

MKT-599: SOCIAL MEDIA INSIGHTS FOR MARKETING INNOVATION
Spring 2021

The class will meet on Tuesdays and Thursday from 9:30-11:20 am

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides deep understanding and hands-on experience in the application of qualitative social media discovery methods to the generation of consumer insights for marketing innovation, brand management, internal communications, and other business purposes. Students will gain a toolkit of frameworks and approaches through which to understand contemporary social media platforms and their users, recognize common behaviors in usage, form pragmatic business questions, and answer them using data, critical thinking, and evidence. The key skill that students can expect to obtain is the ability to conduct sophisticated sociocultural social media investigations to reveal deep consumer and managerial insights upon which to base successful innovations.

The approaches used in this course draw from established netnography, ethnography, semiotics, cultural branding, and media studies techniques, seasoned by years of application in business and marketing. Skills learned in this course include the collection, coding, and cultural analysis of brand-related multimedia data from social media, the interpretation and presentation of research findings, and their strategic and tactical implications. Popular applications of these methods include but are not limited to entertainment, sports, technology, social media industries, cultural industries, and retail. This course is suitable for all Master-level marketing and management students who want to be able to understand how to apply social media conversations and platforms to discover insights to drive business innovation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- 1. Learn to gather, categorize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate relevant qualitative and quantitative data in social media in the conduct of discovery-oriented qualitative social media inquiry.*
- 2. Learn to use marketing and business frameworks to identify relevant problems with brands, critically understand the contexts underlying those problems, then successfully balance competing priorities and points of view in devising workable solutions.*
- 3. Learn marketing research creation, interpretation, and strategic use situations characterized by high personal, cultural, and technological ambiguity.*
- 4. Learn to apply netnography as a practical management tool. Practice how to apply novel cultural brandings concepts through skills development in practical netnography assignments. Apply research and analysis tools individually and in work teams to key branding frameworks.*

5. *Student will develop a cultural approach to marketing and business as well as design novel technocultural conceptual frameworks based on evidence, critical thinking, and deep interpretation.*

COURSE MATERIALS

Required course text:

Kozinets, Robert V. (2020), *Netnography: The Essential Guide to Qualitative Social Media Research*, London: SAGE Publishing.

Recommended course text:

Kozinets, Robert V. and Rossella Gambetti, eds. (2021), *Netnography Unlimited: Understanding Technoculture using Qualitative Social Media Research*, London: Routledge.

Required readings that are published in journal articles are available online through the USC library system. You will be responsible for locating and downloading these articles. Required readings composed of single chapters of published books will be shared on the course Blackboard page.

GRADING

In order to develop your skills as applied qualitative social media research researchers, you will be assessed on your ability to conduct targeted research related assignments, which are broken down into steps, including data collection, analysis, and application. The assignments culminate in a major team project in which you complete an applied netnography which has three stages (the first is ungraded, but receives feedback). To develop that major project, you will also be assessed on 3 individual research skills assignments and 3 team projects, all of which feed into the major project, which also has three stages. Each of these stages builds on the others, so that you learn a major skill (how to conduct a qualitative social media research project) by learning and practicing small chunks of it first, then putting them all together.

Across all assignments, deliverables, assessments, grading in this class will emphasize: (1) clear thinking and writing, (2) critical thinking and writing, (3) a grasp of complex material, (4) an ability to understand scientific methodology and follow its directions, (5) an ability to synthesize empirical data and abstract useful and relevant concepts from it, and (6) the ability to recognize and generate relevant insights. Excellence in this class is marked by consistent outstanding performance in some or all of these aspects. Excellence on these characteristics is usually accompanied by a high degree of intellectual curiosity, motivation, ambition, empathy, and cultural competence.

“A” deliverables, assignments, and projects demonstrate: a keen and honed sense of how to apply marketing research to generate marketing strategy insights from social media data; very clear writing (including supporting facts and figures, including relevant quotes from data and interviews); very strong critical thinking skills; a deep understanding of relevant material and readings (with correct interpretations and reasonable assumptions stated); extraordinary interest in the topic leading to extra effort in additional research work; the exhibition of excellent secondary research skills; nearly flawless following of stated project or assignment directions; strong abstract thinking; genuinely creative thinking; and the presence of directly relevant insights.

“B” deliverables, assignments, and projects demonstrate: a strong sense of how to apply marketing research to generate marketing strategy insights from social media data; clear writing (including

supporting facts and figures, including relevant quotes from data and interviews); strong critical thinking skills; a good understanding of relevant material and literature (with correct interpretations and reasonable assumptions stated); reasonable interest in the topic; very good secondary research skills; highly competent flawless following of stated project or assignment directions; good abstract thinking; some creative thinking; and the presence of some relevant insights.

