

COM 490: Selected Topics – Social Media Strategy **Shippensburg University, Spring 2021**

Weekly class meetings on Zoom, Mondays at 5 p.m.

All course materials posted to the course D2L site (<http://d2l.ship.edu>)

Professor
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Email
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Class hashtag
#ShipSocial



Office hours
Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., via Zoom
Schedule an appointment at <https://calendly.com/krheim/officehours>.

You are always welcome to meet with me during office hours on Zoom. Sign up for an appointment at the link listed above. If none of the available times works for you, please email me, and we can set up an appointment for a different date and time.

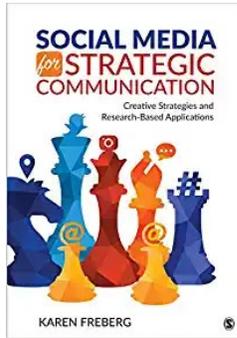
The Zoom link for office hours is posted to the course D2L site in a Content folder labeled “Office Hours.” When you click the Zoom link, you will be placed in a virtual “waiting room.” Please be patient. I will bring you into the Zoom chat room when I am ready to meet with you.

Course description

Students will be introduced to a variety of social media tools and platforms and learn how communication professionals may use them strategically for information gathering, publicity, promotion and audience engagement. The course is designed to broaden students’ understanding of social media principles while providing practical experience in social media planning, content creation and analytics.

Course objectives

- To critically examine the influence of social media, including the ways in which social media both enhance and disrupt the core values and skill sets of communication professionals.
- To identify ways in which communication professionals may use social media to achieve professional goals and interact with their publics and stakeholders.
- To learn strategies for designing social media campaigns and measuring their effectiveness.
- To develop a set of social media skills and practices that will endure even as the technology changes.



REQUIRED texts

Textbook: *Social Media for Strategic Communication: Creative Strategies and Research-Based Applications*. (2019). Karen Freberg. ISBN: 978-1506387109.

Additional readings: Several web pages also are part of the required reading. They are posted as clickable links and/or pdf files on the course D2L site.

Professional values and competencies for C/J majors and minors

The Communication/Journalism Department faculty sets the goal of developing within each student core professional values and competencies as defined by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC). The following competencies are addressed in this course:

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and gather information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Course format and weekly activities

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, COM 490 is **100% online** this semester, using the university's course management system, Desire2Learn (D2L) Brightspace (<http://d2l.ship.edu>), and Zoom online meeting software (<http://ship.zoom.us>). Although the course is online, it will cover all the same material as if it were face to face. More information about using D2L and Zoom, including "how-to" videos, is available at <http://www.ship.edu/technology/student/resources/>.

D2L site: All course materials will be posted to the course D2L site. **It is your responsibility to check the site regularly to make sure you are completing all work and meeting deadlines.**

Weekly content modules: Clicking "Content" in the menu bar at the top of the D2L site will bring up a vertical listing of "modules," organized by week. (NOTE: You will not see the modules for the full semester. As the semester progresses, I will make each week's module available.) Clicking on a weekly module will bring up a listing of all materials for the week.

Zoom meetings: Each module will include a link and the password for the week's Zoom meeting. (NOTE: It will be the same link and password each week.) **We will meet live ("synchronously") as a class Mondays at 5 p.m.** We may not meet every week, but you should always assume that we are meeting unless I notify you otherwise (via D2L and/or email). The Zoom meetings will be used for announcements, discussions, guest speakers, "in-class" exercises and activities, assignment explanations, and any questions you have. **Make sure that you have access to a laptop or desktop computer during the Zoom meetings so that you can complete any exercises or activities.** You are strongly encouraged to share your video during the meetings, which will make the meetings more personal and more productive. **NOTE:** If you need to miss a Zoom meeting because of illness, emergency, etc., please notify me via email.

