Social Media Theory and Practice
MSCM 343
Linfield College
Spring 2017

Instructor
Kevin Curry
Director of Integrated Media
kcurry@linfield.edu
503-883-2321 (o)
503-805-6016 (cell/txt)
Twitter: @KevinCurry
Class Twitter Hashtag: #mscm343

Catalog Description
Exploration of emerging social media technologies, such as Facebook and Twitter, and their applications in journalism and public relations. Study of the history, function, economics, psychology, and sociology of social media as theorized by communication scholars. Hands-on experience in the planning and implementation of ethical and effective social media strategies for journalists and public relations practitioners. For those pursuing a bachelor degree, the course prerequisites are: INQS 125, MSCM 150, and at least sophomore standing. 4 credits.

Course Learning Outcomes
After taking this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand the historical context and origins of social media and the relationship between social media and culture.
2. Understand the relationship between theories of social networking and the development of strategic plans for professional communication.
3. Demonstrate social media literacy in terms of appropriate etiquette, voice, ethics, interaction and applications.
4. Identify and interact with other social media users for reporting, information verification and ongoing professional development.
5. Monitor trends in social media technology and usage in order to adapt your professional use accordingly.
6. Evaluate social media use by journalists and organizations.
7. Apply insights from conversation monitoring and social media analytics to develop and adapt communication strategy.
8. Create quality multimedia content for social media sites that is likely to engage selected audiences and generate sharing.

Course Materials

Web and Email
Blackboard, Twitter and email will be used communicate with you about this course. You’re expected to access all three of these resources regularly to retrieve assignments, course readings, documents and grades. You’re responsible for keeping your email inbox open for incoming messages.
Textbooks and Supplies

Other Readings
Additional readings will be assigned as links to online documents and articles.

Other Equipment
You will need to have access to a digital camera that takes decent photos. You will be posting photos to social media accounts for this class. Most recently made cell phone cameras will be fine.

Assignments and Grading
If not described below, assignments are fully explained in documents linked on Blackboard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Learning Network Assignment</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies (2): Journalism and Public Relations</td>
<td>200 (100 points x 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Tools Assignment (pair/group project)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices handout</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Live News Coverage Assignment</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written report</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Discussion Questions*</td>
<td>84 (7 points x 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Curiosity Journal*</td>
<td>48 (4 points x 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* May be adjusted at the end of the semester to reflect any changes in schedule.

Grades will be posted on Blackboard so you can monitor your progress. Final course grades will be determined according to the following percentages of points earned:
**Weekly Schedule**

Each Sunday, I will post a new module on Blackboard that outlines the required readings for the week. I will also post the Weekly Discussion Question as outlined below. Further, I will post supplemental content, like blog posts, podcasts, videos, or written lectures that provide additional information on that week's topics and should be utilized for the class discussions and your own writing.

**Curiosity Journal**

Each week during your readings, I would like you to think about questions, ideas or concepts that you are curious about exploring further. You may be interested in more information, have a question you want to explore or a specific idea or thought that was generated by the reading. Simply jot these down as you take your reading notes. Then, each week you will write about one of these 'curiosity questions' in an online journal. This is an opportunity for you to write about what you find interesting from the weekly readings. Over a few weeks, you may find yourself exploring the same question in different ways and applying each week’s readings to it. Or, you may choose to explore something new each week. The writing in your Curiosity Journal will only be visible to you and me. It will be due by the end of the day on Saturday, but you should be thinking about possible questions as you do your reading and begin your writing well in advance of the deadline. This gives you the chance to revise before the end of the week. I will post a rubric on Blackboard that further outlines how points will be given for this weekly assignment.

**Weekly Discussion Questions**

Each week, you will be asked to post a response to a question about the assigned readings on the discussion board on Blackboard. In addition, you are asked to provide substantive comments on at least three other posts from your fellow students. Your answers should draw from your own experiences and include specific ideas or concepts from the readings in a critical and analytical way. The discussion board is meant to be an interactive discussion and conversation beyond what is required is encouraged. Your initial answer is due by the end of the day on Wednesday. Your required follow-up posts to your classmates’ answers should be completed by the end of the day on Saturday. However, you should be checking in at least three times each week to see what others have said and engage in the conversation. Simply waiting until the last minute to post will not result in a high score for this weekly assignment. The goal is to create an environment where all class members are engaging with the reading and each other. As the instructor, I will also be adding thoughts and questions to the discussion each week to get you thinking more deeply about the readings or to suggest additional ways to examine the topic. I will post a rubric on Blackboard that outlines how points will be awarded along with additional thoughts on what makes a good discussion post.

**Assignment Notes**

**Blackboard:** You will be submitting all of your work for this class through Blackboard. Please be sure you are comfortable uploading files to Blackboard and using its features.

