
COM 294, Section 1: Social Media Strategy

Shippensburg University, Fall 2022

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-3:15 p.m., Rowland 206

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NOTE: Adjustments may need to be made to this course and the syllabus. Schedule revisions are likely, and some class sessions may be held online via Zoom. Check the course D2L site (<https://d2l.ship.edu>) and your Ship email account regularly for announcements and updates.

University COVID-19 safety statement

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students will be expected to follow the CDC, PA Department of Health and university safety protocols to reduce risks to everyone's health. The most up-to-date information about each individual's responsibility to protect the health and wellbeing of the entire campus community can be found on Shippensburg University's website at <https://raiderrespect.ship.edu/>. There are specific locations on campus where masks are required, including in personal faculty or staff offices where posted.

Do not come to class if you are sick or if you suspect that you have been exposed to someone who is sick. Visit Etter Health Center on campus (717-477-1458) for symptomatic COVID tests and care (mask required). Notify covid19@ship.edu, and they will notify all of your professors of absence due to quarantine or isolation. Make plans to copy class notes from another student, use additional resources posted to D2L, and plan to join office hours via Zoom to ask questions about the material you have missed when you are well enough to do so.

Office hours

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1 – 2 p.m.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

Schedule an appointment at <https://calendly.com/krheim/officehours>.

Don't hesitate to meet with me in my office (Rowland 123) or via Zoom if you need help or have course-related questions. 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 arrange a different time.



Required materials

Textbook: *Social Media for Strategic Communication: Creative Strategies and Research-Based Applications (2nd edition)*. (2022). Karen Freberg. ISBN: 978-1071826904. **Make sure to purchase the 2nd edition.**

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.

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 tools and platforms to achieve professional goals and interact with their publics and stakeholders.
- To learn skills and strategies for designing social media campaigns and measuring their effectiveness.

Professional values and competencies for majors and minors

The Communication, Journalism and Media 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
- Apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating 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.

Attendance

- **Attendance in COM 294 is mandatory**, and students are expected to arrive on time. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the start of class each day. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet. The attendance sheets will serve as the official record of attendance. If you come to class late, after the attendance sheet has circulated, you may be marked absent that day.
- **An absence will be excused ONLY** if you (1) notify the instructor of the absence via email **before** class, **AND** (2) provide official written documentation of the reason for the absence (e.g., an official signed, dated note from a doctor, coach, lawyer, other instructor, etc.) **on the day you return to class**. If you know you will miss more than one class due to illness or a family emergency, it is recommended that you notify the Dean's Office, which will notify all your instructors of your absences (NOTE: Notifying the Dean's Office does not automatically excuse an absence. You still must provide the appropriate documentation when you return to class.)
- Leaving class early, sleeping during class or not participating in class activities may count as an unexcused absence for that class period.
- **Students are permitted no more than 3 unexcused absences during the semester**. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade as follows:
 - **4 or 5 unexcused absences** = final grade lowered by a **half-grade** — for example, from an A- to a B+ or from a C+ to a C. NOTE: Ship does not use C- or D+ grades, so a C would be lowered to a D.
 - **6 unexcused absences** = final grade lowered by a **full letter grade** — for example, from a B to a C.
 - **7 or more unexcused absences** = student automatically **fails the course (grade of F)**, regardless of his or her performance on quizzes and assignments.
- Prolonged or repeated absences will make it difficult to pass this course. In such situations, please

meet with me so that we may discuss the situation and consider options such as withdrawal from the course or a leave of absence from the university.

Class participation and etiquette

- You are expected to be an active, engaged participant in the class and make thoughtful contributions to class discussions.
- Inappropriate, rude or disrespectful language or behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. This may include (but is not limited to): talking or not paying attention during a lecture; using inappropriate language; being disrespectful to your instructor or classmates; texting, emailing, listening to music or other use of electronic devices during class; sleeping; and tardiness.
- **Unless instructed otherwise, the use of cell phones, headphones or earbuds, and other electronic gadgets in the classroom is not permitted.** Cell phones are to be turned off or set to vibrate and put away during class.
- **No food or drink is permitted in the computer labs.**

Email communication

- I frequently use email to communicate important class information. Please check your Ship email account regularly. 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.** **Always mention that the email is regarding COM 294, Section 1.** 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.

D2L modules and course requirements

D2L site: Course materials will be posted to the course D2L site (<https://d2l.ship.edu>). **It is your responsibility to check D2L regularly and 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.

Required reading: There will be required reading each week. Much of the reading will be in the *Social Media for Strategic Communication* textbook, but additional assigned readings and supplemental materials also will be posted in the weekly D2L modules. You are encouraged to take notes as you read.

Quizzes: Most weeks will include a quiz **covering the assigned reading, class lectures and any accompanying materials.** Make sure you complete those tasks before you take the quiz. Each module will contain a link to the week’s quiz. **Quizzes will be available starting at 3:15 p.m. Wednesday and 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.**

Twitter participation: Beginning in Week 5 (Sept. 19), 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. You will also be required to follow a minimum number of Twitter users and create several Twitter lists, and you may be required to live-tweet any class guest speakers. More details will be provided over the course of the semester.

Assignments

Challenge assignments: These assignments will help you gain proficiency in using social media platforms and tools. They consist of a persona challenge, a Hootsuite challenge and a blogging challenge. For the Hootsuite challenge, you will earn Hootsuite Platform Certification by completing online training in use of the social media dashboard and scoring 70% or better on an online examination.

