Overview
Social Media Today (SMT) is a survey course with no prerequisites, intended for students of any major and interest. It satisfies the General Education requirement in Values, Society and Diversity. This course offers an overview of our current understanding of a wide range of social media phenomena from the point of view of researchers, professionals, and critics. We will begin with a brief history of communication technologies, including the first instances of social engagement online. Next, we will discuss key conceptual and theoretical developments that ground informed discussions of social media. We then will examine what the rise of social media means for contemporary culture and society, focusing on a range of topics including: journalism, politics, globalization, and marketing. Finally, we will consider future possibilities for digital and social media.

Diversity and Discussion
In this class, we will be discussing current events and contemporary social issues, including potentially sensitive subjects such as sexual harassment, hate speech, and violence. We will also be discussing political and cultural topics from a variety of perspectives. In Lecture and Section, we support the open presentation and discussion of viewpoints, even those we don’t like or disagree with, and we will also be respectful of others’ ideas. This course is a place to explore new ideas and to think through the complexities of our socially mediated lives.

JMC Learning Outcomes:
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment, we have identified particular learning outcomes that every student should obtain by the time they earn a JMC degree. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment](http://clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/undergraduate-programs/assessment). We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes.

Broadly speaking, the following outcomes apply to this course:

Law and ethics:
- Students will demonstrate an ability to anticipate and recognize ethical issues when they arise and to reason through them taking multiple perspectives and contexts into account.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to explain their ethical approaches and reasoning about a particular dilemma in terms that can be understood by a diverse group of people.
Media literacy:
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic tenets of media literacy and how media literacy relates to their personal media habits and professional development.
- Students will develop critical thinking skills to analyze and interpret media messages through an understanding of media practices and institutions.

Multiculturalism:
- Students will demonstrate sensitivity to and understanding of the cultures, histories, perspectives, and socio-economic and political situations of diverse groups.

Media history:
- Students will demonstrate an awareness of the historical origins of digital communication and the Internet and describe its effect on print and online media industries with emphasis on their business models and audiences.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to explain the historical origins of recent examples of convergent digital news and entertainment media.

Course-specific Objectives
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
- Understand the historical roots and recent antecedents of contemporary social media
- Recognize and apply major theoretical and conceptual issues in social media studies
- Understand how social media affect various 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 digital and social media

Required readings
We will use the following textbook for the course:
Iowa Hawk Shop (use “Academics” tab to search for textbooks) Web: http://www.hawkshop.com/
Phone: 319.335.3179

We will also read chapters from the following book:
Burgess, Jean. (2017). The SAGE Handbook of Social Media. Sage Publications Ltd. This book is available in electronic format in the UI Main Library. You can link to the book through the doi below. Off-campus, you will have to sign in with your hawkid and password for access for the book: http://dx.doi.org.proxy.lib.uiowa.edu/10.4135/97814739984066 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

You can download chapters as pdf files.

In addition, we will read a variety of academic and journalistic accounts of social media in everyday life. These readings are listed on ICON as PDFs or as links. You are expected to complete readings during the week they are assigned.

Electronic Communication
As per university policy, you are responsible for all official correspondences sent to your @uiowa.edu email. Please check regularly for emails from me and your TAs. ICON announcements and discussion boards
will also be used as the official communication medium for this class. You will need to check regularly and keep up to date with course changes and developments. You will need to submit ICON for submission of assignments. Assignments should be submitted and will be accepted as Microsoft Word documents only. We will not accept assignments via e-mail.

If you need to get in touch with by e-mail send it directly to me at sujatha-sosale@uiowa.edu, and not through ICON.

Discussion Sections
Discussion sections meet weekly at your scheduled time. In section, you will explore course concepts, work on in-class exercises, and discuss examples related to the weekly topics. You are encouraged to bring a computing device (e.g. laptop, tablet, smart phone, etc.) to discussion section. You will be graded on your attendance as well as participation in discussion section.

Attendance Policy
Excused absences will be granted only if (a) you are missing class for a documented illness, mandatory religious obligation, or University-sponsored activity, (b) you email your professor and your TA prior to the start of the class period you are missing, AND (c) you provide official documentation within one week of the absence. In your email, include your section number, date of absence, and reason for absence.

Missed Class
If you miss class, it is your responsibility to learn what was covered that day and acquire notes from your fellow classmates. Please do not send the following emails to your instructor or TA:
1. “What did I miss?”
2. “Did I miss anything important?”
The answer to #1 is “Lots,” and the answer to #2 is “Yes.” We are happy to discuss course content during office hours, but we cannot cover the material with the same amount of detail as we can during lecture and discussion section.