I will keep track of your Zoom attendance and participation, which will be graded as follows at the end of the semester:

- **A (27-30 points):** Attended all (or nearly all) Zoom meetings, frequently participated by asking or answering questions, and completed all exercises and activities.
- **B (24-26 points):** Attended all (or nearly all) Zoom meetings, but only occasionally participated by asking or answering questions.
- **C (21-23 points):** Attended all (or nearly all) Zoom meetings, but often did not complete exercises and activities.
- **D (18-20 points):** Missed several Zoom meetings, or frequently left early or arrived late.
- **F (0-17 points):** Rarely attended the Zoom meetings.

Twitter participation: Beginning in Week 3 (Feb. 22-28), you are expected to post at least two substantive tweets per week to the Twitter account you will create for this course. These tweets must be IN ADDITION TO the tweets required for any class assignments. **More than half of them should be original tweets, not retweets. More than half of them should link to a relevant article, blog post, or other current information on the web.** The tweets must be relevant to the topics of this course (directly pertain to social or digital media, public relations, journalism, broadcasting, advertising, and/or marketing). The tweets must be spread throughout the semester. You cannot make up for several missed weeks with a flurry of tweets at the end of the semester.

Your Twitter participation will be graded as follows at the end of the semester:

- **A (27-30 points):** Tweeted well beyond the minimum expectation of two substantive tweets per week.
- **B (24-26 points):** Met the minimum expectation of about two substantive tweets per week.
- **C (21-23 points):** Met the minimum expectation of about two tweets per week, but several tweets were off-topic, were not substantive, or contained spelling or grammatical errors.
- **D (18-20 points):** Posted fewer than two tweets per week or did not tweet regularly throughout the semester.
- **F (0-17 points):** Rarely tweeted except when required to for an assignment.

Assigned reading: There will be assigned reading each week. Much of the reading will be in the *Social Media for Strategic Communication* textbook, but additional assigned readings are posted in the weekly modules as web links and/or pdf files. Please pay close attention to the key concepts and terminology. You are encouraged to take notes as you read.

Supplemental videos and other materials: After you have read the textbook chapter, please view or read any lecture videos, supplemental videos, or other materials posted to the week's module. Let me know if a video is not playing properly or if a link is broken. You are encouraged to take notes.

Quizzes: Most weeks will include a quiz **covering the assigned reading and any accompanying videos and materials**, so make sure that you completed those tasks before you take the quiz. Each module will

contain a link to the week's quiz. **Quizzes must be completed by the end of the day (11:59 p.m.) Sunday.** Failure to complete the quiz by the end of the day Sunday will result in a score of zero. **Each quiz will contain a total of 12 multiple-choice, true-or-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. The quizzes are open-book and open-notes, but you will have only 20 minutes to complete them.** If you exceed the 20-minute time limit, you will receive a score of zero. You must complete the quiz in its entirety the first time you open it, and you are not allowed to move back and forth between questions. If you leave the quiz to go to another web page, you may be locked out of the quiz. **You may not retake a quiz,** so make sure that you have a reliable Internet connection and are free from interruptions before you begin. You may not work on the quizzes with a classmate; that is a form of academic dishonesty (see "Plagiarism and academic dishonesty" below). **Your 10 highest quiz scores will count toward your semester grade, and your 2 lowest quiz scores will be dropped.** I drop the 2 lowest scores because I understand that problems such as illness, emergencies, computer glitches, etc., may arise. Because of the possibility that unforeseen problems will arise later in the semester, you should never skip a quiz. **There will be absolutely no make-up quizzes.**

Assignments

Challenge assignments: These assignments will help you gain proficiency in using multiple social media platforms and tools. The four challenge assignments consist of two blogging challenges, a Twitter challenge, and a Hootsuite challenge. For the Hootsuite challenge, you will earn Hootsuite Platform Certification by completing online training in the use of the Hootsuite social media dashboard and passing an online examination with a score of 75% or better.

Social media strategy project: For this team-based project, you will examine and critique the Communication/Journalism Department's social media activity, as well as the social media activity of similar departments at other universities, and recommend ways in which the department may improve its social media presence. The project has three parts: a social media audit and audience analysis; a strategic plan; and the creation of sample content.

