COMM 321: Communication and Social Media

Spring 2018/ MW 12:00-1:50PM/ASC 228

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Office Hours: W 11:00 – 11:50 and by appointment

Course Description

This class takes a critical approach to understanding the relationship between society and social media. The course will explore the development of social media by situating them in broader social, political, historical, and industrial contexts. Drawing from history and a broad range of social theories, we will examine how the emergence of social media technologies are discussed, the mythologies surrounding these technologies, and how these technologies are used to impact various aspects of our lives including our social relationships (friendship, community, affiliation, etc.), identity, privacy, and labor. By the end of the class, I hope you will be able to think about these emerging technologies and the debates around social media in new and different ways that can lead to actions for social change.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, students will
1) Understand the impact of social media on a variety of social issues such as privacy, surveillance, labor, and participation
2) Be able to critically examine the role media play in the construction of one's identity – gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality – and community
3) Question the use of social media for self-branding, fame, and status update in the age of consumer and celebrity culture
4) Envision creative and innovative ways to use social media as tools for political engagement, activism, collaboration, and social change

Class Readings

This class has no required textbooks. All readings are posted on Blackboard. You are expected to complete readings by the start of lecture and be prepared to actively participate in class discussions.

Course Requirements

Attendance: Required
Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class. Considering that a significant amount of material covered in lecture is not in the reading, it is important that you attend class regularly. You will be given **two (2)** free unexcused absences. Three or more absences will result in an automatic half grade deduction from your overall grade for each unexcused absence. Missing more than seven classes without discussing the situation with the instructor **will** result in a failing grade for the course.

* Excused absences are granted *only* for the following reasons: serious illness (which must be documented with a doctor's certificate), a death in the family (again, documentation is required), or, in very rare cases, a

school-related event that requires your presence and that you have arranged with the professor well in advance (e.g. an out-of-town university competitive event in which you are required to participate, a religious holiday, or a job interview). For an absence to be excused, documentation must be provided (a note from a coach, letter scheduling the interview, etc.).

The following types of situations are NOT considered excused absences: social events, meetings of Greek or service organizations, entertaining out-of-town visitors, holiday plans, going to weddings or to visit relatives, or any other circumstance that is extracurricular and at which your attendance is optional and secondary to your schoolwork.

Participation (10%)

I expect you to come to class on time and be prepared to ask questions, discuss the assigned readings, and make insightful and substantive contributions in every class. You should be able to respond to questions about the assigned readings and offer opinions and insights into the topics addressed. Poor attendance will adversely affect your participation grade. If you have a good attendance record but don't actively participate in class discussions, you can't expect to get a good participation grade (in other words, participation grade will not be based solely on attendance). Each class participation will be graded based on the demonstration of your preparation and the level of involvement and contribution to class discussions.

Discussion Leading (10%)

Early in the semester, you will sign up to be a discussion leader for a topic of your interest. You will prepare 3 thought-provoking questions that we can use for class discussion. The questions must cut across class readings, integrating their contributions to a particular theme. The quality of our class discussions will depend on your discussion points that not only nicely summarize but also reflect and engage critically with the assigned readings (as well as previous class readings, lectures, and discussions). You will prepare a study guide that contains a short summary of the readings (a paragraph for each reading) with your discussion questions and upload it to the discussion forum available on the class blackboard before coming to class on the day of your discussion leading.

Reading Responses (15%)

There are five required short reading responses (2 full pages/double spaced) that include not only a brief summary of the reading(s) but also your personal reaction to the reading materials. You will need to explain what the author's main argument(s) is/are and explain whether you agree or disagree with the author, identify the readings' purpose, and critique the text(s). There is no right or wrong response to the reading. However, it is important that you demonstrate an accurate understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions.

Mid-term (20%)

The mid-term exam will include short and long answer essay questions. The exam will evaluate both your understanding of the readings and topics covered in class and your ability to synthesize ideas across the course.

