

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 481 L01

**Advanced Topics in New Media and Society -
Understanding Social Media**

Fall 2016

Mon. September 12 – Mon. December 5 (excluding Oct. 10)

Lectures: M 12:00-14:45

Instructor: Dr. Rhon Teruelle
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*“I'm in the 7th grade. I'm 13. I'm not a cheerleader. I'm not the president of the student body. Or captain of the debate team. I'm not the prettiest girl in my class. I'm not the most popular girl in my class. I'm just a kid. I'm a little shy. And it's really hard in this school to impress people enough to be your friend if you're not any of those things. But I go on these really great vacations with my parents between Christmas and New Year's every year. And I take pictures of places we go. And I write about those places. And I post this on my Xanga. Because I think if kids in school read what I have to say and how I say it, they'll want to be my friend.” –
Vivien, 13, to Parry Aftab during a “Teen Angels” meeting*

from danah boyd's article *Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Publics in Teenage Social Life

Course Description

Examines the nature, origins and social implications of new media with a focus on the Internet. Evolving forms of interpersonal, group and public communication based on the Internet will be assessed in terms of the role they play in identity formation, cultural integration, learning, political participation, commerce and work.

As illustrated by the above epigraph, danah boyd highlights the perceived importance of social networking sites/social media for this particular 7th grader. Many others argue that social media is now so ubiquitous that it has most definitely become ingrained into the fabric of our everyday lives. As a society, we are continually online and are willing participants in social media. Moreso, we accept that having the right to negotiate with social media involves a transaction which includes sharing our personal information; a transaction that we enter into with little trepidation. Why? This course examines the nature, origins, and social implications of social media. We will also explore the social media landscape by engaging with features of critical

communication such as identity, race, work, and political participation as a way to interrogate social media.

Objectives of the Course

This course will:

- provide students with a critical and theoretical vocabulary related to social media;
- introduce a range of theoretical perspectives on social media at a senior level with a primary emphasis on how these are informed by a variety of social features;
- encourage reflection on the ways in which social media can be more effectively used by advocates for social change;
- promote critical thinking, reading, and writing;
- encourage development of advanced critical media analysis;
- allow opportunities to practice oral presentation skills;
- foster skills in analysis and synthesis;
- promote self-reflection and analysis, as well as expanded cultural knowledge;
- provide opportunities to practice and develop written and oral language skills;
- encourage the development of a pedagogical community through group work and discussion;
- develop advanced research skills in the production of a paper on a topic related to the course.

Textbooks and Readings

There is no required text for this course. Instead, all of the weekly readings will be available through *Desire2Learn*.

Tip: Students should print out **all** materials at the outset of the class to ensure their availability throughout the term. It is advisable to read all materials in hard-copy form. Why? Check out: Jabr, Ferris. 2014. "The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: Why Paper Still Beats Screens," *Scientific American*, 309(5).

Internet and electronic communication device information

The use of internet and electronic devices (laptops, cell phones etc.) during class time is allowable providing 1) the use of the electronic device is specific to the course (no games, Pokemon catching, Facebooking, Twittering, etc.) 2) the use of the electronic device does not interrupt the class nor impede student learning. All cell phones must be turned off or put on vibrate prior to the beginning of each class.

Assignments and Evaluation

Weight	Course components	Due
10%	Attendance and Participation	Ongoing
20%	Major Paper Proposal	Oct. 17
35%	Major Paper	Nov. 14
35%	Final Project and Presentation	Dec. 5

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: NO

All assignments and exams must be completed or a course grade of F may be assigned at

the discretion of the instructor.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (10%):

Ongoing Part of what we will attempt to accomplish in this class is to build an intellectual and pedagogical community. It is very difficult to do so, particularly in the context of student presentations, if people do not attend class. This is your (significantly large) incentive to make an appearance in every class, to listen attentively, and to participate in class discussions. Simply showing up for class will not earn you participation marks in this class.

Remember: Being part of an intellectual community requires that you attend class regularly, read required readings in advance and with care, and involve yourself in discussions in ways that will help you and other students to learn. It means being prepared for each and every class and being respectful and attentive to others.

MAJOR PAPER PROPOSAL (20%):

Due: October 17, 2016, in class. A proposal of no more than three pages outlining the research you will pursue for your major project. You must include a paragraph including the following: 1. a clear outline of your topic and its parameters; 2. a clear statement regarding how your topic relates to the overarching theme or themes of this course; 3. questions you will explore in this research; 4. a general statement regarding why you have selected this topic; 5. any questions you have about the topic that you would like input for, including suggestions for further reading, or any other areas you would like me to help you problem-solve; 6. a preliminary annotation containing at least 8 sources. This assignment should be submitted in the form of a hard copy in class on the date it is due.

