page, include the list of references identified to date. Submit the proposal as a Word document, **double-spaced**, 12-point type, one-inch margins.

### **Guidelines for Digital Social Advocacy Project and Proposal**

Each student will be responsible for developing his or her own Digital Social Advocacy Organization dedicated to a selected issue/cause. For the DSAO, each student will develop a public relations strategic plan, Web site plan and content, and at least two supporting social media platforms (minimum of Facebook page and Twitter account). For each of these, you must include at least the following elements. You are free to include other elements you believe are strategic. You should strive to be creative and innovative.

#### Public Relations Strategic Plan

Mission Statement—What is your DSAO's vision? What values does it stand for?

SPE Context—What are the social, political, and economic factors affecting the issue/cause?

Goals—What does your DSAO seek to accomplish?

Target Publics—With whom does your DSAO need to build and cultivate positive relationships with?

Resources—What resources does your DSAO have? What do you need and how might those resources be secured?

Digital Communication Strategy and Tactics—How can digital media be used to accomplish your DSAO's goals? Which tactics best support the strategy?

Evaluation Plan—How will you know when your DSAO is successful at achieving its goals? What metrics will you use to measure success?

The Public Relations Strategic Plan should be submitted in a Word document (**single-spaced**, 12-point type, one-inch margins, and no longer than five pages). Use complete sentences but you also should use bulleted lists, tables, etc. to organize information where appropriate.

#### Web Site Plan

Required Sections:

About--Name of DSAO, Mission Statement, Goals

Resources (minimum of 10 links to relevant research and news articles)

Helpful Links (minimum of five links to allied organizations)

Follow Us—(information about Facebook page and Twitter account)

Logo

You are not required to create the Web site but rather the content on its homepage. The written material should be submitted in a Word document, **single-spaced**, 12-point type, one-inch

margins. Any visual components you include (a logo is the only required visual) should be submitted via the appropriate software program.

### Social Media Platforms

**Facebook Page**—Create page and populate with content such as logo, pictures, links, etc. Invite at least 10 targeted people to “like.” By targeted, I mean someone who reasonably could be assumed to be interested in the page’s content.

**Twitter Account**—Set up account with an identifier for your DSAO as the hash tag and send a minimum of five tweets after February 3 and before April 30.

**A written proposal of your Digital Social Advocacy Project is due Feb. 3.** This is a one-page summary of your progress on the assignment to date. Indicate the name of your DSAO, the name of its Facebook page and Twitter hash tag so I can “like” the page and follow the DSAO on Twitter. Submit the proposal as a Word document, **single-spaced**, 12-point type, one-inch margins.

### **Online Teaching Evaluations**

“Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online 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/>.”

### **Academic Honesty**

As a UF student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s Student Honor Code: “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 (<http://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 me.

### **Counseling Services**

University counseling services and mental health services are available at <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>; 392-1575, University Police Department 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### **Course Schedule**

Introduction: Course Overview and Requirements

Module 1: What is Digital Advocacy?

**Week 1--January 6**

Joyce, M. (2010). (Ed.). *Digital activism decoded. The new mechanics of change*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Introduction: How to Think About Digital Activism, Mary Joyce

Shirky, C. (2008). Chapter 2, Sharing anchors Community. *Here comes everybody*. New York: Penguin.

Institutions vs. Collaboration (speech by Clay Shirky). Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPQViNNOAkw>.

## Module 2: Modeling Digital Social Advocacy

### **Week 2--January 13**

Part 1—Antecedents—the Digital Activism Environment

Joyce, M. (2010). (Ed.). *Digital activism decoded. The new mechanics of change*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Infrastructure: Its Transformation and Effect on Digital Activism, Trebor Scholz  
Applications: Picking the Right One in a Transient World, Dan Schultz and Andreas Jungherr  
Devices: The Power of Mobile Phones, Brannon Cullum  
Economic and Social Factors: The Digital (Activism) Divide, Katharine Brodock  
Political Factors: Digital Activism in Closed and Open Societies, Tom Glaisyer

### **Week 3--January 20**

Part 2—Processes—Digital Actions in the Aggregate

Joyce, M. (2010). (Ed.). *Digital activism decoded. The new mechanics of change*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Activism Transforms Digital: The Social Movement Perspective, Anastasia Kavada  
Digital Transforms Activism: The Web Ecology Perspective, Tim Hwang  
Destructive Activism: The Double-Edged Sword of Digital Tactics, Steven Murdoch

### **Week 4--January 27**

Part 3—Effects—What is Digital Activism's Value?