Assignments / Grading

Professional Branding Assignment – 50 points
- For this assignment, you will assess your online brand and create a brand management strategy for a professional brand that would position you well for your ideal post-graduation job. You will create a professional profile on LinkedIn (or another professional social networking site) and write a 500- to 750-word paper that discusses your brand audit, your ideal post-graduation job, and your brand management strategy.
- This assignment will be discussed in greater detail in lecture and discussion section.
- Assigned Week 3; Due Week 5

Case Study Paper – 75 points
- For this assignment, you will take a key concept identified during the first five weeks of the semester and apply it to a contemporary issue or event in the news. You will write a 750- to 1000-word paper that demonstrates a clear understanding of the concept and a thoughtful and engaging application of the concept to your case.
- This assignment will be discussed in greater detail in lecture and discussion section.
- Assigned Week 7; Due Week 9

Social Media Campaign Critique – 75 points
- For this assignment, you will select a social media campaign and analyze it using key principles of social media marketing discussed in class. You will write a 750- to 1000-word paper that includes a description of the campaign and an assessment of its successes and failures.
This assignment will be discussed in greater detail in lecture and discussion section.

Assigned Week 12; Due Week 14

Exam #1 (week 6) – 75 points
- Covers weeks 1–5, including material from lecture, readings, and discussion section.

Exam #2 (week 11) – 75 points
- Covers weeks 7–10, including material from lecture, readings, and discussion section.

Exam #3 (finals week) – 75 points
- Cover weeks 12–15, including material from lecture, readings, and discussion section.
- Note: Exam #3 will be held during our assigned final exam period. The date and time for Exam #3 will be announced by the Registrar early in the semester. Do not make end-of-the-semester travel plans until the final exam schedule is made public.

Attendance and Participation – 50 points
- Every student gets one “grace” absence from discussion section. Each additional unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5-point deduction from your Participation and Attendance grade. For example, 3 unexcused absences from discussion section will result in a maximum Attendance and Participation grade of 40/50. See attendance policy below.
- Your participation grade will reflect our assessment of your preparedness, cooperation, and contribution. While attendance means “showing up,” preparedness means completing the assigned readings and tasks on time, cooperation means working well with others, and contribution means adding value to class discussions and activities.

Instant Reaction Papers – 25 points
- Throughout the semester, you will be asked to write down your immediate reactions to topics and/or examples discussed in lecture and discussion. You will be given sufficient time to write your instant reaction papers.
- There will be a total of 6 instant reaction papers (5 points each) throughout the semester. We will drop your lowest scoring paper. Instant reaction papers will not be announced in advance and cannot be made up. Instant reaction papers are due by the end of the class period.
- You are welcome to use laptops, tablets, or other computing devices to write your instant reaction papers and upload them directly to ICON. If you prefer, we will supply paper for this assignment, and you can write your IRP and submit it to your TA.

Total Points = 500

Helpful Resources
- Writing Center: http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/
- Speaking Center: http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/for-students/speaking-center
- Tutor Iowa: http://tutor.uiowa.edu/

Grading Scale: Your final grade will be determined by the total number of points earned during the semester.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>485-500 pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>465-484</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>450-464</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>435-449</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>415-434</td>
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<td>B-</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>385-399</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>300-314</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>299 and below</td>
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Grade Inquiries
If you have questions or concerns about a grade, please speak with your TA in person during your TA’s office hours. If you feel like the situation has not been resolved after this conversation, please see me during my office hours to discuss the situation and grade. These conversations will not happen over email. You must contact us within one week of receiving your grade.

Late Policy
Assignments that are submitted late will face a 10 percent penalty per day late, beginning at the exact due date/time and including weekends and holidays. For example, an assignment that would have received a 93% if it were turned in on time will receive a 83% if submitted ten minutes late, 73% if submitted two days late, and so on.

Extra Credit
Although we cannot guarantee it, there may be limited extra credit opportunities during the semester. Extra credit will be offered for participation in approved research projects or for attendance at approved events. Students will be notified of these opportunities via email. You should not anticipate that the amount of extra credit offered will be great enough to make a significant impact on your final grade.

Academic Misconduct
Students are not allowed to collaborate with each other on course assignments and exams. Do not share your work with others or ask others to see their completed assignments – both are considered academic misconduct. If you need assistance on your work, please meet with your TA or course instructor. Clear evidence of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade for the assignment/exam and possibly the course. Per college policy, we are required to report academic misconduct the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

According to the University of Iowa Academic Policies, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Using direct quotations without quotation marks and/or without crediting the source
- Paraphrasing information and ideas from sources without crediting the source
- Failing to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research
- Downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation
- Submitting material created/written by someone else as one’s own, including purchased papers, artistic works, photography, and electronic media.