1 Short Paper Assignment (15%)

You will write a short paper (5 full pages), which will require you to make connections between the course reading materials and your own observations and experiences of social media. Further instructions on this paper assignment will be provided later in the semester.

<u>Final Research Paper (Proposal: 5%/ Presentation: 5%/ Final Paper: 20%/ Total: 30%)</u>

Instead of a final exam, you will and write a 10 page final research paper incorporating topics and theories you learned in class. This paper will be due at the end of the semester. In the first half of the semester, you will submit a 1 page proposal that clearly explains your research topic, research questions, and methods you will use to answer those research questions. Your research topic must be approved by the instructor in advance. In addition to the proposal, you will be required to give a 6-8 minute presentation to the class on the last two weeks of the semester. You will need to prepare a visual aid (e.g. Power Point, Keynote, etc.) for the presentation. Further instructions on these assignments will be provided in a supplemental handout.

* Late Policy: No extensions will be given unless you have truly extenuating circumstances. Assignment extensions will **only** be granted for documented medical emergencies and ongoing serious illnesses, family emergencies, natural disasters, and religious holidays. If your circumstance fits any of these and you need to request a deadline extension, you need to let me know ASAP and **at least 24 hours before the assignment is due** so we can make arrangements. Technology excuses are not acceptable. **Assignments turned in late without an approved extension will be marked down a letter grade for every day late. After five days late, the assignment will earn a 0!** Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss assignments.

Course Grading Policy

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. **All assignments need to be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a <u>timely</u> manner. Do no wait until the end of the semester to sort things out.**

In order to pass this class you will need to complete <u>ALL</u> of the assignments. Failure to complete one or more of them will result in an F in the class.

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A   outstanding, thoughtful and enthusiastic work

B+/B   above average work, demonstrating good insight into assignment

B-/C+   needs improvement on ideas, argument and follow through

C and below   fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores won the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade per the scale shown below:

A	= 100-94	C	= 76-74
A-	= 93-90	C-	= 73-70
B+	= 89-87	D+	= 69-67
B	= 86-84	D	= 66-64
B-	= 83-80	D-	= 63-60

C+   = 79-77   F   = 59-0

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within one week of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* http://equity.usc.edu or to the *Department of Public Safety* http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety of the whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage http://sarc.usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Annenberg School of Communication Academic Integrity Policy

Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. You cannot turn in someone else's work and you cannot turn in material you have used in other classes, whether at USC or elsewhere. You should also properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor.

The Annenberg School of Communication maintains a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found responsible for plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade for this course, will be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards and may be dismissed from the School of Communication.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* http://emergency.usc.edu will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

<u>Disability</u>

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in 120 Grace Ford Salvatori Hall and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Other Classroom Policies

<u>Email</u>
Feel free to email me if you have any questions but give me 24 hours to reply. Include the course number in the subject line and sign your full name. I will only answer emails about assignments up to **24 HOURS** before the deadline.

<u>Discriminatory Conduct (such as sexual harassment)</u>
The University as well as this class will not tolerate discriminatory conduct. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Such behavior will not be allowed in this classroom.

<u>Seating and Discussion</u>
Since this is a discussion-oriented class, I encourage you frequently participate and add value to class discussions. Feel free to raise your hand during lecture and ask questions, make comments, or ask for clarification of points you may not have understood. When you do ask a question or make a comment, please speak up – even if the professor can hear you, your classmates need to be able to as well.

<u>Noise-Making Devices and Computer Use in Class</u>
All noise-making electronic devices (cellphones, mp3 players, etc.) are disruptive. Please remember to set your cellphones into mute or vibrate at the beginning of class. Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. You may use a computer in the classroom <u>only for note taking </u>and not recreation. Any other uses will result in a reduced participation grade.

