

CMN174: Social Media

Course Information

Instructor: Professor Cindy Shen
Class location: Wellman 126
Time: MW 4:10 – 6:00 pm
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Office Location: KERR 363
Office Hours: Mondays 2 - 3 pm & by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Grace Benefield
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Office Location: KERR 352
Office Hours: Tuesdays 9 - 10 am & by appointment

Email is the best way to reach us. Please begin your email subject heading with “**CMN174**” to ensure our prompt attention. Additional course readings, assignments and updated course schedule will be posted on SmartSite.

Course Description

This course offers an overview of the social media landscape. We apply theories of communication to the study and design of social media. General concepts and topics include motivations for membership, participation, virality, networks, social-technical capital, and privacy. Social media Sites in various contexts such as relationship maintenance, activism, and collaboration will also be examined. The objective is to provide students with the knowledge, critical thinking ability, and practical skills they will need to effectively produce, consume and assess the potential cognitive, social, and political impact of social media.

Required Texts

- The Social Media Reader, ed. Mandiberg (2012). ISBN: 9780814764060.
- Additional course readings will be posted to SmartSite.

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation (10%)

Class sessions will involve intensive discussions as well as individual and group activities. I expect you to come to every class prepared and ready to discuss critically about the assigned readings and social media sites. Participation in the form of discussion, individual and group activities will be reflected in your grade. Our impression will also modify this score. In addition, quizzes will be given during some classes. They will not be graded, but the questions may appear in mid-term and final exams.

Site review assignments (10%)

During most lectures, we will review a few social media sites together. You are required to be familiar with *all sites* listed in the syllabus. Typically that means you will create an account (if you do not have one already), spend some time on the site, explore the mechanisms of interaction and observe the social dynamics on the site. These social media sites are an integral part of the class, and will be reflected in midterm and final exams.

- There are **7 weekly site review assignments** and you are required to complete **5 out of 7 (2% each)**. For each assignment, it asks you to pick one social media site from a few listed sites (sites scheduled for next week) and complete a site review worksheet (see SmartSite Assignment). **Site review assignments are due at 11:59pm on each Sunday, starting on April 3rd.**

- In addition, students can also sign up to deliver a **site review presentation** (up to 10 minutes) on a social media site in class once during the quarter. The presenter is required to participate on the site for a substantial amount of time and essentially become an “expert” on this site and be able to answer questions. Take careful notes on your experiences every time you connect and become very familiar with its **purpose, history, user roles, leadership, code of conduct and social structure**. Although the presenter only reviews one site, they are encouraged to contextualize the reviewed site within other sites in the same genre. The site review presentations will serve as a starting point for class discussion. The presentation is optional and it **counts as two site review assignments**. Therefore, if you choose to complete one presentation, you only need to finish 3 site review assignments instead of 5, to get the full score (10%).

Exams (40% and 40%)

There will be one mid-term exam and one final exam. The format will be multiple choice questions. Exams will cover information in 1) lectures, 2) sites reviewed, and 3) readings. I will provide a study guide before each exam. The final exam is cumulative. I do not give makeup exams except in cases of documented illness or family crisis **with prior notice**. So you should contact me **before** missing an exam in such circumstances. Exams will be closed book and closed notes, and use of electronic devices during examinations is not allowed.

Extra credit (up to 3%)

Up to 3 points of extra credit may be earned by participating in research conducted by faculty or graduate students at Communication and other departments. Since I typically do not receive the extra credit list from the researcher until very late in the quarter, I cannot guarantee that extra credit opportunities will be available.

