

# Social Media & Society

## Spring 2014

Instructor: **Jessica A. Mahone, Ph.D.**

Office: **3065 Weimer Hall**

Email: [jmahone@ufl.edu](mailto:jmahone@ufl.edu) (preferred)

Twitter: **@drjessmahone** (second preference)

Phone: **352-392-0491** (I'd prefer smoke signals to this.)

Office Hours: **TR 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> periods**

### Required #Books

The following book is required for class, and quiz material will be drawn from it. It is available as an e-book using Kindle (either the reader itself or the app on your computer, tablet, or phone) for about \$10. It's considerably more to get a print copy. If you have any concerns about the book, please let me know.

Title: ***The Social Media Reader***

Editor: **Michael Mandiberg**

In addition, there are supplemental readings as noted on the schedule below.

### Course #Description: What is this class about?

Every day, 700,000 new members join Facebook. To put this into perspective, this is the equivalent of the nation of Guyana joining Facebook each day. As of 2012, Facebook announced it has over 1 billion active monthly users. This is approximately 1/7 of the earth's population connected to one another, sharing information, thoughts, feelings, videos, photos, links, and essentially their lives with one another. All of this sharing, the "stuff" being made, posted, and read is what we call "social media."

This "stuff" has consequences for all of us. It's a key component to social change and political campaigns and a part of everyday life for the vast majority of us. It's even been used to overthrow oppressive dictators, but it's also changed how we think of privacy and culture. Like everything else created by humans, it's only as good or bad as we make it.

This class addresses precisely that issue: Is social media making society- making us better, or is it making us worse?

There is no decisive answer. We will explore what others have said and written about this issue, looking at both sides of the question.

By the end of the class, you'll be expected to have developed your own answer, with support of the textbook and other writings.

## **Course #Objectives: What are we trying to do here?**

The objective of this course is to discuss the societal implications of the growth of social media, including:

- Defining social media
- Our culture
- Cooperation
- Privacy
- Journalism and Media
- Politics and Democracy
- Business
- Entertainment and Sports
- Health

## **#Grades**

Your grade in this course will be the result of four different items. Below, I will give an overview of those items. These aren't instructions. Specific instructions will be given as deadlines get closer.

**Weekly #Quizzes:** Beginning in week 2, we will have 13 small quizzes almost every week. Quizzes will **open Wednesday at 5 p.m. and close Saturday at 5 p.m.** The quizzes will be 10 multiple-choice questions, each worth 1 point, for a total of 10 points per quiz. Your lowest grade will be dropped, and your quiz grade will be an average of your quiz scores.

**Class #Blog:** Rather than have a written component to weekly quizzes, you will be expected to participate in a class blog, which will be hosted as a group blog on Tumblr. Sunday night, I will post a general synopsis of the topic we will be discussing that week. Each student is expected to contribute at least one post that is relevant and insightful to that topic by 5 p.m. Wednesday each week. You will each receive an email to join the blog after drop/add. I will distribute rubrics for the grading of blog posts at this time. You are allowed not to post one week during the term. Your grade for this component of class is an average of your post grades.

**Media #Diary:** Each student will be randomly assigned a week during the semester during which you will track your social media use. You will take notes of how long you use social media, what kind of social media you use, when you use it, and what kinds of people you interact with. You will condense down each of your days' notes into a few short paragraphs and post them on the class blog. Each entry needs to be posted by 11:59p.m. that day. The week begins on Sunday. There will be six daily diary entries. On the seventh day, Saturday, you will post a short three -to five-paragraph reflection summarizing what you have learned from the process of recording your social media use. Note: Dr. Mahone will do a social media diary during the first week of class so you have a model of what to do. Your grade will be an average of your seven entries.

**#Argument Paper:** This will be your final assignment in the class and will act as the "final exam." You will write a three- to five-page paper argument paper addressing the following question: [AUTHOR] is [CORRECT/INCORRECT] about [TOPIC] because..." The "because" should rely on assigned readings, online news articles, stuff you find online, research studies, etc. There is no right or wrong answer to the statement, so

what you need to do is take a position and back it up with at least five sources. You will need to use some form of citation (APA, MLA, Chicago), but the choice of which is yours.

## **Grading**

Grades are determined as follows:

Quizzes (lowest dropped): 20%  
Blog posts: 30%  
Media Diary: 15%  
Final argument paper: 35%

There may be opportunities for extra credit during the semester, but please do not count on it due to the small size of the class.

The following grading scale will be used in this class. Please note that I do not round grades.

A = 93% and above	C = 73% to 76.99%
A- = 90% to 92.99%	C- = 70% to 72.99%
B+ = 87% to 89.99%	D+ = 67% to 69.99%
B = 83% to 86.99%	D = 63% to 66.99%
B- = 80% to 82.99%	D- = 60% to 62.99%
C+ = 77% to 79.99%	E = 59..% and below

## **Course #Policies**

1. **Attendance:** I will not take attendance in this class. However, there is a good chance that something from lecture will end up on quizzes. If you miss quiz questions because you didn't get the material, that is on you. If you must miss class, it is YOUR responsibility to get notes from someone else in class including any announcements made.