Joyce, M. (2010). (Ed.). *Digital activism decoded. The new mechanics of change*. New York: International Debate Education Association.

Measuring the Success of Digital Campaigns, Dave Karpf  
The New Casualties: Prisons and Persecution, Simon Columbus  
Digital Politics as Usual, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen  
The Future of Advocacy in a Networked Age, Sem Devillart and Brian Waniewski

Conclusion: Building the Future of Digital Activism, Mary Joyce

Module 3: Digital Media and Advocacy: New Tools, New Forms

**Week 5--February 3**

**Research Paper Proposal Due**

**Digital Social Advocacy Organization Project Proposal Due**

Earl, J. & Kimport K. (2011). *Digitally enabled social change. Activism in the Internet age.* Cambridge, MA: MIT.

Part 1—Action

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Where We Have Been and Where We are Headed

Chapter 3: the look and Feel of E-tactics and their Websites

Chapter 4: Taking Action on the Cheap: Costs and Participation

Chapter 5: Making Action on the Cheap: Costs and Organizing

**Week 6--February 10**

Part 2—Coordination

Chapter 6: Being Together Versus Working Together: Copresence in Participation

Chapter 7: From Power in Numbers to Power Laws: Copresence in Organizing

Chapter 8: A New Digital Repertoire of Contention

Chapter 9: Conclusion

**Week 7--February 17**

**Peer Critique of Discussion Group Participation--Instructor Prompts Due Feb. 21**

Gerbaudo, P. (2012) *Tweets and the streets. Social media and contemporary activism.* New York: Pluto.

Part 3—A Choreography of Assembly

Introduction

Chapter 1: “Friendly” Reunions: Social Media and the Choreography of Assembly

Chapter 2: “We are not Guys of Comment and Like”: The Revolutionary Coalescence of Shabab-al-Facebook

Chapter 3: “We are not on Facebook, We are on the Streets!”: The Harvesting of Indignation

Chapter 4: “The Hashtag which did (not) start a Revolution”: The Laborious Adding up to the 99%.

Chapter 5: “Follow Me, but Don’t Ask Me to Lead You!”: Liquid Organizing and Choreographic leadership.

Conclusion

Module 4: Social Advocacy and Public Relations: Historical Precedents in the United States

**Week 8--February 24**

## Part 1

Lamme, M.O. & Russell, K.M. (2010). Removing the spin: Toward a new theory of public relations history. *Journalism and Communication Monographs*, 11(4), 281-362.

Piasecki, A. (2000). Blowing the railroad trumpet: Public relations on the American frontier. *Public Relations Review*, 26(1), 53-65.

Pinkleton, B. (1994). The campaign of the Committee on Public Information: Its contributions to the history and evolution of public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 6(4), 229-240.

Russell, K.M. & Lamme M.O. (2013). Public relations and business responses to the civil rights movement, *Public Relations Review* 39(1), 63-73.

Toledano, M. (2005). Challenging accounts: Public relations and a tale of two revolutions. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 463-470.

### **Week 9--March 3—Spring Break**

### **Week 10--March 10**

## Part 2

Coatney, C. (2012). Public relations techniques for leaders in a crisis: Mackenzie King and John Curtin in the Canadian-Australian war alliance, 1941-1945. *Global Media Journal*, 5(2), 5-22.

Hallahan, K. (2002). Ivy Lee and the Rockefellers' response to the 1913-1914 Colorado coal strike. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 14(4), 265-315.

Hon, L.C. (1997). "To redeem the soul of America: Public relations and the civil rights movement. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(3), 163-212.

Lamme, M.O. (2003, Fall). The "Public Sentiment Building Society." The Anti-Saloon League of America 1895-1910. *Journalism History* 29(3), 123-132.

Russell, K.M. & Hume, J., & Sichler, K. (2007). Libbie Custer's "Last Stand": Image restoration, the press, and public memory. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(3), 582-599.

### Module 5: Digital Social Advocacy and Public Relations: Coming of Age

### **Week 11--March 17**

Auger, Giselle A. (2013). Fostering democracy through social media: Evaluating diametrically opposed nonprofit advocacy organizations' use of Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. *Public Relations Review* 39, 369-376.