This course uses the following cut-off points as the minimum for each letter grade:

A 93%	A- 90%	B+ 87%	B 83%	B- 80%	C+ 77%
C 73%	C- 70%	D+ 67%	D 63%	D-60%	F under 60%

Course Policies

- **Missing class.** If you missed a class, this is what you should do: catch up with your readings, get the lecture outlines from the course website, borrow detailed notes from somebody else in the class, and come to us if you have specific questions about the materials.
- **Equal treatment.** A principle of equal treatment of all students will be a fundamental guide I use in responding to requests for special consideration. No student will be given an opportunity to improve a grade that is not made available to all members of the class. The policy applies to requests for special treatment both before and after the course is completed. Examples of *unacceptable* opportunities for an individual include “extra credit” work such as retaking an exam, or an extension of time on an assignment. However, this policy is not intended to exclude reasonable accommodation of verified student disability. If you have a documented disability or educational need, please let us know and we will try to provide appropriate accommodation.
- **Plagiarism.** You’re expected to know and follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (<http://sja.ucdavis.edu>). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University regulations.
- **Professionalism.** Students are expected to be professional in terms of the quality of submitted assignments, the quality of the communicative interaction with classmates and the instructors, and general conduct. Based on my past experiences, I think setting the following ground rules is necessary:
 - Arrive on time, and stay until class is dismissed.
 - Avoid disruptive behavior during the class such as chatting, snoring, etc.
 - Turn off cell phones or set in silent mode.
 - If you must leave early, leave quietly by a back door if possible.

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings and Sites (To be completed before each class)
3/28	Introduction	
3/30	Are social media making us stupid?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rheingold, Chapter 1
4/4	Participation power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rheingold, Chapter 3 <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wikipedia (Find one article of interest and learn about the major points of discussion on the “talk” page. Contribute at least 100 words to this article and follow closely the development of this article, especially your edits. Also check out the Village Pump) ▪ Daviswiki.org
4/6	Crap detection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rheingold, Chapter 2 <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facebook ▪ Reddit (and subreddits, such as News and the UC Davis subreddit) ▪ Quora
4/11	New media, old media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Baym, N., 2010. Personal Connections in the Digital Age. Chapter 2. “Making new media make sense.” <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patientslikeme ▪ MyFitnessPal
4/13	Social structures online and offline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oldenburg, R. (1997). <i>The great good place: Cafés, coffee shops, community centers, beauty parlors, general stores, bars, hangouts, and how they get you through the day.</i> Chapter 2 <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meetup.com ▪ SeeClickFix ▪ Craigslist ▪ Nextdoor
4/18	Social Networks I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gladwell, M. (1999). Six Degrees of Lois Weisberg. link
4/20	Social networks II Midterm Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rheingold, Chapter 5
4/25	Midterm	
4/27	Social media for interpersonal relationships I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ellison, N. B. & boyd, d. (2013). Sociality through Social Network Sites. In Dutton, W. H. (Ed.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies.</i> (SS) <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Twitter ▪ Pinterest ▪ LinkedIn

5/2	Social media for interpersonal relationships II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 78, 1360-1380. link <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yelp ▪ Foursquare ▪ YikYak
5/4	Why do people participate in social media?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 2 ▪ Daniel Pink TED talk <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ instagram ▪ DeviantArt ▪ imgur
5/9	Participation and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kraut & Resnick, Chapter 3 <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tumblr ▪ Medium ▪ Twitch
5/11	Memes and virality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Social Media Reader, Chapter 9 ▪ Jenkins, et al. "Introduction: Why Media Spreads," in <i>Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture</i>. pp. 1-46. (SS) <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Youtube ▪ Vine
5/16	Social media and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Social Media Reader, Chapters 2, 5 and 16 <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encyclopedia of Life ▪ Amazon Mechanical Turk (Please finish at least two tasks.) ▪ Github
5/18	Social media and activism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gladwell (2010) <i>Small Change: Why The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted</i>. link <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change.org ▪ Huffington Post
5/23	Social media in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield (2013). Enterprise Social Media: Definition, History, and Prospects for the Study of Social Technologies in Organizations. <i>Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication</i>. link <p>Sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sephora Online Community ▪ Home Depot Online Community

5/25	Privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Grossman (2016) Inside Apple CEO Tim Cook's Fight With the FBI. link Sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Whatsapp▪ SnapChat▪ WeChat
5/30	Memorial Day	No class
6/1	Final Q&A	
6/7	Final Exam at 6pm	