**Formatting:** Assignments should be turned in as directed in class. All written assignments should be typed double-spaced in Times 12-point font, with 1" margins on all sides of the page.
Extra credit: Extra credit assignments will be announced throughout the semester. These are not guaranteed, and will not be given to individual students at any time.

Other Course Policies

Late Work
All assignment due dates will be indicated on the Course Schedule and the weekly module. No late work will be accepted in this class. However, I am happy to talk with you in advance if you anticipate you may have difficulty completing an assignment on time. I am always inclined to assist students who demonstrate that they are proactive in planning their work. If you are having an academic or personal concern that is affecting your work in this class, please let me know. I am happy to work with students when these challenges arise.

Plagiarism
Any student found to plagiarize, fabricate or otherwise submit dishonest work will automatically receive a grade of zero for the assignment or, in extreme cases, for the course. This policy will apply regardless of the magnitude of the offense (i.e., how much is plagiarized or fabricated) or the writer’s intent (i.e., whether the offense is deliberate or a mistake). Whether plagiarism or cheating is suspected or not, sources may be consulted and Turnitin or other auditing procedures may be used to determine whether assignments are students’ own work. If you’re not sure about something you’re using in your writing, or whether/how to attribute information, always ask.

Class Expectations
This class will be conducted in an atmosphere of respect and decorum. Examining the media often takes us into challenging and controversial areas. The news covers difficult situations, and entertainment includes violence, sex, and other dramatic situations. Social media confronts us with issues like pornography, obscenity, and censorship. The potential for difficult discussion is real. Such is the nature of studying the media. Overall, I expect your respectful, thoughtful engagement with the material, your instructor and other students.

Grade Appeals
Grade appeals will not be considered until 24 hours after the return of the graded assignment. Appeals of grades on assignments will be considered only within a one-week period following the return of that particular assignment. Students must email a memorandum specifying which portion of the assignment should be re-examined and why.

Email
I am happy to answer brief questions via email. When you email, please identify yourself clearly and write in a professional style. (This article has some good tips on how to email your professors.) I rarely check email after 5 p.m. You may send email at any time of day, but please be aware of the schedule restrictions. Lengthy questions requiring detailed replies may be better addressed through conversation via phone. Please consider this and set-up a phone meeting.

Course Online Interaction
Blackboard and a range of online platforms will be used to facilitate the online class activity. You will be able to comment on class materials and discuss them with the instructor and with other students. Professional, thoughtful engagement with the
materials and each other is expected; humor in good taste is welcomed, but these media are intended for educational purposes. Much of your online activity will be open to the public in this class, unlike Blackboard, so be aware that your activities may be seen by others. Please behave professionally and remember to safeguard your personal privacy. I am not personally responsible for any consequences of inappropriate student activity in these media. Please help make our online activity a vital, useful part of the course by enjoying it wisely and letting us know if others are failing to do so.

**Note to Mass Communication Majors**
All Mass Communication majors must take the Senior Capstone course during their senior year. In the capstone course, you will revisit key knowledge and skills from your studies in the major and integrate them into a capstone project. You will also write a reflective paper based on your review of your collected papers and projects. If you are a Mass Communication major, you should maintain a file of the work you produce in Mass Communication courses for this purpose. In this class, the final project would be an ideal candidate for your capstone file.

**College Policies**

**Disability Statement**
Students with disabilities are protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and feel you may require academic accommodations contact Cheri White, Program Director of Learning Support Services (LSS), as early as possible to request accommodation for your disability. The timeliness of your request will allow LSS to promptly arrange the details of your support. LSS is located in Loveridge Hall, Room 24, (503-413-8219), or chwhite@linfield.edu. We also encourage students to communicate with faculty about their accommodations.

**Academic Integrity**
This course adheres to the [college policy on academic integrity](#), as published in the Linfield College Course Catalog. Additional details regarding specific course policies on plagiarism, course expectations etc. are provided above.

**Your Instructor**
Kevin Curry is currently the director of integrated media at Linfield College where he oversees the college's social media efforts, works on media relations, produces multimedia content for the web, and advises on marketing and advertising. He has worked since 1994 on communication and public relations for trade associations, small businesses, and in the political arena. In addition, he was a producer of the documentary film *The Gentleman of the Senate: Oregon’s Mark Hatfield*, which aired in 2015 on Oregon Public Broadcasting. He is also a founding partner in Relium Media, a transmedia production company, which will launch its first project - *Angel Punk* - in 2017 with a comic published by Dark Horse Comics, a novel, and a tabletop game. Kevin has a Master of Arts degree in Communication from the University of Washington, a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication and Political Science from Linfield College, and is completing his doctorate in public affairs from The Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University.