Schedule of Classes, Topics & Readings

Week One: Introduction

Monday, 8 January: Course Overview

Wednesday, 10 January: In-class Screening – *Generation Like*

Week Two: Online Identity

Monday, 15 January:

No Class – Martin Luther King Day

Wednesday, 17 January:
- danah boyd (2014). Chapter 1. "Identity: Why Do Teens Seem Strange Online?" in *It's Complicated* (pp. 29-53).
- Alice Marwick (2013). Chapter 23. "Online Identity" in *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (pp. 355-364).
- José van Dijck (2013). "'You Have One Identity': Performing the Self on Facebook and LinkedIn" in *Media, Culture & Society* 35(2), pp. 199-215.

Week Three: Gender and Sexuality

Monday, 22 January:
- Alice Marwick (2013). "Gender, Sexuality, and Social Media" in *The Social Media Handbook* (pp. 59-75).
- Michael Lovelock (2017). "'Is Every YouTuber Going to Make a Coming Out Video Eventually?': YouTube Celebrity Video Bloggers and Lesbian and Gay Identity" in *Celebrity Studies* 8(1), pp. 88-103.
- John Paul Brammer (2017). "LGBTQ and Out on Social Media – But Nowhere Else" in https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-out-social-media-nowhere-else-n809796

Thursday, 24 January:
- Nicholas Carah & Amy Dobson (2016). "Algorithmic Hotness: Young Women's "Promotion" and "Reconnaissance" Work Via Social Media Body Images" in *Social Media + Society* 2(4), pp. 1-10.
- Antonia Lyons, Ian Goodwin, Christine Griffin, Tim McCreanor, & Helen Moewaka Barnes (2016). "Facebook and the Fun of Drinking Photos: Reproducing Gendered Regimes of Power' in *Social Media + Society* 2(4), pp. 1-13.

Week Four: Race

Monday, 29 January:
- Theresa Senft & Safiya Noble (2013). "Race and Social Media" in *The Social Media Handbook* (pp. 107-125).
- Lori Kido Lopez (2017). "Asian America Gone Viral: A Genealogy of Asian American YouTubers and Memes" in *The Routledge Companion to Asian American Media* (pp. 157-169).

Wednesday, 31 January:
- Jeff Guo (2015). "What People Don't Get About 'Black Twitter'" in *The Washington Post*. *https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/10/22/why-it-can-be-offensive-to-use-the-term-black-twitter/?utm_term=.4da88c122cc9*

- Sarah Florini (2014). "'Tweets, Tweeps and Signifyin': Communication and Cultural Performance on "Black Twitter"" in *Television & New Media* 15(3), pp. 223-237.

Week Five: Privacy

Monday, 5 February:
- danah boyd (2014). Chapter 2. "Privacy: Why Do Youth Share So Publicly?" in *It's Complicated* (pp. 54-76).
- Alice Marwick, Claire Fontaine, & danah boyd (2017). ""Nobody Sees It, Nobody Gets Mad: Social Media, Privacy, and Personal Responsibility Among Low-SES Youth" in *Social Media + Society* 3(2), pp. 1-14.

Wednesday, 7 February:
- Amy Adele Hasinoff (2012). "Sexting as Media Production: Rethinking Social Media and Sexuality" in *New Media & Society* 15(4), pp. 449-465.
- Emily van der Nagel & James Meese (2015). "Reddit Tackles 'Revenge Porn' and Celebrity Nudes" in *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/reddit-tackles-revenge-porn-and-celebrity-nudes-38112
- Jeffrey Rosen (2010). "The Web Means the End of Forgetting" in *The New York Times.* http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/25/magazine/25privacy-t2.html?pagewanted=all

Week Six: Surveillace/Sousveillance

Monday, 12 February:
- Alice Marwick (2012). "The Public Domain: Surveillance in Everyday Life" in *Surveillance & Society*, pp. 1-16.
- Daniel Trottier (2012). "Policing Social Media" in *Canadian Review of Sociology* 49(4), pp. 1-15.

Wednesday, 14 February:
- Peter Dreier (2016). "Caught on Camera: Police Racism" in *The American Prospect* (11 July). Access at: http://prospect.org/article/caught-camera-police-racism
- Steve Mann & Joseph Ferenbok (2013). "New Media and the Power Politics of Sousveillance in a Surveillance-Dominated World" in *Surveillance & Society* 11(1/2): 18-34.