“C” deliverables, assignments, and projects demonstrate: weak writing (more than 4 errors in spelling and grammar; missing supporting facts and figures, not including relevant quotes from data and interviews); poor critical thinking skills; many misunderstandings of relevant material (unsupportable interpretations or unstated assumptions); perfunctory style; failure to follow stated project or assignment directions; lack of abstract thinking; and very little insight.

“D” deliverables, assignments, and projects demonstrate: weak writing (more than 7 errors in spelling and grammar; missing supporting facts and figures, not including relevant quotes from data and interviews); little to no critical thinking skills; many misunderstandings of relevant material (unsupportable interpretations or unstated assumptions); poor organization; perfunctory style; failure to follow stated project or assignment directions; lack of abstract thinking; and almost no insight.

“F” projects are weak in every dimension mentioned for “D” deliverables, late or not turned in.

State what categories of graded assignments will be combined to calculate the final course grade (on top of the sample grading table below). It is recommended that you add the target course GPA of 3.3 for core courses and 3.5 for electives. Include any statistical measures you will use to assign the final grades. You should have a sub-heading of each graded assignment under this section of the syllabus with a detailed description of the assignment.

Include a grading table (example below) that shows the number of points and % allocation of the overall grade for each category. Percentages must add up to 100.

| <u>Assignments</u> | <u>Points</u> | <u>% of Overall Grade</u> |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|
| Class participation | 100 | 10% |
| Individual insight discovery skills assignments (3 in total) | 150 | 35% |
| Mid-term exam | 150 | 15% |
| Team insight discovery skills assignments (2 in total) | 150 | 15% |
| Team netnography project | 250 | 25% |
| TOTAL | 1000 | 100% |

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Your Class Participation grade will be assigned based upon: (1) contributions to in-class discussions (quality as well as quantity), (2) fluency with and insights on the readings and central course topics, (3) ability to start and maintain interesting classroom and online conversations, and (4) your performance when called upon for the class exercises. One sure way to signal your interest in gaining an A grade in Class Participation in this class is to consistently show up to class, consistently read not only the required and the “skim” readings, but also to find and share additional relevant readings, and come to class reliably prepared to explain their significance to the other students in the

class. I am happy to discuss your current class participation grade with you at any point in the semester.

Class participation counts for 10% of your final grade and is assessed after each class by the professor. Participation also includes participation in any online exercises or class meetings.

HOMEWORK

Students should expect to spend 3-4 hours per week outside of class in preparation and working on assignments. Part of this work will include rigorous investigations of social media platforms and content.

INDIVIDUAL INSIGHT DISCOVERY SKILLS ASSIGNMENTS

There are three individual insight discovery skills assignments, and in total they contribute 500 points (50%) of your final grade. With the exception of the first assignment, a case analysis, these assignments are linked into your team project, and your work should be complementary and synergistic with your other team members. The four individual insight discovery skills assignments are as follows:

- 1. Applied insight ethnographic/online case discussion and analysis, 300 word limit (week 3)*
- 2. Deep data sample with initial discovery analysis, approx. 10 pages (week 6)*
- 3. Interaction guide for inquiry process, approx. 2 pages (week 8)*

Additional details on the individual team insight discovery skills assignments will be provided and discussed in class.

TEAM INSIGHT DISCOVERY SKILLS ASSIGNMENTS

There are two team insight discovery skills assignments, and in total they contribute 150 points (15%) of your final grade. The two team insight discovery skills assignments are as follows:

- 1. Social site map, 1 page (week 7)*
- 2. Coded visual insights, 1-3 pages (week 12)*

Additional details on the two team insight discovery skills assignments will be provided and discussed in class.

MID-TERM EXAM

The Mid-term exam is a take-home knowledge and skill testing examination that test your comprehension of the discovery processes discussed in the class. The exam is worth 150 points (15%) of your final grade.

TEAM NETNOGRAPHY PROJECT

Netnography in industry is a team sport, and that is how you will be learning it. You will choose your own teams and work in them the entire semester. Everyone is expected to pull their weight in their teams, and any team issue (missed meetings, poor or missing contributions) should be discussed as team and then reported to the professor as early as possible so that we can work together to remedy the situation. The team netnography / strategy project is complementary with the individual written assignments. Breaking down the project in this way leads you step-by-step through the creation and presentation of a focused team netnography project, similar to a netnography project that might be

conducted in an industry setting. The entire project seeks to answer a specific marketing question and find a strategic solution to a branding challenge.

The three component parts of the individual netnography project are as follows:

- 1) Delve into the marketing problem and brand question, and formulate a netnographic research design and plan to address and answer them; team mission statement*
- 2) Conduct iterations of netnographic research, combine them, and offer findings about the cultural sources of challenges and problems, and their solution*
- 3) Propose a marketing campaign (strategy and tactics) that draws directly from your findings*

The team netnography project counts for 250 points in total, however, most of the individual and team written deliverables also feed into it.

