Social Media Today (019:050/JMC:1500)  Spring 2013

Day/Time: T/Th, 2:00–2:50 p.m.
Location: C20 Pomerantz Center (PC)
Class email: sjmc-socialmedia@uiowa.edu (please use this email for all course-related matters)
Class Twitter: @sjmc_smtoday
DEO: David Perlmutter, david-perlmutter@uiowa.edu, E305B Adler Journalism Bldg.

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<tr>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Petya Eckler</td>
<td>W333 AJB</td>
<td>W 1:00–3:00 p.m. and Th 12:00–1:00 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa Tully</td>
<td>E332 AJB</td>
<td>T 12:30–1:30 and W 12:30–2:30 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joy Chang</td>
<td>E333 AJB</td>
<td>W 9 a.m.–12 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Li Chen</td>
<td>E325 AJB</td>
<td>M 1–2 p.m. and W 10 a.m.–12 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zhengjia Liu</td>
<td>E323 AJB</td>
<td>Th 3–6 p.m.</td>
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**See ISIS for section meeting times and locations.**

Background

The current generation of undergraduate college students at the University of Iowa was born during the early years of the commercial Internet and World Wide Web. They were tweenagers when online social-interactive media like blogs first rose to prominence, controversy, and power. Today, we live in a world still in the throes of the social media revolution. A vast majority of graduates from communication schools now enter into jobs like “junior digital strategist” and “social media outreach coordinator” or “Twitter stylist.” Every institution, from the Pentagon to the University of Iowa to McDonald's to the local county historical society, is trying to figure out how best to use social media for their purposes, which include surveillance, customer satisfaction and engagement, and marketing research.

Social media have also changed as disparate fields as health care, politics, journalism, and philanthropy. It is increasingly through social media that we decide what we “like,” consume, and vote for. Social media are even said to be the enablers or instigators of real revolutions, such as the recent Arab Spring. At the same time, social media have provided a new wider platform for propaganda for terrorists, hate groups, criminals, and all those seeking to cheat us and do us harm.

And, of course, practically every employer today, no matter what industry you want to work in, is “Oogling” you—that is, conducting social media background checks to see what you have posted or what others have posted about you on blogs, Facebook, Flickr, Tumblr, and Twitter.

Social Media Today will examine this extraordinary new world through some exciting questions. What are the historical, social, and cultural origins of the rise of social media? What insights about the human mind explain our behavior online? How have social media affected our daily lives, from romance to jobs to electing presidents to maintaining our health? How have social media changed our connections with those close to us and those across the globe?

Overview

Social Media Today is a survey course with no prerequisites, intended for anyone of any major and interest. It satisfies the General Education requirement in Values, Society and Diversity. It is meant to give an outline of our current understanding, from the point of view of researchers, professionals, and critics of the wide range of social media phenomena. The course will begin with a prehistory of social media. Then we will look at the earliest days of online posting and interacting.
and trace the first instances of social engagement on the Web. Next, the course will look at individual areas of life, culture, and society and assess how social media have affected them. These include journalism, politics, health care, romance and lifestyle, entertainment, war and terrorism, and professions and jobs. Finally, we will ask, “What’s next?”

Objectives
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

• Understand the historical roots and current societal context of social media
• Understand how social media have affected a number of social and personal aspects of contemporary life
• Navigate the world of social media in a more professional way
• Read critically and analyze information posted on and about social media
• Write analytically about social media

Lecture Schedule

Part 1: Social media in society

Week 1 – Jan. 22 & 24: Big questions about social media and the prehistory of social media
We will outline the major questions to ask and to try to answer about social media, from “where did they come from” to “how do they affect our lives” to “where are they going.” We will survey particular types of media of the past that have served the function of personalized mass communication – that is, attempts to reach audiences in a more reflective personal manner that mimics current online social media.