Week Seven: Labor

Monday, 19 February:

President's Day – No Class

Wednesday, 21 February:
- Mark Andrejevic (2009). "Exploiting YouTube: Contradictions of User-generated Labor" in *The YouTube Reader* (pp. 406-423).
- Brooke Erin Duffy & Emily Hund (2015). ""Having it All" on Social Media: Entrepreneurial Femininity and Self-Branding Among Fashion Bloggers" in *Social Media + Society* 1(2), pp. 1-11.

Week Eight: Social Media and Self-Branding

Monday, 26 February:

Mid-term

Wednesday, 28 February:
- Alison Hearn (2008). "'Meat, Mask, Burden': Probing the Contours of the Branded 'Self'" in *Journal of Consumer Culture* 8(2), pp. 197-217.
- Kathleen M. Kuehn (2016). "Branding the Self on Yelp: Consumer Reviewing as Image Entrepreneurship" in *Social Media + Society* 2(4), pp. 1-9.

Week Nine: Social Media Fame and Reputation

Monday, 5 March: In-class Screening: "Nosedive" from *Black Mirror*
- Theresa Senft (2013). "Microcelebrity and the Branded Self" in *A Companion to New Media Dynamics* (pp. 346-354).
- Susie Khamis, Lawrence Ang & Raymond Welling, "Self-Branding, 'Micro-Celebrity' and the Rise of Social Media Influencers" in *Celebrity Studies* 8(2), pp. 191-208.

Wednesday, 8 March:
- Alice E. Marwick (2015). "Instafame: Luxury Selfies in the Attention Economy" in *Public Culture* 27(1), pp. 137-160.

Week Ten: Spring Break! (No Classes on March 12 & 14)

Week Eleven: Trolling, Harassing, and Hating on Social Media

Monday, 19 March:
- Pat Morrison (2015). "Privilege Makes Them Do It-What a Study of Internet Study on Trolls Reveals" in *Los Angeles Times* (1 July). http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-morrison-phillips-20150701-column.html
- Whitney Phillips (2015). "Let's Call 'Trolling' What It Really Is" in *The Kernel* (10 May). http://kernelmag.dailydot.com/issue-sections/staff-editorials/12898/trolling-stem-tech-sexism/
- Andrew Marantz (2016). "Trolls for Trump" in *The New Yorker*. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/10/31/trolls-for-trump

Wednesday, 21 March:
- Sarah Banet-Weiser (2015). "Popular Misogyny" in *Culture Digitally* (21 January). http://culturedigitally.org/2015/01/popular-misogyny-a-zeitgeist/
- Adrienne Massanari (2015). "#Gamergate and the Fappening: How Reddit's Algorithm, Governance, and Culture Support Toxic Technocultures" in *New Media & Society,* pp. 1-18.

Final Paper Proposal Due!

Week Twelve: Social Media Activism

Monday, 26 March:
- Malcolm Gladwell (2010). "Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted" in *The New Yorker* (4 October). http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/10/04/small-change-malcolm-gladwell
- Paolo Gerbaudo (2012). "'The Hashtag Which Did (Not) Start a Revolution': The Laborious Adding Up to the 99%" in *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism* (pp. 102-133).
- Noah Berlatsky (2015). "Hashtag Activism Isn't a Cop-Out" in *The Atlantic*. *https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/01/not-just-hashtag-activism-why-social-media-matters-to-protestors/384215/*

- Yarimar Bonilla & Jonathan Rosa (2015). "#Ferguson: Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States" in *American Ethnologist*, pp. 4-16.

Must Attend Event: USC Visions & Voices – "Talking Race: Social Media and Social Justice" on March 27, 2018 (@ Doheny Memorial Library (DML), Friends of the USC Libraries Lecture Hall, Room 240). RSVP begins on February 28.