- A) Your team mission statement will focus your social insight topic, it is due in week 4*
- B) The second team presentation (week 9) is an informal progress report, presented in class, which counts for 50 points, and also includes a 1-2 page written report, and receives some feedback and direction*
- C) The final team presentation (weeks 14 and 15) includes the written deliverable and counts for 170 points in total. The grading allocation is 200 points for the presentation and final written report. A template will be provided to clearly specify what to include in the project deliverables.*

Your contribution to teamwork is a serious matter. In any groups where one or more members request it, peer evaluations will be used to assess individual student contributions to the team project. A copy of the peer evaluation form is at the end of this syllabus so that students will know what is expected of them. If a peer review evaluation is not requested, grades for the team project will be allocated evenly among all team members.

EXAMS

There are no exams in this course.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COURSE EVALUATIONS

The student course evaluations are valuable. This course is continuously improved, based on feedback from students and instructor observations.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, the USC Emergency Information web site (<https://emergency.usc.edu/>) will provide safety and other information, including electronic means by which instructors will conduct class using a combination of USC's Blackboard learning management system (blackboard.usc.edu), teleconferencing, and other technologies.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY:

Assignments must be turned in on the due date/time electronically via Blackboard. Unless you have a prior written deadline extension from the professor, any assignment turned in late, even if by only a few minutes, will receive a full grade deduction for each day it is late (for example, if your work is a B+ grade, you will be given a C+ grade if you hand it in within 24 hours of the due date; you will receive a D+ if you hand it in between 24 and 48 hours from the due date, and so on). Late or not, however, you must complete all required assignments to pass this course.

EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK:

This course does not do any so-called “normalizing” statistical manipulation or bell curving of your grade. You get what you get. This course conforms to the standards set forth in the Marshall Guidelines and described under the grading and evaluations sections of this syllabus.

You should think about my comments and grading scheme carefully before addressing any issue you may have about grading with me. Let me know within five days if you have a grading complaint with an email explaining on exactly what aspect of the paper you need more commentary.

Historically, the mean GPA for graduate elective classes was 3.5. Generally, I will use the average quality of past work among my MBA students, which was also a 3.5, as my guide in grading. However, excellence will be recognized. I would be pleased to have a class where everyone in the class excels, and I have fought successfully in the past to recognize the performance of the students in such classes, rare as they may be.

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| COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS |
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| | Topics/ Daily Activities | Readings and Homework | Deliverables with Due Dates |
|--|---|--|---|
| <i>Week 1</i> 01/19 and 01/21 2020 | Ethnography and Branding in a Digital and Social Media Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding in the Digital Age, by Edelman, HBR, Dec 2010 • Beyond Spam, by Stock, 2016 • Netnography: The Essential Guide (3e), Chapter 1 | |
| <i>Week 2</i> 01/26 and 01/28 2020 | Social Listening: Data Big and Small and Cultural Research | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Horizontal Revolution” in Social Media Marketing by Tuten and Solomon (textbook) • Building an Insights Engine, by Van Den Driest, Sthanunathan, and Weed, HBR, Sept 2016 | |
| <i>Week 3</i> 02/02 and 02/04 2020 | Cultural Research in the Digital Age | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography 3e, Chapter 4 • How is Cultural Branding Different?” by Holt, in <i>How Brands Become Icons</i> • “Cultural Innovation Theory,” by Holt and Cameron, in <i>Cultural Strategy</i> • Fat Tire Beer Case Study, available at http://culturalbranding.org/cb2016/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/Fat-Tire-website-case.pdf | Individual deliverable #1 due (and in class case discussion): Ethnographic case |
| <i>Week 4</i> 02/09 and 02/11 2020 | Research with Deep Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography 3e, Chapter 5 • Netnography Unlimited, Chapter 10 • Aiden and Michel (2013), <i>Uncharted: Big Data as a Lens on Human Culture</i>, Ch2: G. K. Zipf and the Fossil Hunters • Rapaille (2006), <i>The Culture Code</i>, Ch2: Growing Pains of an Adolescent Culture (READ) | Team project #1 due: mission statements (including ethics statement) |
| <i>Week 5</i> 02/16 and 02/18 2020 | Ethics, Diversity, and Praxis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography 3e: Chapter 6 • Netnography Unlimited, Ch. 4 • IRB and Association of Internet Researchers Ethical Research guides • Association of Internet Researchers, (2012), <i>Ethical decision-making and Internet research 2.0: Recommendations from the AoIR ethics working committee</i>, available online at http://aoir.org/ethics/ | |
| <i>Week 6</i> 02/23 and 02/25 2020 | Investigative Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READ: Netnography 3e, Ch 4: Site Search, pages 161-164 • Getting Closer to the Consumers—How Nivea Co-Creates New Products, by Bilgram et al., MRSB 2011 • | Individual deliverable #2 due: deep data sample |
| <i>Week 7</i> 03/02 and 03/04 2020 | Coding investigative data | Netnography 3e: Chapter 12 McNaught and Lam (2010), “Using Wordle as a Supplementary Research Tool” | Team deliverable #1: social site map |