In short, plagiarism occurs whenever someone else’s work or idea is presented as your own. Students are responsible for understanding this policy. If you have questions, please ask your TA or professor for clarification.
**Schedule**

*Due to the contemporary nature of the subject matter, the schedule is subject to change. Changes to topics and readings will be noted in lecture and on ICON.*

**Week 1**

**Tuesday (8/21): Course Overview**
Reading: Slate article Power Tweeting

**Thursday (8/23): Defining Social Media**
Reading: boyd, *It's Complicated*, Introduction

**Week 2**

**Tuesday (8/28): History**

**Thursday (8/30): Literacy**
Reading: boyd, *It's Complicated*, Chapter 7: Literacy

**Week 3**

**Tuesday (9/4): Identity**
Reading: boyd, *It's Complicated*, Chapter 1: Identity

**Thursday (9/6): Personal Branding**
Readings:
Christina DesMarais. (2017, January 16). Why You Need a Personal Brand and How to Build It on Social Media.” *Inc.com*

**Assigned:** Professional Branding Assignment

**Week 4**

**Tuesday (9/11): Community**
Reading: Baym. *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, Chapter 4

**Thursday (9/13): Networks**

**Week 5**

**Tuesday (9/18): Privacy**
Reading: boyd, *It's Complicated*, Chapter 2: Privacy

**Thursday (9/20): Surveillance**
**Reading:** Privacy and Surveillance (Chapter 25 from *Sage Handbook of Social Media*)

**Due:** Professional Branding Assignment

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**Week 6**

**Tuesday (9/25): Exam Review**

*No reading*

**Thursday (9/27): Exam #1**

*No reading*

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**Week 7**

**Tuesday (10/2): Participatory Culture**


**Viewings:** What is participatory culture? *Audiopedia*.

Henry Jenkins. (2013, May 7). Participatory Culture (Big Thinkers Series)

**Assigned:** Case Study Paper

**Thursday (10/4): Labor and Exploitation**

**Reading:** Adam Fish and Ramesh Srinivasan. (2012). Digital labor is the new killer app. *New Media and Society*. Read Introduction and Literature review. (and Jozuka reading next page)


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**Week 8**

**Tuesday (10/9): Globalization**

**Reading:** Digital globalization: The new era of global flows. *McKinsey Global Institute*

**Reading:** Alfred Hermida. (2014). *#TellEveryone: Why We Share & Why It Matters*, Chapter 4

**Thursday (10/11): Globalization II TBA**

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**Week 9**

**Tuesday (10/16): Inequality**

Readings: Reading: boyd, ch. 6 Inequality


**Thursday (10/18): Gender**

Readings: Does Gender Matter on Social Media?

Hope in a Hashtag

**Due:** Case Study Paper
Week 10
Tuesday (10/23): Addiction to social media
   Reading: boyd, It's Complicated, Ch. 3: Addiction

Thursday (10/25): Cyberbullying
   Reading: boyd, It's Complicated, Chapter 5: Bullying

Week 11
Tuesday (10/30): Exam Review

Thursday (11/1): Exam #2
   No reading

No discussion section this week

Week 12
Tuesday (11/6): Social Media Marketing
   Social Media Marketing (chapter 26 in Sage Handbook of Social Media)
   Assigned: Social Media Campaign Critique

Thursday (11/8): Social Media Marketing
   Guest lecture

Week 13
Tuesday (11/13): Consuming News
   Reading: Hermida, Social Media and Journalism (chapter 27 in Sage Handbook of Social Media)

Thursday (11/15): Producing News

Happy Thanksgiving – no classes this week

Week 14
Tuesday (11/27): Politics and Social Media Use
   Reading: Politics 2.0 (chapter 29 in Sage Handbook of Social Media)

Thursday (11/29): Campaigns and Social Media
Due: Social Media Campaign Critique

**Week 15**

**Tuesday (12/4): Futures**
Reading: Kevin Kelly (2016, June 6). “The Internet Is Still at the Beginning of Its Beginning,” Huffington Post

**Thursday (12/6): Exam Review & Course Evaluations**
*No reading*

**Final Exam**
Date to be announced by the Registrar
Teaching Policies & Resources — Syllabus Insert

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other policies. These policies vary by college (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook).

Electronic Communication
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to their UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student should then discuss accommodations with the course instructor (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/).

Nondiscrimination in the Classroom
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity at diversity@uiowa.edu or diversity.uiowa.edu.

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College’s Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final exam schedule for each semester is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this final exam information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals (https://clas.uiowa.edu/faculty/teaching-policies-resources-examination-policies/).

Making a Complaint
Students with a complaint should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the departmental executive officer (DEO), also known as the Chair. Students may then bring the concern to CLAS (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, definitions, and the full University policy, see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.