

DSM 510
Introduction to Digital Social Media
Fall 2019- Section 21850D

Class date/time: Monday, 6:30 p.m. – 9:20 p.m.
Location: ASC 204
Instructor: Mayanna Framroze, Ph.D.
Contact: Framroze@usc.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes a critical approach to analyzing the role and scope of social media by examining socio-historical perspectives regarding technology and society, current trends concerning social media's impact on contemporary issues, and social scientific theories relevant to communicating via social media. In order to expose incoming students to a number of broad topic areas relevant to understanding the digital social media (DSM) ecosystem, this class is structured largely as a colloquium series. Students will engage with a variety of guest speakers from various media organizations throughout the semester. As such, they will have the benefit of approaching the study of DSM from different perspectives, and will also have the opportunity to then focus on a particular thematic area of interest to them.

The course is an amalgam of theory and practice, whereby students are required to acquire new skills with respect to specific technological tools and utilize them to achieve learning objectives tied to social media platforms. Additionally, through the readings and discussions, students will make connections between the theoretical concepts in the readings and real-world practical applications in the digital social media ecosystem.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Explore a wide spectrum of topics within the digital social media space in order to be able to understand this transformative ecosystem. This will occur through the guest lectures as well as via instructor lectures.
- Integrate theoretical perspectives into more applied instantiations of social media practice to develop sound and holistic insights. This will occur via readings and class discussions.
- Develop new skills that can be utilized post-graduation as part of employment in media, communication or marketing fields. Do so via the hands-on learning opportunity using a social measurement tool required for the final project assignment.

- Engage in critical thinking about various aspects of social media in order to gain perspective that encompass such key issues as privacy, data usage, crisis management, etc. This will occur in class via discussions and also via the mid-term assignment.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend all classes. If you know you will need to miss a class, you should inform the instructor in advance to receive an excused absence. More than two excused absences may impact your participation grade. Always discuss your situation with your instructor. Our guest speakers are making a concerted effort to be present for your learning. It is expected that DSM students will be similarly vested in their own education and attend all classes, well-prepared, and ready to participate.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no required texts. There are numerous articles that will be posted on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS

The course assignments are as follows:

Preparation/Participation - 10%

Engaged participation is a vital component of this class, especially as there will be several guest lecturers. You are expected not only to have fully read all the assigned readings each week, even if it is not your week to lead the discussion. You are also expected to participate by engaging in class discussions AND asking questions of our guest speakers. Your contributions to the overall learning journey of this class are the means by which you will earn your participation grade – it is not merely a reflection of your class attendance.

Presentation of readings/Discussion facilitation – 10%

As part of your role as facilitator, you will prepare a brief visual presentation with your teammates on the week's readings, highlighting the key takeaways from each article. You should be prepared to spur substantive conversation about the week's topic by having questions and thought starters prepared. You may elect to add some facts/figures to your presentation if you believe that will help frame the discussion. After listening to the evening's speaker/lecture, try to connect your presentation/comments to what the class just heard.

Mid-term Paper/Presentation – 40%

This assignment asks you to select and examine a contemporary issue within the digital media ecosystem. Develop a report that describes the issue at hand, traces its historic trajectory, delves into the challenges and opportunities associated with the issue within broader society, assesses its impact or influence on the culture at large, and offers your particular point of view on the topic.

Make sure you include at least one real life example that elucidates your points; you may elect to include more than one. For instance, if your selected topic is about forming relationships online, you may include one or two online dating sites and describe their positioning – the female empowerment strategy touted by Bumble as one example.

Ask yourself: What is the issue, specifically, that I want to think about more deeply and that I find either interesting or important to study further? Who are the key online players connected to this issue? Why is it important to understand this issue? What are the consequences of not being mindful of this issue? What problem areas are associated with the issue? What proposed or current solutions exist? What would you suggest and what is your point of view on this issue?

Paper length: Double-spaced, one-inch margins on each page, 16-18 pages. If you are including charts or graphics, this does NOT count toward your word/page count.

You will present your paper in class and be required to create a well-conceived and presentation-worthy PowerPoint, Prezi, or Keynote. You may want to incorporate videos, sound clips, or other interactive components to make your points. Your presentation should be polished, interesting, informative and even entertaining. Practice your presentation so the class isn't watching you rehearse for the first time. The quality of your presentation will factor into your overall grade.

Final Project – 40%

Your group will select a sector of society and focus on its expression online. Gaming, beauty, NGOs, music, healthcare, architecture, travel, arts, relationships, beverages – these are all examples of sectors that comprise either distinct categories (product, brand, for instance) or cultural segments.

This project serves as a capstone report with respect to your class learnings about social media and digital technologies, and incorporates your understanding and use of the social media analytics tool Sprout Social that has been made available to you as part of this course.

Research: As part of the discovery phase, during which you are to ascertain what the most pressing concerns are relative to your topic area, you will design and implement a survey instrument using a readily available platform such as Qualtrics or Survey Monkey.