MAJOR PAPER (35%):

Due: November 14, 2016, in class. This will take the form of a formal essay ten (10) to (12) pages in length with a bibliography containing a minimum of ten (10) sources from scholarly books or journals. If you choose to cite online sources (apart from academic, peer-reviewed e-journals), these must be in addition to the ten (10) text-based sources. You will be expected to choose your own topic. Papers may be as creative as you wish, provided they address the issues raised in this course. I know that you will bring diverse experiences and perspectives to this class and I am prepared to entertain any ideas you may have. Start thinking early about what topic you would like to explore. Each student should come see me during office hours at some stage in the term in order to discuss projects. This is a way of ensuring that you are on the right track. I can also help you problem-solve, to carve out a project that is neither too small nor too large, and to find resources connected to the work you wish to pursue. I can also help you to locate a topic that is appropriate to a fourth year course in Communication Studies. Papers must be submitted to me in the form of a hard copy on the date that it is due.

PRESENTATION (35%):

Due: December 5, 2016, in class. Each student will be expected to give a presentation as part of a group. There are to be no more than FOUR individuals per group! You will be required to present orally on a film or documentary of your choice that relates to new media and/or communication technology. Illuminate your work with critical insights gained from the readings, from your preparation for your major project, from other courses, or even from your own cultural consumption. Each presentation will be a maximum of 10 minutes in length and conclude in a way that opens a 5 minute discussion for the class (times are subject to change depending on the

number of groups). Presenters should be prepared to lead the discussion that follows. Grades will be based on content, presentation style, and discussion.

Tips: Give the kind of presentation to which you would like to listen. You may be as creative as you wish, provided you fulfil the requirements of this assignment. However, there must be a "resource" aspect to each presentation, meaning that you must bring in examples to illustrate and help explain key concepts or ideas. The format of the presentation beyond this will be up to you. *Every student should come see me for guidance in the preparation of the presentation. Come to my office hours or make an appointment.*

GROUND RULES:

I am more than willing to entertain questions or concerns during class, and will also be available to provide individual guidance and advice during my office hours. If you need to meet with me outside my office hours, you must set up an appointment. It is best to do so by email. Be sure to identify the course (COMS481) in the subject area of your message.

Given the nature of this course, I would encourage you to consider going "old school" with your notes for this course. This class will be interactive and discussion driven, therefore you need to pay attention differently than in most of your other classes as you will need to be ready and able to participate in discussion at all times. Also, since we are a small class, any off-task moments will be especially disruptive.

A great deal of research has been conducted on how electronic devices have affected learning.

Reasons why taking hand-written notes is tied to improved learning may be found in the following articles:

Meyer, Robinson. 2014. "To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand," The Atlantic, May 1. < <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>>Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Association for Psychological Science. 2014. "To Remember a Lecture Better, Take Notes by Hand." May 22. < <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand.html>>Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Where does the policy come from? When it boils down to it, this policy is derived from a strong desire to promote your learning and the learning of the students around you. You may think that your own use of electronic devices doesn't distract you, and it may well not, but it **does** distract others even when you think it doesn't, as studies have shown:

Montgomery, Marc. 2013. "New Study Shows Computers in Class Distract Both Users and Non-Users," Radio Canada International, August 20. < <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2013/08/20/new-study-shows-computers-in-class-distract-both-users-and-non-users/>>. Accessed: August 28, 2015.

Sana, Faria, Weston, Tina, and Cepeda, Nicholas J. 2012. "Laptop multitasking hinders classroom learning for both users and nearby peers," Computers and Education, 62: 24- 31.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your tutor or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320;

a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

You are responsible for ensuring that you attend your presentation. If you do not present with your group and do not have supporting documentation from a physician for your absence, you will be assigned a zero (0) for this section of your course. You may not change your presentation topic after you have signed up.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. All assignments will be graded using percentages which will then be converted into letter grades.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* **
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must

be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people’s words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents

<p>STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	<p>https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/</p> <p>http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds</p>
<p>SU WELLNESS CENTRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	<p>403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health</p> <p>403-266-HELP (4357)</p> <p>http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus</p> <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Week 1. Introduction to the course

September 12

Introduction, course framework, expectations, ground rules, syllabus and assignments, definitions, etc.

Week 2. Defining social media.

September 19

What is social media? Why has social media become so important to us?

Required reading:

Plato's Cave Allegory. **Available online.** Retrieved from:

<https://faculty.washington.edu/smcohen/320/cave.htm>

Bell, V. (2010). Don't Touch That Dial: A history of media technology scares, from the printing press to Facebook. **Available online.** Retrieved from:

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2010/02/dont_touch_that_dial.html

boyd, d. and Ellison, N. (2007) Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, 13(1): 210-230

boyd, d. (2007) Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life. *MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning – Youth, Identity, and Digital Media Volume* (ed. David Buckingham). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www.danah.org/papers/WhyYouthHeart.pdf>

Week 3. The digital divide and net neutrality

September 26

Required reading:

van Dijck, J. A. G. M. (2006). Digital divide research, achievements, and shortcomings. *Poetics*, 34, (4): 221-235.

Barratt, N. & Shade, L. R. (2007). Net Neutrality: Telecom Policy and the Public Interest, *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 32(2): 295-305.

Videos: Molinari, A. – Bridging the Digital Divide. TEDx San Miguel de Allende.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kaxCRnZ_CLg

Daniel, B. – The Internet of Civil Rights. TEDx Philadelphia.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3X4I3S-O70>

Week 4. Communities and social media.

October 3

Video: Wesch, M. - An Anthropological Introduction to YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPAO-IZ4_hU

Thanksgiving: October 10th – no class.

Week 5. Identity formation and social media.

October 17 – Due in class: MAJOR PAPER PROPOSAL (20%)

Required reading:

Cover, R. (2012). Performing and undoing identity online: Social networking, identity theories and the incompatibility of online profiles and friendship regimes. *Convergence*, 18(2): 177-193.

Rambe, P. (2013). Converged social media: Identity management and engagement on Facebook Mobile and blogs. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 29(3): 315-336.

Hunt, E. (2015, November 3). Essena O’Neill quits Instagram claiming social media “is not real life.” *The Guardian*. **Available online.** Retrieved from:
<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/03/instagram-star-essena-oneill-quits-2d-life-to-reveal-true-story-behind-images>

Week 6. Race and social media.

October 24

Required reading:

Len-Ríos, M. et al. (2015). Image repair campaign strategies addressing race: Paula Deen, social media, and defiance. *International Journal of Strategic Communication*, 9(2): 148-165.

Noble, S. U. (2014, Spring). Teaching Trayvon: race, media, and the politics of spectacle. *The Black Scholar*, 44(1): 12-29.

Cisneros, J. D. & Nakayama, T. K. (2015). New Media, Old Racisms: Twitter, Miss America, and the cultural logics of race. *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication*, 8(2): 108-127.

Week 7. Gender and social media.

October 31

Required reading:

Billings, A. C. et al. (2015). The art of coming out: Traditional and social media frames surrounding the NBA's Jason Collins. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 92(1): 142-160.

Hasinoff, A. A. (2012). Sexting as media production: Rethinking social media and sexuality. *New Media & Society*, 15(4): 449-465.

Video: How girls act on social media. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UEl3ept-yAY>

Girls on social media. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-uOb4xKhp0>

The dangers of social media-girls. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jMhMVEjEQg>

The dangers of social media-boys. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4sHoDW8QU4>

Week 8. Political economy of social media.

November 7

Required reading:

Mansell, R. (2004). Political economy, power and new media. *New Media & Society*, 6(1): 96-105.

Fuchs, C. (2012). The political economy of privacy on Facebook. *Television & New Media*, 13(2): 139-159.

Marshall, C. C. and Shipman, F. M. (2011). Social media ownership: Using Twitter as a window

onto current attitudes and beliefs. *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on human factors in computing systems*. Pp. 1081-1090.

Week 9. Work and social media.

November 14 – Due in class: MAJOR PAPER (35%)

Lai, S. L. (2010). Social commerce – E-commerce in social media context. Retrieved from <http://www.waset.org/publications/2123>

Hajli, M. N. (2014). A study on the impact of social media on consumers. *International Journal of Market Research*, 56(3): 387-404.

Yan, J. (2011). Social media in branding: Fulfilling a need. *Journal of Brand Management*, 18(9): 688-696.

Week 10. Internet campaigns and social media.

November 21

KONY, the Obama Campaign, and the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict.

Required reading:

Bal, A. S., Archer-Brown, C., Robson, K. & Hall, D. E. (2013). Do good, goes bad, gets ugly: Kony 2012. *Journal of Public Affairs*, 13(2): 202-208.

Cogburn, D. L. & Espinoza-Vasquez, F. (2011). From networked nominee to networked nation: Examining the impact of Web 2.0 and social media on political participation and civic engagement in the 2008 Obama campaign. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 10(1-2), 189-213.

Mor, Y., Yiftach, R. and Maoz, I. “Likes” for peace: Can Facebook promote dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict? *Media and Communication*, 4(1): 15-26.

Videos:

IDF Forces in combat action versus Hamas @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-hpCEdG_5Q

Hannity takes on Cornel West over Gaza conflict @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPEI4JLRYKk>

Kids playing on the beach – TYT - @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q71R9jW6oR8>

Week 11. Youth-led uprisings and the use of social media.

November 28

Required reading:

Ezbawy, Y. A. (2011). The role of the youth's new protest movements in the January 25th revolution. *IDS Bulletin*, 43(1), 26-36.

Giroux, H. (2013). The Quebec student protest movement in the age of neoliberal terror. *Social Identities*, 19(5): 515-535.

Jeppesen, S. (2012). Livestreaming on CUTV: 'Emboldened riot culture' of Student Strike. *Wi: Journal of mobile media (Special Issue)*, 6(2): 16.

Newspaper Article:

Gil, N. (2014, November 17). Robbed of their futures: how austerity cuts hit young people hardest. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/nov/17/robbed-of-their-futures-how-austerity-cuts-hit-young-people-hardest>.

Movie:

Bertolino, S. & Samson, H. (Directors), & Pageau, L. (Producer). (2013). *Carré rouge sur fond noir* [Red square on black board]. [Motion picture]. Canada: Productions Multi-Monde.

Week 12. Presentations.

December 5 – Due in class: PRESENTATION (35%)

All students will present in-class on this day.