Social media ethics case study presentation (graduate students only): Graduate students will select a case in which social media were used by communication professionals in ways that raised ethical questions or controversy. Each student will deliver a Zoom presentation to the class summarizing the case, analyzing the usage of social media, and explaining what lessons the case teaches us about best (and worst) social media practices. The presentation must be 7 to 10 minutes and include accompanying slides.

Email communication

- In addition to checking the D2L site, please check your Ship email account regularly. I frequently use email to communicate important class information to students. I will contact you at your Ship email address (not your Gmail, Yahoo or other account).
- When corresponding with me by email, please **use your Ship account and include a subject line. I am teaching 3 other courses this semester, so always mention that the email is regarding COM 490.** Please allow 24 hours for a response or up to 48 hours on a weekend. I am always happy to answer a question, but check the syllabus and the D2L site to see if it can be answered there first.

Deadlines, course progress

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are completing all work and meeting deadlines. In an online-only course, it is easy to fall behind or become "invisible." **If you run into problems affecting your progress in the course or your ability to meet deadlines, let's chat. Please email me or meet with me on Zoom during office hours so that we can address the situation.**

Quizzes must be completed by the set deadlines. Failure to meet the deadline will result in a score of zero. Only in the most extreme of situations will I reopen a quiz after the deadline has passed, and my definition of “extreme situation” is probably much narrower than yours.

All assignments must be completed by the due dates. Late assignments will be penalized a full letter grade (e.g., from B+ to a C+) for each day past the deadline, unless appropriate arrangements were made in advance. Extensions are granted at my discretion and may require documentation of extreme circumstances, such as illness or an emergency. Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Because of the nature of this course, assignments will be submitted in a variety of formats. **Any assignment that is not correctly formatted or does not follow instructions and proper procedures may be penalized with a deduction in points or a zero.** Computer or Internet problems will not be a valid excuse for failing to follow instructions or failing to complete assignments on time.

Grading

Grades will be recorded on the course D2L site. It is your responsibility to monitor your grades. Questions about grades should be raised when an assignment is returned, not at the end of the semester.

NO incompletes will be issued for this course, except in emergency situations as defined by the University catalog.

UNDERGRADUATE students may earn a total of up to **400 points** during the semester, broken down as follows:

Quizzes (Top 10 scores)	120 points
Challenge assignments	70 points
Blogging Challenge 1 (10 points)	
Hootsuite Challenge (20 points)	
Blogging Challenge 2 (20 points)	
Twitter Challenge (20 points)	
Social media strategy project	150 points
Part 1 – Social media audit and audience analysis (50 points)	
Part 2 – Strategic plan (50 points)	
Part 3 – Content creation (50 points)	
Zoom participation	30 points
Twitter participation	30 points
TOTAL	400 points

Point totals at the end of the semester will be converted to letter grades using the following percentage-based scale:

Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade
372 – 400 (93%)	A	320 – 331.5 (80%)	B-	0 – 239.5	F
360 – 371.5 (90%)	A-	300 – 319.5 (75%)	C+		
348 – 359.5 (87%)	B+	280 – 299.5 (70%)	C		
332 – 347.5 (83%)	B	240 – 279.5 (60%)	D		

GRADUATE students may earn a total of up to **450 points** during the semester, including everything listed above, plus up to 50 points for the social media ethics case study presentation.

Point totals at the end of the semester will be converted to letter grades using the following percentage-based scale:

Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade	Point Total	Grade
418 – 450 (93%)	A	360 – 372.5 (80%)	B-	0 – 269.5	F
405 – 417.5 (90%)	A-	337 – 359.5 (75%)	C+		
391 – 404.5 (87%)	B+	315 – 336.5 (70%)	C		
373 – 390.5 (83%)	B	270 – 314.5 (60%)	D		

Extra credit

Generally, I do not provide extra-credit work. However, some extra-credit opportunities may appear by surprise as “Easter eggs” during the semester.

Keeping copies of assignments and emails

Keep an electronic copy of all assignments and course-related email messages. Do not delete any course-related files or emails until you receive your final grade at the end of the semester. If there are questions about assignments, you may be asked to produce the original emails and files.