Week 2 – Jan. 29 & 31: Birth of modern media to the rise of the Internet/the social media era
We will look at the rise in the mid-nineteenth of industrial mass media via newspapers and then the 20th century’s radio, film, and television. We identify the particular characteristics of mass communication versus interpersonal communication and analyze the invention of the military and then commercial “nets.” We will survey the beginnings of true online social-interactive media, from bulletin board services to blogs, MySpace, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc. This week we will also survey our basic knowledge, from academic research and professional studies, of the reason for the success of social media. We will ask why, of the thousands and thousands of big ideas for social media platforms, did only a few truly succeed and why others (like MySpace and ChatRoulette) have faded. What made social media so popular? Why do we use them so much?

Week 3 – Feb. 5 & 7: Social media privacy and security
You have probably been told to update your privacy settings on Facebook by your friends and family. But, have you considered why this is important? This week we will examine issues of privacy and personal security on social networking sites.

Week 4 – Feb. 12 & 14: Social media law and ethics
At a party, your friend is making a fool of himself. You pull out your iPhone, create a funny video, and post it to YouTube. A week later, his antics become “most viewed” and as a result his girlfriend drops him and he becomes practically unemployable. Did you mean to ruin his life? We will look at the different major questions of ethics, of using social media for our friends, society, and ourselves.
Our big question is, can we simply apply traditional ethical systems to the new media or do we have to devise new rules of common sense and decency for cyberspace? We will also consider laws that govern social media practice and consider how legal frameworks and things like the First Amendment affect social media behavior.

**Week 5 – Feb. 19 & 21: Mobile social networking and geo-information**
This week we will examine the growth of the global mobile industry. We will look at the development of mobile social media applications and the phenomenon of always “being connected” even on the go. We will ask why has text messaging become so popular among young people? Is text messaging limiting or enhancing our interpersonal interactions? We will also consider mobile social networks across the world. We will look at social networking sites that incorporate geographic information through “checking in” or tapping into your smart phone’s GPS capabilities to “locate” you. What benefits and risks do these geo-technologies present? [Assigned: Research paper]

**Week 6 – Feb. 26 & 28: Exam Review & Exam 1**

Exam 1: Thursday, February 28 in class (50 minutes)

**No discussion sections this week. No WtL.**

**Part 2: Social media in our lives**

**Week 7 – March 5 & 7: Social media and health**
One of the most unseen revolutions in social media has been in health care, where patients and practitioners are increasingly blogging, “liking,” Tweeting, and posting to learn more and say more about their own health and the health care system. Whether it’s the setting off of misinformation such as the vaccine panic or the measurable effects of positive blogging on someone’s health, social media changes the way we live and die. [Select topic for research paper.]

**Week 8 – March 12 & 14: Social media and strategic communication**
Advancement in social media use often comes from the industries that rely on strategic communication for achieving their goals: advertising, public relations, marketing, fundraising, non-profits, etc. Companies have long searched for ways to reach current and potential customers/members that are more personal and targeted, but also not too expensive or time-consuming. Some would argue that they have found that in social media. Many brands and non-profit organizations were among the pioneers of social media in discovering how to engage consumers on a personal level and excite them about various products, services or causes. We’ll discuss some of the best examples of strategic communication through social media to show that. The history of one of the staples of social media, the viral video, will also be presented. Further, we will look into how entertainers and celebrities use social media as a way to connect to their fans and advance their own brand.

**SPRING BREAK (March 18–22)**

**Week 9 – March 26 & 28: Social media, news and information**
Once upon a time, people received their news from a few limited sources: a daily newspaper, an evening newscast. Moreover, ordinary people were mostly relegated to reacting to news as
audiences. Now we live in a world where, whether it’s a terrorist bombing or a plane landing on the Hudson River, the “citizen journalist” with her cell phone camera is first on the scene and where political blogs and bloggers strongly affect our understanding of news and major events. We will look at how traditional mainstream media have struggled and reacted to the new world of online commentary and declining sources of revenue. [Turn in research paper proposal.]

