COMM105S: Dynamics of Social Media
Stanford Summer Session 2021

Teaching Team

Instructor
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Teaching Assistant
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Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30-6:30pm PST (Zoom link available on Canvas)

Course Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-4:20pm PST
Lecture Delivery: Synchronous via Zoom, recordings will be made available after class. This course is taught in real-time, and students will be expected to attend virtual sessions at specific times in the week.
Grading Option: Letter or Credit/No Credit

Course Overview
Welcome! This course provides an introduction to understanding social media and its role in human behavior and society. The course will begin by discussing the factors that inform and shape the communication process. We will examine the interpersonal and psychological aspects of communication with social media, including impression formation, group dynamics, relationships, deception/trust and well-being, culminating in a final project that applies theories from social psychology and communication to modern phenomena in social media.

Learning Goals
This course is designed to invite students to consider a mainstay of modern social life through the lens of scientific inquiry. In this class, we will draw on theories and research studies from psychology, communication studies, and human-computer interaction to explain, interpret, and interrogate the dynamics of social media use. The overall goal for this class is to equip students with the theoretical and methodological tools needed to leverage their unique understanding of social media use to critically explore and discuss the social media phenomena they observe in their everyday lives.

There are multiple objectives intended for a wide variety of student backgrounds and goals including:

- Understanding how current theories and models of human behavior can explain and anticipate social dynamics with social media
- Evaluating theories critically, with an emphasis on how humans adapt to social media and use it for social purposes
- Forming an awareness of research methods that are used to study social behavior and social media
- Developing the ability to evaluate popular media accounts of the role of social media in society

**Canvas**

Canvas is where we will be doing most of our coursework. *All course information - including course readings, Zoom links, and research assignments - can be found on Canvas.*

You may need to self-enroll in the COMM105S Canvas site. Check this as soon as possible and report any problems.

**Required Readings**

Each class’s reading assignment will consist of readings from that will be posted on Canvas. *There are no required textbooks for this class.* All readings will be provided by the instructor.

See the Reading Schedule for more details.

Please note that you are expected to have finished the readings for each day *before* coming to class and to be ready to engage with the material.

**Course Structure and Student Evaluation**

Evaluation in this course is a combination of Research In the Wild Assignments, Discussion Board Reflections, milestones towards the final project, and participation. Up to 2 extra credit points may be earned “Social Media in the World” reports.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research in the Wild Assignments (x3 @ 10% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Board Reflections (x4 @ 10% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Milestones</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Project proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Paper summary</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Peer feedback</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Final presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Extra credit, up to 2% extra</td>
<td>up to 2%</td>
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**Research in the Wild Assignments**

There are three Research in the Wild Assignments that you will complete. The goal of RITW assignments is to help you apply some of the research skills we will learn about in class to real-world data. All assignments will be posted online on the Canvas. You will also be commenting on others’ assignment posts and providing constructive feedback on their assignments.
Discussion Board Reflections
Every other week there will be a Discussion Board reflection prompt. The goal of the reflections is to provide a space for you to discuss your thoughts, questions, and ideas about the topics that come up in lecture and in the readings. All prompts will be posted on the Canvas, and we will encourage students to respond to each others’ posts in addition to providing instructor feedback.

Capstone Project and Final Presentation
Over the course of the Summer Session, you will produce a Capstone Presentation that will apply the theories and concepts from class to a subject of your choice relating to social media dynamics. The goal of this project is for you to become an “expert” on a topic of your choice by combining your own analysis with relevant research, and presenting your findings to the class.

Working on this project will be broken up into four milestones. One milestone will be due every two weeks.

1) Project proposal: Your first milestone will be to identify a specific topic relating to social media dynamics that you would like to understand and explore further. We recommend that you select a specific social media community, content creator, trend, or behavior to focus on.
2) Paper summary: Your second milestone will be to find two research papers relating to the topic you are interested in. You will summarize the findings of these papers and explain how they relate to your topic.
3) Peer feedback: Your third milestone will be to provide feedback to one of your classmates on their project.
4) Final presentation: Your final milestone will be to summarize and present your topic to the class in a 5-7 minute presentation. This will take place during class time during Week 8.