You will survey no fewer than 100 subjects. You will also be required to conduct informal interviews with 4-8 individuals on your subject area and the three brands/entities you've selected (see below). This portion will provide you with experience in both quantitative and qualitative data collection and usage. You should write up your findings, along with associated insights, as part of the research section of your report.

Analysis: Within your category, select three brands/organizations and analyze their social media efficacy using Sprout Social. Utilize the listening tools as well as any other solutions offered by Sprout to develop a solid comparative analysis between these three selections. Compare them to overall trends for their specific market segment from the data provided via Sprout. For instance, if you select beverages as your sector, you may want to compare the social media footprint of Starbucks, Blue Bottle Coffee, and McDonalds to see how each brand engages with customers, how effectively they produce social content, what sorts of marketing they conduct on social, and so forth.

Narrative: Your group will produce a 25-page written report that describes the sector as it relates to the digital ecosystem. Do not spend time discussing the offline aspects of your brands unless that is integral to your thesis.

Each report should contain the following sections, though you are free to add others as you see fit:

1. Introduction/Background – Set the foundation for the sector. Provide facts/figures to show the scope of this sector, either only for digital or holistically -- inclusive of offline metrics (sales revenues, for instance).
2. Research – Report the results of your own research. You may include charts in the appendix. Include your own insights in this section. Do your findings corroborate or contradict general facts about your sector and/or your brands?
3. Analysis – Utilize Sprout Social tools as outlined above. Explain how you used the tool and what insights were helpful to this project.
4. Key issues – What critical challenges face the sector, as well as your brands? If you are covering non-profits/NGOs, is one of the challenges the glut of competition online to secure donations, for instance? What solutions might you propose for brands facing such dilemmas?
5. Future trajectory – Based on research you've conducted, what is the growth prognosis for this sector and for these brands? What critical issues might impede or enhance progress? For instance, if you're covering electric vehicles, customer adoption and concerns about the safety of driverless cars might be two related

aspects that would need to be overcome in order to gain greater traction with the public.

6. Conclusion –What do you want to say from YOUR perspectives about what you’ve learned with respect to how this sector functions in the social media/digital ecosystem? What’s your POV?

Presentation: Your group will present your topic and findings via a polished, informed, and rehearsed performance. You should incorporate a variety of multi-media elements to depict your topic area. Pay close attention to your presentation – graduate students at Annenberg are expected to know how to present in a polished manner. If you feel you need assistance in this, please connect with me or ask questions in class far in advance of your presentation date.

COURSE GRADING POLICY

All assignments are to be turned at the beginning of class on the date due. **If an assignment is submitted after the deadline, a deduction of one full grade point per day will occur.** If you have a serious issue (that is not an emergency) that prevents you from turning in your assignment, you must discuss this with your instructor in advance. All assignments must contain your name, and follow appropriate graduate-level standards for submission. Unless otherwise indicated, use APA style for all assignments. Full details on all assignments will be posted on Blackboard.

In order to pass this class, you will need to complete ALL 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/A-	Outstanding, thoughtful, well-written polished work.
B+/B	Very good work, demonstrating good insights.
B-/C+	Needs improvement on ideas, suppositions and critical analysis.
C and below	Fulfills the bare minimum or shows minimal comprehension of the material.

Each assignment is worth 100 points; those will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assignment to each. Your percentage scores for each assignment will be totaled and translated to a letter grade based on the scale below:

Grading Range

A	93.0% or higher
A-	90.0% - 92.9%

B+	87.0% - 89.9%
B	83.0% - 86.9%
B-	80.0% - 82.9%
C+	77.0% - 79.9%
C	73.0% - 76.9%
C-	70.0% - 72.9%
D	60.0% - 69.9%
F	59.9% - or lower

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University's Academic Integrity code as detailed in the SCampus Guide. It is your responsibility to understand and abide by university policies on academic dishonesty, which includes plagiarism, cheating on exams, fabricating project data, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself.

Resources on academic integrity can be found on the Student Judicial Affairs Web site (<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS>.) "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism" addresses issues of paraphrasing, quotations, and citation in written assignments, drawing from materials used in the university's writing program. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the University Student Judicial Affairs office (SJACS) and to the USC Annenberg School for Communication Dean's Office on Student Affairs. Any serious violation or pattern of violations will result in the student's from the Communication program.

Disabilities Policy: Students requesting academic accommodations based on disabilities are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please deliver that letter to me at the start of the semester.

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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421

studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

CLASS SCHEDULE

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE DEPENDING ON THE AVAILABILITY OF OUR GUEST SPEAKERS. TOPIC AREAS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN CONCERT WITH THE GUEST SPEAKER'S AREA OF EXPERTISE AND WILL BE SHIFTED AS NECESSARY.

YOU SHOULD MAKE IT A POINT TO RESEARCH ALL SPEAKERS AND TOPIC AREAS IN ADVANCE VIA THE ASSIGNED READINGS. YOU ARE EXPECTED TO BE ENGAGED AND ASK QUESTIONS OF THE SPEAKERS.

Aug. 26: Welcome to your Semester!