2. **NO MAKEUPS FOR ANY ASSIGNMENT:** If you fail to complete an assignment on time, you are forfeiting those points.

3. **Class participation:** Because this is a discussion-based class, you need to complete assigned readings BEFORE the class period and pay attention when I am presenting on a topic. Obviously, the nature of the class necessitates use of a laptop, tablet, or smartphone, but PLEASE focus on the topic at hand.

4. **Ground rules for debate:** You must be respectful to me and your fellow students at all times. We'll probably disagree often, but debate is encouraged, so long as they are civil. No name-calling, no shouting or yelling, no getting personal, and no sarcasm. If you have a point you want to make, make it. Don't be afraid to challenge the readings (or me), and don't be afraid to augment our discussions with something else you've read. Also, don't be afraid to derail the topic, as long as your topic is relevant to class. While I may respectfully ask that we stick to the original topic, I will make note to return to your topic later.

If you raise your hand, and I do not see it, just shout it out. However, please do not interrupt or dominate discussion in a way that prevents your fellow students from participating.

5. **Behavior:** You are expected to show respect to your fellow classmates, guest speakers, and me at all times. If you engage in rude or aggressive behavior towards anyone, either in person or online, you will be asked to leave class and may face a grade deduction.

6. **All grades are final after one week.** This includes assignments and any extra credit.

### **Email #Etiquette**

I have more than 250 students in any given semester. This makes for a very full inbox, and so, I require that you clearly label any emails addressed to me so that I can quickly and easily identify the course and the issue at hand. **When you email me, please put “RTV 4930” followed by the subject of your email IN THE SUBJECT LINE.** In addition, **please include your full name and UFID number at the end of the email.**

For example, if you have a question about the media diary, the subject line should read “RTV 4930 Media Diary.” Then, in the email, ask me the question and close with “Joe Schmo” (Actually, your name) and “UFID 1234 5678” (Actually, your UFID) on the line under your name.

**I will NOT reply to emails that do not follow this protocol.** I do not have enough hours in my day to track down who is in what class and what they want, so please make it easier on both of us and label your emails accordingly.

**Accommodation for Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation for a disability must first register with the Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office. The DRC will provide documentation to the student, who will bring a copy to me. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, PLEASE do not hesitate to request it, even if you don’t believe you’ll need it in this class. DRC email: [accessuf@dso.ufl.edu](mailto:accessuf@dso.ufl.edu); Voice: 352-392-8565 x200

**Academic Honesty:** All students enrolled at the University of Florida have read and signed an honor code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>). By doing so, you have pledged that you will maintain the highest level of academic integrity. **If you don’t know that something you are doing is okay, it probably isn’t.** If you are wondering if I consider something academic dishonesty, you should ask me. Do not trust other students or professors regarding what is acceptable in my class, and while we’re thinking about it, don’t trust me regarding what is acceptable in other classes.

I have a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY for academic honesty violations.** If I determine you have plagiarized or fabricated information for your work in this class, **you will fail the course.** If I discover you’ve cheated on a quiz, **you will fail the course.** **That’s the whole COURSE, not just the assignment.** In addition, I will report the violation to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

## Course Schedule

\*Reading available via Sakai

Date	Topic	Readings
<b>Jan. 6, 8, 10</b>	Introduction; Why does this matter?	None
<b>Jan. 13, 15, 17</b>	Defining social media and social networks; Approaches to social media	Boyd & Ellison, <i>Social Network Sites</i> *  Mandiberg Chapters 1, 4
<b>Jan. 20, 22, 24</b>	Culture	Mandiberg Chapters 2, 3, 6
<b>Jan. 27, 29, 31</b>	Cooperation: Arab Spring and Crowdsourcing	Online readings TBA
<b>Feb. 3, 5, 7</b>	Cooperation: Collaborative Production, Collective Action, and Social Movements	Mandiberg, Chapters 5, 9; Online readings TBA
<b>Feb. 10, 12, 14</b>	Politics: Changing nature of political discourse and the impact on elections and campaigns	Online readings TBA
<b>Feb. 17, 19, 21</b>	Identity and Social Media	Mandiberg, Chapter 8; Online readings TBA
<b>Feb. 24, 26, 28</b>	Media: Ownership and Copyright	Mandiberg, Chapters 11, 14
<b>Mar. 3, 5, 7</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>Mar. 10, 12, 14</b>	Media and Business	Mandiberg Chapters 15, 16; Online readings TBA
<b>Mar. 17, 19, 21</b>	Journalism	Mandiberg, Chapter 7; Online readings TBA
<b>Mar. 24, 26, 28</b>	Entertainment and Sports	Online readings TBA
<b>Mar. 31, Apr. 2, 4</b>	Privacy: TOS agreements and social media	Mandiberg, Chapter 17; Online readings TBA
<b>Apr. 7, 9, 11</b>	Privacy: Exhibitionism? On my social media? It's more likely than you think.	Online readings TBA
<b>Apr. 14, 16, 18</b>	Health: Is this killing us?	Online readings TBA
<b>Apr. 21, 23</b>	Closing arguments	Online readings TBA