Technology help

I am happy to answer any questions regarding course content and assignments, but technical questions should be addressed to people who are much more knowledgeable about the technology:

Computer and Internet access: If you need access to a laptop or the Internet, please visit [the university’s “Spring 2021 Student Technology” page](#) and click the “Request access to technology equipment” link to request a loaned laptop or mobile hotspot.

D2L assistance: If you need technical assistance with the D2L system, contact the SU Student Helpdesk at (717) 477-HELP (x4357) or helpdesk@ship.edu. After hours, you may contact D2L Technical Support at helpdesk@d2l.com or (866) 832-2319. An [instructional video](#) provides details on using D2L as a student.

Zoom assistance: Information is available on [how to download and set up the Zoom application](#) and [how to join a Zoom meeting](#). An [instructional video](#) provides details on using Zoom as a student, and additional information is available through the [Zoom Help Center](#).

General information: More information about Spring 2021 technology at Ship is available [at this site](#).

Withdrawing from the course

A student may drop a course within the drop/add period without ramifications to the student’s transcript, but after that time frame, a withdrawal from the course will result in a W grade on the transcript. **The deadline to withdraw with a W grade is Monday, April 19.** More information is available at the [Registrar’s site](#).

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty

Students are expected to complete individual and original work for this class. Plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be handled according to the university’s [Academic Dishonesty Policy](#). All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department, Dean’s Office and Office of Student Affairs. Penalties for violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy

include grade reduction, assignment of a failing grade for the course, suspension and expulsion from the University.

Academic resources

The Learning Center: If you feel you need extra help to improve your academic performance in this course or in any of your other courses, please consider making an appointment with a tutor or learning specialist in the Learning Center. The Learning Center is located in Mowrey Hall and can be reached at (717) 477-1420. Tutoring and most other services will be offered via Zoom. More information is available at the [Learning Center's website](#).

The College of Arts & Sciences Advising Center (CASA): Located in DHC 216, CASA is a walk-in office that offers several types of academic support, from advice and help on time management, test anxiety and study skills to discussions about what major might be right for you. Email casa@ship.edu or call (717) 477-1150 to set up a time to meet with a success coach or faculty adviser.

Student Success: The Elnetta G. Jones University Center for Student Success and Exploratory Studies uniquely supplements and reinforces the university's commitments to serve a more diverse student population and to cultivate a learning-centered environment where students persist to graduation. We enrich the teaching and learning mission of the university by delivering specialized, high-impact academic and student enrichment services that empower students to successfully attain their educational goals. See [the Student Success Center website](#) for more information.

Accessibility resources

Shippensburg University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. The University welcomes all students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs and strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) to discuss specific needs. OAR is located in Mowrey Hall 252 and can be reached by phone at (717) 477-1364 or via email at oar@ship.edu.

Preferred name policy

In an effort to continue building a more inclusive and affirming campus climate, the LGBTQ+ Concerns Committee collaborated with APSCUF's Social Justice Committee to develop a preferred name policy at Shippensburg University. This policy was unanimously approved by President's Cabinet in September, 2017. View specific details about [Shippensburg University's Preferred Name Policy](#). Although a legal name and/or gender marker change is determined by the state in which a student, staff, or faculty resides in, the LGBTQ+ committee has worked to increase access for campus community members to utilize a preferred name in situations where a legal name is not required.

Title IX - Commitment to a safe learning environment

Shippensburg University and its faculty are committed to ensuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the University's commitment to offering supportive measures in accordance with the 2020 regulations issued under Title IX, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator at title9@ship.edu or by calling (717) 477-1161. The **only exceptions** to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student **during**: 1. A classroom discussion; 2. in a writing assignment for a class; 3. or as part of a University-approved research project. Faculty members are **obligated** to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the

University protection of minors policy found here: <https://www.ship.edu/globalassets/no-more/su-protection-and-supervision-of-minors-on-campus.pdf>. Information regarding the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence are set forth here: <https://www.ship.edu/life/resources/womens-center/resources/> and reporting processes and resolution can be found here: <https://www.ship.edu/globalassets/administration-finance/policies/701-002-sexual-misconduct-policy.pdf>

Tentative Course Schedule

The timeline for this course may need to be adjusted due to unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced via Zoom, email or D2L.