Carr, R.L., Pratt, C.B., & Herrera (2012). Social media for crisis communication on Japan's 2011 Tohoku earthquake. A critical textual analysis. In S. Duhe (Ed.), *New media and public relations*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (pp. 293-301). New York: Lang.

Kent, M.L. (2013). Using social media dialogically: Public relations role in reviving democracy. *Public Relations Review*, 39, 337-345.

Sison, M.D. (2013). Creative strategic communications: A case study of Earth Hour. *International Journal of Strategic Communications*, 7, 227-240.

Sommerfeldt, E.J. (2013). Online power resource management: Activist resource mobilization, community strategy, and organizational structure. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 25(4), 347-367.

### Module 6: Digital Media and Advocacy: International and Issue-Specific Applications

#### **Week 12--March 24**

##### Part 1

Ackland, R. & O'Neil, M. (2011). Online collective identity: The case of the environmental movement. *Social Networks*, 33(3), 177-190.

Christensen, C. (2013). @Sweden: Curating a nation on Twitter. *Popular Communication: The International Journal of Media and Culture*, 11(1), 30-46.

Kang, J. (2012). A volatile public: the 2009 Whole Foods Boycott on Facebook. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, 56(4), 562-577.

Ozdemir, B.P. (2012). Social media as a tool for online advocacy campaigns: Greenpeace's Mediterranean's anti genetically engineered food campaign in Turkey. *Global Media Journal*, 5(2), 23-39.

Ciszek, E. (2013). Advocacy in the digital age. Participatory media and the empowerment of an LGBT public. In *Coming out of the closet*, N T.J. Tindall & R. Waters, (Eds.), pp. 207-218. New York: Lang.

#### **Week 13--March 31**

##### Part 2

Carty, V. (2002). Technology and counter-hegemonic movements: The case of Nike Corporation. *Social Movement Studies*, 1(2), 129-146.

Carty, V. & Onyett, J. (2006). Protest, cyberactivism and new social movements: The reemergence of the peace movement post 9/11. *Social Movement Studies*, 5(3), 229-249.

Clark, J.D. & Themudo, N.S. (2006). Linking the Web and the Street: Internet-Based "Dotcauses" and the Anti-Globalization Movement. *World Development*, 34(1), 50-74.

Hestres, L.E. (2013). Preaching to the choir: Internet-mediated advocacy, issue public mobilization, and climate change. *New Media and Society*, 0(0), 1-17.

Rane, H. & Salem, S. (2012). Social media, social movements, and the diffusion of ideas in the Arab uprisings. *Journal of International Communication*, 18(1), 97-111.

### **Week 14--April 7**

#### Part 3

Harlow, S. (2012). Social media and social movements: Facebook and an online Guatemalan justice movement that moved offline. *New Media and Society*, 14(2), 225-243.

Gill, J. & DeFronzo, J. (2009). A comparative framework for the analysis of international student movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 8(3), 203-224.

Gustafsson, N. (2012). The subtle nature of Facebook politics: Swedish social network site users and political participation. *New Media and Society*, 14(7), 1111-1127.

McDonald, K. (2002). From solidarity to fluidarity: Social movements beyond 'collective identity'—the case of globalization conflicts. *Social Movement Studies*, 1(2), 109-128.

Stein, L. (2009). Social movement web use in theory and practice: A content analysis of US movement websites. *New Media and Society*, 11(5), 749-771.

### **Week 15--April 14**

#### **Peer Critique for Discussion Group Participation--Extended Abstracts—Due April 18**

#### Part 4

Munro, L. (2005). Strategies, action repertoires and DIY activism in the animal rights movement. *Social Movement Studies*, 4(1), 75-94.

Muir, K. & Peetz, D. (2010). Not dead yet: The Australian union movement and the defeat of a government. *Social Movement Studies*, 9(2), 215-228.

Sima, Y. (2011). Grassroots environmental activism and the Internet: Constructing a green public sphere in China. *Asian Studies Review*, 35(4), 477-497.

Wall, M. (2007). Social movements and email: Expressions of online identity in the globalization protests. *New Media and Society*, 9, 258-277.

Wojcieszak, M. (2013). Will politics be tweeted? New media use by Iranian youth in 2011. *New Media and Society*, 0(0), 1-19.

### **Week 16--April 21**

No class readings or assignments.

**April 30**

**Final Research Paper Due; Final Digital Social Advocacy Project Due**