Participation
Participation is vital to learning and expected in every class. We recognize that different people may feel comfortable participating in different ways. To this end, we will include diverse opportunities for participation (e.g., in-class discussions, pair-based conversations in break-out rooms, personal reflection, cold-calling, typing in the chat) and expect all students to participate fully. Please remember that a portion of your grade is from class participation so if you miss multiple classes or do not participate in the discussions, your grade will be affected.

Submitting Your Work
In this course your work will often be submitted electronically through Canvas. It is your responsibility to ensure that your work is properly submitted. You should verify that this is the case and seek support or at least let the instructors know if you’re having trouble. We will keep the Canvas calendar up to date, which is a good means to know what is due, when and how to submit.
Attendance
Class will meet during its scheduled time of 2:30PM Pacific Time via Zoom. Regular attendance for class is required as there will be substantial time devoted to discussion and breakout exercises in class, though we recognize that for some students in different time zones regular synchronous attendance will be difficult. There will be two main parts to each class: (1) lecture and (2) class breakout discussion sections. The breakouts will involve having students paired up via Zoom breakout rooms to work on a problem or concept that has been discussed in class. Upon returning from the breakout session, students will be called on to discuss their breakout observations.

Recordings
All classes will be recorded and made available on Canvas after the class.

Videos
For classes and sections the teaching team feel more comfortable when we can see faces, and we hope to make this classroom a place where everyone feels safe and comfortable using video, but we also understand these are unusual times that require us to videoconference in from widely varying situations and therefore we will never penalize you if you need to turn off your video. That said, you should expect to be called on when in class and to participate via the chat.

Grading Policies and Re-reviews:
Your course grade will be based on completion of readings, assignments, quizzes and participation in section. In completing course requirements, you are expected to abide by Stanford’s Code of Academic Integrity and Acknowledging the Work of Others.

Grades will be based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
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If you have questions or concerns about any grade you receive, then you may submit a 1 page written request for grade re-review within three days after you receive the grade. It is important to note that a grade re-review may result in a higher or lower grade as the Instructors may review your entire assignment.

Late Policy & Flexibility Options:
In general, without a submitted reason, late assignments will be penalized at 10% each day, up to a maximum of 50% off of an assignment (so a perfect assignment handed in three days late, would receive a grade of 50%).
However, this term is an extraordinary one and we recognize that many students will face challenges with getting their work done in a timely manner. We therefore have developed flexibility options: a one-time 24 hour late submission option for research in the wild assignments and a one-time 24 hour late submission option for project milestones.

1. **Research in the Wild 24 Hour Free Extension**: Students may submit one research assignment up to 24 hours late during the course of the quarter. This can be for any or no reason. Beyond this one, late assignments without prior arrangements or notification will not be accepted and will result in a zero for that assignment. If you anticipate not being able to turn an assignment in on time, you should contact your TA as early as possible.

2. **Project Milestone 24 Hour Free Extension**: Students may submit one research assignment up to 24 hours late during the course of the quarter. This can be for any or no reason.

**Getting Help or Answers to Questions**
There are many resources available for help in this course, which are listed below. You can reach out to fellow students, the TAs or the instructor. We are more than happy to help you. When you ask for help, let the person you’re asking know what you’ve already done. This makes it easier to answer your question quickly.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities that need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessible Education (OED) as soon as possible (i.e., during the first week of classes, barring extenuating circumstances that prohibit this) to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. In general and to ensure fairness to all students, the instructors will not make accommodations for disabilities without documentation from the OED office.

**Academic Integrity at Stanford University**
Students are expected to comply with University regulations regarding academic integrity. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak to the instructors before the assignment is due and/or examine the University web site. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam (e.g., copying others’ answers, providing information to others, using a crib sheet) or plagiarism of a paper (e.g., taking material from readings without citation, copying another student’s paper). Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a loss of credit for that assignment—at a minimum. Other penalties may also apply, including academic suspension. The guidelines for determining academic dishonesty and procedures followed in a suspected incident of academic dishonesty are detailed on the website. For more information, visit: https://web.stanford.edu/dept/1c/language/courses/academicIntegrity.html

**Sexual Harassment Policy**
Stanford University strives to provide a place of work and study free of sexual harassment,
intimidation or exploitation. Where sexual harassment has occurred, the University will act to stop the harassment, prevent its recurrence, and discipline and/or take other appropriate action against those responsible. For more information, please visit the Sexual Harassment Policy Office. For confidential support, please contact CST (Confidential Support Team) at https://vaden.stanford.edu/cst.