NOTE: This is an abbreviated schedule. Please see each week's module (on the D2L course site under "Content") for due dates and the full list of tasks, assignments, videos and other materials for the week.

Unit 1 – The strategic mindset

Week 1 (Feb. 8-14): The art and science of social media

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 1 (Introduction to Social Media: An Art and Science)

Read: "Is COVID-19 Social Media's Levelling Up Moment?"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Set up Hootsuite, Twitter and Medium accounts

Week 2 (Feb. 15-21): Identifying and understanding your audience

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 8 (Audience Segmentation and Analysis)

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Blogging Challenge #1 – due by end of the day Monday, Feb. 22

Week 3 (Feb. 22-28): Social media listening and monitoring

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 5 (Research in Social Media: Monitoring, Listening, and Analysis)

Read: "Newsjacking – How to Get Traffic and Backlinks from Breaking News"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Week 4 (March 1-7): Planning and strategizing

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 6 (Strategic Planning for Social Media)

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Hootsuite Challenge – due by end of the day Monday, March 8

Unit 2 – Content creation

Week 5 (March 8-14): Tone and voice, strategic writing

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 7 (Strategic Writing for Social Media)

Read: "How to Find Your Social Media Marketing Voice and Tone"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Week 6 (March 15-21): Blogging, keywords and SEO

Zoom meeting

Read: "What Is a Blog & Why Should You Create One?"

Read: "The Anatomy of a Perfect Blog Post"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 1 – due by end of the day Monday, March 22

Week 7 (March 22-28): Twitter

Zoom meeting

Read: "So You Wanna Livetweet: 10 Rules for Effective Livetweeting"

Read: "How to Participate in a Twitter Chat"

Read: "Using Twitter Lists for Better PR"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Week 8 (March 29-April 4): Photos, audio, and video

Zoom meeting

Read: "How to Write Good Instagram Captions: Tips, Ideas, and Tools"

Read: "8 Incredible Tips for a Great Social Media Video Strategy"

Read: "How TikTok is Rewriting the World"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Blogging Challenge #2 – due by end of the day Monday, April 5

Week 9 (April 5-11): Measurement and analytics

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 10 (Measurement, Evaluation, Budget and Calendar)

Read: "The Most Important Social Media Metrics to Track"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Week 10 (April 12-18): Getting an assist: Crowdsourcing, influencers, takeovers

Zoom meeting

Read: "What is Influencer Marketing: How to Develop Your Strategy"

Read: "How to Run a Smart Social Media Takeover in 5 Steps"

Read: "The Ultimate Guide to Crowdsourcing"

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 2 – due by end of the day Monday, April 19

Unit 3 – Ethics, responsibility, and professionalism

Week 11 (April 19-25): Crisis communication

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 11, pp. 233-238 only (section on “Overview of Social Media and Crisis Communication”)

Read “How to Use Social Media for Crisis Communications an Emergency Management”

Videos and other materials

ASSIGNMENT: Social Media Ethics Case Study Presentation – GRAD STUDENTS ONLY
– present in class on Monday, April 26

Week 12 (April 26-May 2): Ethics and etiquette

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 2 (Ethical and Legal Fundamentals in Social Media)

Videos and other materials

Quiz

ASSIGNMENT: Twitter Challenge – due by end of the day Monday, May 3

Week 13 (May 3-9): Careers in social media

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 4 (Industry Qualifications and Roles)

Videos and other materials

Quiz

Week 14 (May 10-16): Personal branding

Zoom meeting

Read: Chapter 3 (Personal and Professional Branding)

Read: “‘I Am a Brand,’ Pathetic Man Says”

Videos and other materials

May 17-21: Finals week (There is NO final exam in this course.)

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 3 – due date to be announced