Wednesday, 28 March:
- Alicia Garza (2016). "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement" in *Are All the Women Still White?: Rethinking Race, Expanding Feminisms* (pp. 23-28).
- Susana Loza (2014). "Hashtag Feminism, #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, and the Other #FemFuture" in *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media & Technology.* http://adanewmedia.org/2014/07/issue5-loza/
- Carrie A. Rentschler (20). "Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media" in *Girlhood Studies* 7(1), pp. 65-82.
- Jessalynn Keller (2017). "#MeToo Campaign Brings Conversation of Rape to Mainstream" in *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/metoo-campaign-brings-conversation-of-rape-to-the-mainstream-85875
- Jessica Megarry (2017). "Why #MeToo is an Impoverished Form of Feminist Activism, Unlikely to Spark Social Change" in *The Conversation.* https://theconversation.com/why-metoo-is-an-impoverished-form-of-feminist-activism-unlikely-to-spark-social-change-86455

Week Thirteen: Fake News and the Social Media Bubble

Monday, 2 April:
- Kartik Hosanagar (2016). "Blame The Echo Chamber on Facebook. But Blame Yourself, Too" in *Wired* (25 November). Accessed at: https://www.wired.com/2016/11/facebook-echo-chamber/
- Filippo Menczer (2016). "Fake Online News Spreads Through Social Echo Chambers" in *Scienctific American* (28 November). Accessed at: https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/fake-online-news-spreads-through-social-echo-chambers/
- Sapna Maheshwari (2016). "How Fake News Goes Viral: A Case Study" in *The New York Times.* http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/business/media/how-fake-news-spreads.html
- Stephen Marche (2017). "Why is the U.S. So Susceptible to Social-Media Distortion?" in *The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/why-is-the-us-so-susceptible-to-social-media-distortion*

Wednesday, 4 April:
- Dominic Spohr (2017). "Fake News and Ideological Polarization: Filter Bubble and Selective Exposure on Social Media" in *Business Information Review* 34(3), pp. 150-160.
- Duncan Watts & David M. Rothschild (2017). "Don't Blame the Election on Fake News" in *Columbia Journalism Review.* https://www.cjr.org/analysis/fake-news-media-election-trump.php
- Jane Suiter (2016). "Post-truth Politics" in *Political Insight* (December), pp. 25-27.
- Jayson Harsin (2015). "Regimes of Posttruth, Postpolitics, and Attention Economies" in *Communication, Culture & Critique* 8(2), pp. 327-333.

Week Fourteen: The Social Media Fatigue

Monday, 9 April:
- *Media Collective* (11 August). http://socialmediacollective.org/2011/08/11/if-you-dont-like-it-dont-use-it-its-that-simple-orly/
- Laura Portwood-Stacer (2012). "How We Talk About Media Refusal, Part I: Addiction," "Part II. Asceticism," & "Part III. Aesthetics," in *FlowTV.org.*

Wednesday, 11 April:

- Elle Hunt (2015). "Essena O'Neil Quits Instagram Claiming Social Media 'is Not Real Life'" in *The Guardian* (3 November). http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/03/instagram-star-essena-oneill-quits-2d-life-to-reveal-true-story-behind-images
- Jane Halpern (2015). "'Social Media Suicide': Why Generation Z Is Going Off the Grid" in *i-D* (9 October). https://i-d.vice.com/en_us/article/social-media-suicide-why-generation-z-is-going-off-the-grid
- Woodrow Hartzog & Evan Selinger (2012). "Quitters Never Win: The Costs of Leaving Social Media" in *The Atlantic* (15 February). http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/02/quitters-never-win-the-costs-of-leaving-social-media/273139/
- Stacey Morrison & Ricardo Gomez (2014). "Pushback: Expressions of Resistance to the "Evertime" of Constant Online Connectivity" in *First Monday* 19(8). http://firstmonday.org/article/view/4902/4106

Week Fifteen: Final Paper Presentation

Monday, 16 April: Group I

Wednesday, 18 April: Group II

Week Sixteen: Final Paper Presentation

Monday, 23 April: Group III

Wednesday, 25 April: Group IV

Friday, May 4: Final Paper Due!