JOUR 304 Social Media and Society
Wintermester 2019

Number of Credits

3

Instructor

Dr. Paromita Pain

Catalog Description

This course examines applications and implications of social media. First, students will read literatures related with social media. With the help of reading materials, social psychological perspectives of social media will be primarily examined. The objectives of learning the social psychological views will focus on the intersections between individual's psychological status and social media as a medium connecting individuals. For example, communication environments provided to social media users, e.g., pseudonymous communication environment, mis-trustee/trustee environment presented to social media users, person to person networked environment, various types of social order environment, and consequential psychological status induced by such environments, will be discussed. Perception, attitudes, and behavioral consequences on individuals will be primary discussion points, but the societal consequences of individual's behaviors, e.g., political polarization of the society or concentration of social capital, will also be discussed. Although learning about social psychological perspectives on social media is the primary focus of the class, the subject of discussions and readings are not limited to those perspectives. Because of the evolving nature of social media in contemporary society, new materials will be added to supplement current topical discourses of the social media. The new material will encourage students to develop their sociological imaginations related to social media. In sum, students are expected to develop their own theoretical and practical perspectives on social media during the course.

Required Textbooks/Materials

You will be able to access course resources through UNR Canvas Systems. Materials are located under class Canvas Discussions Section.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to

- think about social media from diverse perspectives after taking this class. They will be able to articulate the importance of social media systems' anonymity/pseudonymity implementations, intricacies of maintaining order for amenable discussion environment, legal implications of writing reviews, cultural sensitivity of providing comments, and others.
- learn about how to synthesize social media theories and provide evidence. They will lean how to apply and utilize learned theories explaining the up-to-date examples in contemporary social media.
- critically assess information provided via online search and advertising. Because they will learn how information is prioritized and filtered on search, advertising, and social media, they will become a savvy consumer and producer. For example, the class content covering the nature of human and computer-mediated-communication network will make them to be able to understand the search, advertising, and social media from a network perspective. They will be able to apply the network concepts and become better social media communicators.
- understand how to properly exercise their 1st amendment rights on social media. Because the course content covers social order and control of social media, students will learn to properly exercise their free speech rights on social media. Multiple cases related to social media libel and product review will be discussed to provide opportunities to think about social media's impact on individual's free speech rights.
- understand the impact of social media use on their community, the county, and the world. The class content covers the impact of social media discourse on society. Particularly, they will learn about discourses on the selective exposure only to agreeable ideas vs. the cross pollinations of different ideas on social media along with the implication of these two opposite views. They will be able to learn political, social, and economic implications of social media communication with the provided frameworks.

First Week of Materials/Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change:

January 2:   **Social media: Introduction**
Goal: Introduce classmates, Reviewing the discourse frameworks of social media
Outcome: Students will learn necessary theoretical frameworks to understand important issues of social media

Reading: No reading, but you will need to access the recorded lecture by the instructor Assignments: Post introduction of yourself on the class Canvas Discussion board module 1A

January 3:   **Module 1 B**
Social media: Introduction
Goal: Introduce classmates, Reviewing the discourse frameworks of social

media
Outcome: Students will learn necessary theoretical frameworks to understand important issues of social media

Reading: Kollock & Smith (1999)
Assignments: Post reading feedback on the class Canvas discussions

* When you read, think about these questions.
1. What do you think is the most important discourse about social media.
2. Why do you think social media is or is not important?
3. What kind of social media is most interesting to you?
4. What are important characteristics of social media?
5. What are differences between email and other types of online discussion groups?
6. What are important concepts related to social media that we need to discuss in this class? Why? For example, identity, honesty and deception, race, gender, social order and control, ecommerce, social media as institution, social media structure, collective action, and many more.

January 4: **Module 2 A**
Identities and anonymity online
Goal: Understand the importance of identity and anonymity online
Outcome: Identify the implications of identity settings of online communication. Reading: Turkle (web)
Assignments: Post reading feedback on the class Canvas Discussions Section

Reading points. Turkle

Module 3 A
Design online communities
Goal: Discuss social media campaign problems and solutions
Outcome: Learn about social media problems and solutions to those problems
Reading: Kollock (1998)
Assignments: Post reading feedback on the class Canvas Discussions Section

Reading points
Kollock (1998)
* Which part(s) of Kollock's recommendation building communication do you like the most? * Do you agree with Kollock's design principle? If you do, why? If not, why?
* Do popular social media follow Kollock's principle?

January 7: **Module 3 B**
Due: Term paper 1st draft

Module 4 A
Structural layers of social media
Goal: Discuss the social media related projects and think about solutions to the potential problems Outcome: Understand the structural layers of social media.
Reading: Bruns & Moe (2013)
Assignments: Post reading feedback on the class Canvas Discussions Section

Reading points
Bruns & Moe (2013)
* What are three key layers of communication on Twitter based on this reading?
* Bruns and Moe (2013) divided Twitter user layers into micro, meso and macro. Can you apply this structural layers into other social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Google plus, and others?
* Send a Tweet about this class (Create a Twitter account, if you do not have one).
* Lucasfilm's habitat promotion video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVpulhO3jyc What can you learn from the Lucasfilm's habitat video?

Course Details

Students of this class will learn to understand various topics related to social media such as identity and anonymity online, influence of online communication on real off-line world, online relationships, control mechanisms of the online community, implications on social orders of online community, roles of online communities in the open marketplace of ideas, the dilemmas of people face during their online community communication, gender identification on online communities, ecommerce, the mechanisms of recommendation and reputation online community systems, health information distribution through online communities and many more. The implementation of online community building will provide experiences in logistics of building online communities. After taking this class, students will be able to think about social media from diverse perspectives.

Grade Breakdown

The point distribution for the course is:

Assignment	Points
Reading feedback postings	100
Midterm paper proposal	100
Midterm paper	100
Final paper proposal	100
Final paper	100
Total	*500*

The percentage distribution for the course is:

Letter	Percentage
A	94–100
A-	90–93
B+	87–89
B	84–86
B-	80–83
C+	77–79
C	74–76
C-	70–73
D+	67–69
D	65–66
D-	62–64
F	below 62