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| | | Elo and Kyngash (2007), The Qualitative Content Analysis Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Spiggle (1994), Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data in Consumer Research, JCR, Analysis pages (read intro and analysis section: pages 491-497 • Netnography Unlimited, Chapter 12 | Mid-term exam |
| Week 8 03/09 and 03/11 2020 | Interview, online and group | Netnography 3e, Chapter 9 (to page 261) Salmons (2010), Online Interviews in Real Time, Ch 7 •McCracken (1988), The Long Interview, Ch 3: The Four-Step Method of Inquiry | Individual deliverable #3 due: mobile interview guide |
| Week 9 03/16 and 03/18 2020 | Lead user analysis and mobile and platform ethnography | Netnography 3e, Chapter 9 (from page 261 to end) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belz and Baumbach (2010), “Netnography as a Method of Lead User Identification,” <i>Creativity and Innovation Management</i> • Lux, Bailey, and Reyes (2017), Lead User Discovery through Netnography: Transhumanist Subcultures, <i>PDXScholar</i> | Team projects #2 due: update report |
| Week 10 [Wellness day and] 03/25 2020 | Immersion and Researching influencers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography 3e, Chapter 10 • Netnography Unlimited, Chapters 14 and 15 | |
| Week 11 03/30 and 04/01 2020 | Interpreting Qualitative Data | Netnography 3e, Chapter 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you Hear Me Now? Learning from Customer Stories, by Gorry and Westbrook, Bus Horizons 2011 • Cayla and Arnould (2013), Ethnographic Stories for Market Learning, Journal of Marketing • Nursing under the skin: A Netnographic study of metaphors and meanings in nursing tattoos”, by Eriksson et al. (2013), Nursing Inquiry | |
| Week 12 04/06 and 04/08 2020 | Integration and Symbolic Understanding | Netnography 3e: Chapter 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Thinking: Driving Innovation, by Owen, BPM Institute, 2005 • Creating Visual Narrative Art for Decoding Stories that Consumers and Brands Tell , by Megehee and Woodside, <i>Psychology and Marketing</i>, 2010 • Separating Fads from Facts, by Ketchen and Short, Business Horizons 2011; see especially their graphic novel at See http://www-google-com.libproxy1.usc.edu/googlebooks/chrome/small_00.html | Team deliverable #2 due: Coded and Visual Insights |
| Week 13 04/13 and 04/15 2020 | Applications: Communicating netnographic research findings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography 3e: Chapter 14 • Netnography Unlimited, Chapter 12 | |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netnography: The Marketers’ Secret Ingredient, MIT Technology Review • Duarte (2010), Resonate: “The Hero’s Journey Structure” and “Crossing the Threshold” (READ) • The Power of Storytelling in Public Relations:” Introducing the 20 Master Plots, by Kent, Public Relations Review, 2015 • “Chapter 8: Analysis, Theory, and Presentation for Managers,” by Belk, Fischer, and Kozinets, <i>Qualitative Consumer and Marketing Research</i> (book) | |
| <i>Week 14</i> 04/20 [and Wellness Day] | Class presentations and critique | | Final team presentations (deliverable #3) |
| <i>Week 15</i> 04/27 and 04/29 2020 | Class presentations and critique | | Final team presentations (deliverable #3) |
| <i>FINAL</i> May 5-12 date TBA | Project summatives | | Project summative writeups due |

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| STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS |
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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:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.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) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

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

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, 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 Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 821-4710

campussupport.usc.edu

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.

Appendix I

SAMPLE PEER EVALUATION FORM

Please identify your team and team members for the ____ Project(s) that you worked on. Then rate all your team members, *including yourself*, based on the **contributions** of each team member for the selected assignment according to the criteria listed below. On a scale of 0 – 2 with 0 indicating does not meet expectations, 1 meets expectations and 2 exceeds expectations, rate each person on each of the five criteria. Lastly, add up the points for each person with the maximum number of points for each person being 10. In the box below (“contribution details”), please describe the exact contributions of each team member, including yourself. Feel free to use additional space as required.

| Team Members/ Assessment Criteria of Team Contributions | Team Member 1 | Team Member 2 | Team Member 3 | Yourself |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------|
| 1. Role Performance | | | | |
| 2. Assists Team Members | | | | |
| 3. Listening and Discussing | | | | |
| 4. Research and Information Sharing | | | | |
| 5. Time Management | | | | |
| Total | | | | |

Contribution details: