Course Overview:
This seminar course in social media is driven by in-class discussion. The readings are primarily oriented to theory, but I have also included several texts that lean toward application for practitioners. The first few weeks focus on historical context and include a few "classic" texts that help situate our conversations. Each of you will serve as moderator for part of one class period, and that, along with your attendance, participation, and reading responses, constitutes half of your grade.

The other half of your grade is either a research paper that you could submit to an academic conference or a social media project for a local client: Your choice. That is intended to be a semester-long endeavor, and I've devoted a couple class periods for each of you to provide updates and workshop ideas with the rest of the group.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, you should be able to:
1. Develop a better understanding of the historical context of social media;
2. Explain and apply a range of theoretical and methodological perspectives to studying issues related to social media;
3. Create a social media strategy for a client based on best practices;
4. Write a manuscript suitable for presentation at an academic conference.

Readings:
All readings are available online via D2L.

Recommended Texts:
There are no required texts, but you may find the following two books useful in crafting your final paper or project. For those completing a research paper, The Craft of Research is an update on a classic textbook for conducting research and crafting an academic paper. For those completing a client project, The New Rules text provides a nice overview of best practices. Both texts may be found online for around $15.


**Late Work**
Work submitted after the deadline has passed receives a 20 percent deduction. An additional 5 percent is deducted for each 24-hour period that elapses beyond that.

**Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**
You are expected to do original work. Recycling work you have previously done is known as self-plagiarism. When you use information or images that you did not create, you need to indicate that.

Section 14.03 of the UWSP code defines academic misconduct as occurring when a student takes any of the following actions:
- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forgés or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

The potential consequences of academic misconduct include failing the class, being placed on disciplinary probation, being suspended, or being expelled from UWSP.

The stakes are far too high to take risks in this area. Let me know if you need clarification.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

**Attendance: 10%**
Regular attendance in class is worth 10% of your final grade. Bring readings and/or your analyses to class and be prepared to discuss them in detail.

**Reading Responses & Participation: 20%**
The readings for each class period offer an opportunity for critical reflection. Class discussion may not address issues or concepts you initially find relevant. Between your reading response and participation in discussion, I hope to have a good idea of your thoughts each week. These responses are to be 1-2 pages in
length, single-spaced, and turned in at the end of each class. When applicable, your response should also include an answer to one of the questions posed by the person leading class discussion that week.

**Guiding Discussion: 20%**
Each person is responsible for guiding class discussion for half of a class period during the semester. Email me with your top three choices before class begins on February 5.

To help facilitate that in-class conversation, send a list of 4-6 questions for the group to consider before we encounter the readings for the week. Ideally this will be done several days in advance, but it must be completed and sent to the group at least 48 hours before class begins (so by 5pm Saturday).

**Final Paper/Project and Presentation: 50%**
*(Proposal: 10%, Final Paper/Project 25%, Presentation 15%)*

You have the option of completing a research paper or a client project.

Research papers should be suitable for presentation at an academic conference, and approximately 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced.

Client projects will involve a partnership with a local business or nonprofit to enhance their online presence.

The proposal (due Feb. 26) should be between 2-4 pages in length, double-spaced. Additional details will be provided during the semester.

**Additional Resources**
The [Mary K. Croft Tutoring-Learning Center](http://www.marykcrofttutoring.com) offers assistance with writing, technology, and study skills. It is located in room 018 of the Learning Resource Center (in the basement of the library), and you can set up an appointment by stopping by or calling 715-346-3568.

Any student who anticipates they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) should contact me privately to discuss specific needs.

The [Disability and Assistive Technology Center](http://www.datc.wisc.edu) offers assistance and documentation for students with disabilities. It is located in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center. You can contact them at 715-346-3365 or via email at datctr@uwsp.edu. Students registered with the DATC may provide their Notice of
Accommodation letter (yellow forms) during office hours, via email, or after class.

The UWSP Counseling Center is available to help you deal with the stresses of college life. There are licensed mental health professionals who can help. It is located on the 3rd floor of Delzell Hall at 910 Fremont Street. Contact them at 715-346-3553, or via email at counsel@uwsp.edu.
Course Schedule

Jan. 22 - First Day: Introductions, Syllabus, TNB Viewing/Discussion

Jan. 29 - Historical Context

Feb. 5 - Situating Social Media
McLuhan, M. & Fiore, Q. (1967). The Medium is the Massage.

Feb. 12 - Meta-Analyses of Social Media Research

Feb. 19 - "The People Formerly Known as the Audience"

Feb. 26 - Homophily, Echo Chambers and Political Communication
Final Paper/Project Proposal Due


March 5 - The Parasocial Spectrum

**March 12 - Problematizing Interpersonal Communication**


**March 19 - Theory & Methodological Approaches**

*Paper/Project Update*


**March 26 - No Class / Spring Break**

**April 2 - Best Practices I**


April 9 - Best Practices II


April 16 - Readers’ Choice & Paper/Project Workshop
Each person should post a link to an article of their choice to the Discussion Board of D2L before 5pm Friday, April 13.

April 23 - Finding Balance: Unplugging

April 30 - Work Day
No official class meeting: Prepare for presentations.

May 7 - Last Day of Class
Presentations