Course and syllabus review

Sept. 2: University Holiday – Labor Day

Check Blackboard for week's discussion prompt.

Sept. 9: Digital Media Ecosystem

Exploration of key constructs and themes.

Final project groups assigned.

Readings:

Benton, J. (2015). The triumph of the social platform: Distributed content—editorial distributed solely through social media—offers news outlets new ways to build audience and revenue. *Neiman Reports*, 46-47.

Helmond, A. (2015). The platformization of the web: Making web data platform ready. *Social Media + Society*, 1-11.

Sept. 16: Psychology of online behaviors and decision-making science.

Guest Speaker: Jorge Barraza, Assistant Professor, Consumer Psychology, USC; co-founder/CTO of Immersion Neuroscience, a consumer neuroscience consultancy.

Readings:

Steers, M.N., Wickham, R.E. & Acitelli, L.K. (2014). Seeing everyone else's highlight reels: How Facebook usage is linked to depressive symptoms. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 33(8), 701-731.

Phua, J. (2019). E-cigarette marketing on social networking sites: Effects on Attitudes, Behavioral Control, Intention to Quit, and Self-Efficacy. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 59(2), 242-254.

Sept. 23: Sprout Social: Analytics, Social Listening, and Publishing

Guest Speaker: Caroline Leon, Manager, Product Marketing/Sprout Social. Hands-on training/tutorial on Sprout Social system.

Sept. 30: Social Media Influence, Influencers, and Micro-fame

Guest Speaker: Eric Dahan, CEO/Co-Founder, Open Influence.

Readings:

Amatulli, C., Guido, G. & Barbarito, M. (2014). Does popularity in social networks influence purchasing and lifestyle decisions? The meaning of online friendship. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 11(3), 1-21.

Knoll, J. & Schramm, H. (2015). Advertising in social networks sites: Investigating the social influence of user-generated content on online advertising effects. *Communications*, 40(3), 341-360.

Gamson, J. (2011). The unwatched life is not worth living: The elevation of the ordinary in celebrity culture. *Theories and Methodologies*, 126(4), 1061-1069.

Oct. 7: Evaluating Reach and Social Impact in Multiple DSM Use Cases

Guest Speaker: Curtis Jewell, II, Manager, Strategic Alliances, Sony Pictures

Individual Meetings.

Oct. 14: Mid-term presentations.

Oct. 21: The Digital World According to Henry

Guest Speaker: Henry Jenkins, Provost Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts & Education, USC Annenberg.

Readings:

Jenkins, H. (2014). Fandom Studies As I See It. *Journal of Fandom Studies*, 2(2), 89-109.

Jenkins, H. (2014). Rethinking 'Rethinking convergence/culture'. *Cultural Studies*, 28(2), 267-297.

Oct. 28: Advertising Efficacy/Measurement on SM Platforms

Guest Speaker: Claire Munley, Facebook Partnership Director/Nielsen.

Readings:

Brettle, M., Reich, J., Gavilanes, J.M. & Flatten, T.C. (2015). What drives advertising success on Facebook? An advertising effectiveness model. *Journal of Advertising Research*, June, 162-175.

Fulgoni, G.M. & Lipsman, A. (2017). The downside of digital word of mouth and the pursuit of media quality: How social sharing is disrupting digital advertising models and metrics. *Journal of Advertising Research*, June, 127-131.

Zaltman, G. (2014). Are you mistaking facts for insights? Lighting up advertising's dark continent of imagination. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 373-376.

Nov. 4: Data mining and usage via social media.

Readings:

Couldry, N. & Yu, J. (2018). Deconstructing datafication's brave new world. *New Media and Society*, 1-19.

Hustad, K. (2018). Facebook, Cambridge Analytica and why your data is still for sale. Center for Digital Ethics & Policy.

Boyd, D. & Crawford, K. (2012). Critical questions for big data: Provocations for a cultural, technological, and scholarly phenomenon. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 662-679.

Nov. 11: Digital Ethics and Media Literacy

Readings:

Wohn, D.Y., Bowe, B.J. (2016). Micro agenda setters: The effect of social media on young adults' exposure to and attitude toward news. *Social Media + Society*, 1-12.

Bowen, S. (2013). Using classic social media cases to distill ethical guidelines for digital engagement. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 28(2), 119-133.

Meyer, R. (2018). The grim conclusions of the largest-ever study of fake news. *The Atlantic*, March 8.

Nov. 18: Online Privacy in Surveillance Society

Readings:

Wissinger, E. (2018). Blood, sweat, and tears: Navigating creepy versus cool in wearable biotech. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(5), 779-785.

Lyon, D. (2017). Surveillance culture: Engagement, exposure, and ethics in digital modernity. *International Journal of Communication*, 11, 824-842.

Marwick, A. E. (2012). The public domain: Social surveillance in everyday life. *Surveillance and Society*, 9(4), 378-393.

Nov. 25: Final project in-class work.

**Dec. 2: Final project presentations. Last class.
Reports due Dec. 11.**