Week 10 – April 2 & 4: Social media and education, jobs, and hiring

This week we will survey the different ways that social media are being used in education by faculty and students and try to identify the most effective classroom and personal study practices and habits that social media can facilitate. We will then turn to your life after college and consider how social media interacts with your professional life.

It is almost certain that when you apply for a job or internship, no matter what the industry, your prospective employer will conduct a social media background check, looking you up via Google or other search engines. Here we survey how jobs and careers have been helped and hurt by what we post or is posted about us online. We will outline practical strategies for you to put your best social media face forward for your careers to come. [Assigned: “Oogle Me” assignment]

Week 11 – April 9 & 11: Social media and politics

Now we begin to look at individual areas of our lives, culture, and history, and how social media has affected them. The political world of legislation, campaigns, and elections first called attention to social media here in Iowa with the 2003–2004 presidential campaign of Howard Dean. We will look at how social media are used by campaigns and politicians and by the journalists and ordinary people covering them. In particular, we will examine the 2008 Obama campaign, in Iowa and beyond, which was considerably assisted by an effective social media strategy. We will also assess the 2012 presidential elections and the evolution of social media during election cycles. [Due: “Oogle Me” assignment]

Week 12 – April 16 & 18: Social media and diversity

The concept of “digital divide” has been a part of the conversation surrounding the Internet and web usage since the early days of the commercial Web. This week we’ll explore how diverse groups from different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds adopt and use social media technologies. We’ll examine the adoption of Twitter and mobile technologies by Hispanic and African American youth; ways that social media has been used for social justice causes and to promote more hate and cultural insensitivity; and we’ll explore the future of the digital divide. We will also discuss online sub-cultures and demographics. [Turn in research paper source list.]

Week 13 – April 23 & 25: Social media, war and revolution

Several American military leaders have stated that, in the long run, the “cyber war” with terrorists is more important than land conflicts. Ever since 9/11, the role of interactive media in supporting and opposing war and enabling terrorists and counter-terrorism has been studied and much written about. We will look at the role of social media in the U.S. military's global anti-terrorism strategies, the rise of the so-called “Dark Web” of jihadi messages and videos on YouTube and elsewhere, and how ordinary citizens and policymakers use social media to support their own views and actions related to war and terrorism. We will also examine the use of social media during the recent and ongoing “Arab Spring” revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa. We will discuss the
implications of the global reach of social media sites like Facebook on these major international issues.

**Week 14 – April 30 & May 2: Social media and romance and sex**
Probably no area of social media is less studied but more used than dating, romance, sex, and porn. Hundreds of millions of people use blogs and other interactive media for meeting up, voyeurism, or just finding accurate information. We will look at how entire industries have grown up around social media and romance—the eHarmony phenomenon. At the same time, we will ask critical questions of the effects of oversaturation on healthy lifestyles and relationships. We will also explore how men and women approach social media differently. We will examine relationships built in virtual social spaces such as Second Life and ask questions about the blurring of our real and online lives. [Due: Research paper]

**Week 15 – May 7 & 9: Exploring what’s next in social media and Final Exam Review**
Twenty years from now, will you have a chip in your head that will give you instant access to the entire library of the world's information since the dawn of time? Will we be constantly in “feel” with our friends, sensing what they love and do? Or will our society react in the opposite direction and seek out more face-to-face relationships and reduce the role of social media in our lives? Here we look at some predictions about the direction of social media to come and the changes they may force on society and ourselves. [Last tweet must be posted by 5 p.m. on May 7.]

**Final Exam – During finals week, date/time TBD**

**Discussion Sections**
Discussion sections meet weekly at your scheduled time. In section, you will explore concepts in more detail and discuss examples and case studies related to the weekly topics. You are expected to attend and participate in discussion section. You will be graded on attendance and participation. Part of your participation grade consists of writing-to-learn assignments.

**Readings**
All readings will be posted on ICON. You are expected to complete the week’s readings by the start of lecture on Tuesday. Readings will be included on quizzes.

**Grade Allocation**
The grade for Social Media Today is out of **1500 points**.

**Attendance and participation – 200 points**
- 50 for attendance in discussion section
  - 2 to 3 absences in your discussion section results in an automatic half grade deduction (25 points); 4 or more results in a full grade deduction.
- 50 for participation
- 100 for writing-to-learn assignments

**Quizzes – 100 points**
- Over the course of the semester, we will have ten quizzes in lecture consisting of one short-answer question. You will not be given advance notice of quizzes.
Exam 1 (multiple choice) – 200 points
• Covering Part 1 (weeks 1–5) including lecture, readings and material presented in section

Analyzing and Using Social Media Assignments – 600 points
• Twitter assignment – 50 points
• “Oogle” me assignment – 250 points
• Research paper – 300 points

**Assignments will be discussed in more detail in lecture and discussion sections. Assignments could change. You will be given advanced notice of any changes to the assignment or schedule.**

Final exam (multiple choice and short answer) – 400 points
• Comprehensive exam covering the semester, but focusing on Part 2 (weeks 7–15) including lecture, readings and material presented in section

Total Points = 1500

Grading Scale
Your final grade is calculated as a percentage. To calculate your grade, divide your total points by the total points for the class (1500).

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Late Policy
Assignments that are late will lose 1/2 of a grade per day, beginning at the end of class and including weekends and holidays. This means that a paper, which would have received an A if it was on time, will receive a B+ the next day, B- for two days late, and so on.
The **Iowa Dozen** (practices specific to the School of Journalism and Communication)

As one of more than 104 programs in journalism and mass communication accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (**ACEJMC**), we must assess student learning to assure that each of our graduates meets the following standards.

**We learn to ...**

1. Write correctly, clearly and well. *(papers, presentations)*
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly. *(papers, presentations)*
3. Edit and evaluate carefully. *(papers, presentations)*

**We value ...**

6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

**We explore ...**

10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND NOTIFICATIONS

DISABILITY: Please notify me if you require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

EMAIL: Make sure your UI email account is active and connected to the University system so that you can get J-MC School, UI and class messages. You should check your email regularly.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory save for VERY good excuses.

PARTICIPATION: You will be expected to complete all reading assignments and participate fully in class discussions and other activities.

CHANGES: It may be necessary to make changes in the syllabus.

COMPLAINTS: Student complaints concerning faculty/TA actions: First attempt to resolve the matter with the TA; if not possible, contact the professor. If you are still not able to settle the issue, you may submit a written complaint to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, Office of Academic Programs, 116 Schaeffer Hall. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

SEVERE WEATHER: The University Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/v/16.htm#1614d> to a tornado or similar crisis. If there is a crisis as indicated by the UI Outdoor Warning System, members of the class should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building at the lowest level and stay until the crisis is over. In the case of really bad weather, please check your email before coming to class. If the class is cancelled I will send an email notice as far ahead as possible.

ADMINISTRATIVE HOME: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: Student Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating. Plagiarism is presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, whether in writing or speaking. Cheating includes copying someone else's work or purposefully allowing someone else to copy your work. Disciplinary actions: The professor will inform you immediately of the allegation. If found guilty your grade can be reduced, you may receive an F in the course, probation, suspension or even expulsion. The full text of this policy can be found in the College's Student Academic Handbook.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: The University has a policy on sexual harassment and consensual relationships in the instructional environment. You may obtain the full text of this policy in the Office of Affirmative Action, 202 Jessup Hall.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: Student Rights and Responsibilities include your right to expect a classroom environment that enables all to learn comfortably. You further have a responsibility to this class and your own education to help create a classroom environment where the same is possible. At the most basic level, this means that you will respect the other members of the class and the professor/TA, and treat everyone with the same courtesy you want to receive in return.