In-class assignments: You will complete and submit several assignments in class, either working alone or with one or more partners. Some of these assignments will be graded. If you have an unexcused absence on the day of a graded in-class assignment, you will not earn the points for the assignment.

Social media strategy project: For this team-based project, you will examine and critique the Communication, Journalism and Media 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.

Deadlines, course progress

It is your responsibility to make sure that you are completing all work and meeting deadlines. **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 during office hours so that we can discuss the situation** to ensure that you succeed in the course.

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. (Forgetting to take a quiz is not an extreme situation. Computer problems are not an extreme situation.)

All assignments must be completed by the due dates. Late assignments will be penalized with a 10% reduction in points (approximately one full letter grade) 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 via email 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. You may earn a total of up to **400 points** during the semester, broken down as follows:

Quizzes (Top 10 scores)	120 points
Challenge assignments	80 points
Persona Challenge (10 points)	
Hootsuite Challenge (40 points)	
Blogging Challenge (30 points)	
In-class assignments	20 points
Social media strategy project	150 points
Part 1 (50 points)	
Part 2 (50 points)	
Part 3 (50 points)	
Twitter participation	30 points
TOTAL	400 points

Point totals at the end of the semester will be converted to letter grades, using this 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		

Reminder: More than three unexcused absences during the semester will result in the lowering of your final course grade (see “Attendance policy” above for details). Incompletes will be issued only in emergency situations as defined in the university catalog.

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:

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

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.

Withdrawing from the course

You may drop a course within the drop/add period without ramifications to your 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, Oct. 31.** 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.

Title IX - Commitment to a safe learning environment

Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania and its faculty are committed to assuring 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 regulations issued under Title IX, Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the university's Title IX coordinator, Dr. John Burnett (JABurnett@ship.edu or Title9@ship.edu). The only exceptions to the

faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, 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's Protection and Supervision of Minors on Campus Policy. Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence are available on the Office of Human Resources website:
https://www.ship.edu/about/offices/hr/title_ix_statement/

Tentative Course Schedule

***** IMPORTANT:** The schedule for this course may need to be adjusted because of severe weather events or other unforeseen circumstances. Changes will be announced in class and via email or D2L.***

Unit 1 – The strategic mindset

Week 1 (Aug. 22-28): The art and science of social media

READ by Wednesday, Aug. 24

- Chapter 1 (Introduction to Social Media: An Art and Science) (available as pdf on D2L)
- “Is COVID-19 Social Media’s Levelling Up Moment?” (on D2L)
- “Instagram Is Doing Grave Harm to Our Generation. We Need Help to Stop It” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Aug. 28

ASSIGNMENT: Set up Hootsuite and Twitter accounts

Week 2 (Aug. 29-Sept. 4): Identifying and understanding your audience

READ by Wednesday, Aug. 31

- Chapter 11 (Audience Segmentation and Analysis)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day **Tuesday, Sept. 6** (NOTE: The deadline is Tuesday because of the Labor Day holiday. Normally, the deadline for quizzes will be Sunday.)

ASSIGNMENT: Persona Challenge – due by end of the day Wednesday, Sept. 7

Week 3 (Sept. 5-11): Social listening and monitoring

NO CLASS MONDAY, SEPT. 5 (LABOR DAY) 😊

DUE: Persona Challenge – end of the day Wednesday, Sept. 7

READ by Wednesday, Sept. 7

- Chapter 6 (Research in Social Media: Monitoring, Listening, and Analysis)
- “Newsjacking – How to Get Traffic and Backlinks from Breaking News” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Sept. 11

Week 4 (Sept. 12-18): Planning and strategizing

READ by Wednesday, Sept. 14

- Chapter 7 (Strategic Planning for Social Media)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Sept. 18

Unit 2 – Content creation

Week 5 (Sept. 19-25): Tone and voice, strategic writing

READ by Wednesday, Sept. 21

- Chapter 10 (Strategic Writing for Social Media)
- “How to Find Your Social Media Marketing Voice and Tone” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Sept. 25

ASSIGNMENT: Hootsuite Challenge – due by end of the day Monday, Sept. 26

BEGIN TWEETING (at least two substantive tweets per week), if you haven’t already!

Week 6 (Sept. 26-Oct. 2): Blogging

DUE: Hootsuite Challenge – end of the day Monday, Sept. 26

READ by Wednesday, Sept. 28

- “What Is a Blog & Why Should You Create One?” (on D2L)
- “The Anatomy of a Perfect Blog Post” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 2

Week 7 (Oct. 3-9): Twitter

READ by Wednesday, Oct. 5

- “So You Wanna Livetweet: 10 Rules for Effective Livetweeting” (on D2L)
- “Using Twitter Lists for Better PR” (on D2L)

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 1 – due by 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14

Week 8 (Oct. 10-16): Photos, audio, and video

NO CLASS MONDAY, OCT. 10 (FALL BREAK) 😊

READ by Wednesday, Oct. 12

- “How to Write Great Instagram Captions: 9 Tips With Examples” (on D2L)
- “8 Incredible Tips for a Great Social Media Video Strategy” (on D2L)

DUE: Strategy Project, Part 1 – 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 16

Week 9 (Oct. 17-23): Organic vs. paid media

READ by Wednesday, Oct. 19

- Chapter 9 (Paid Media)
- “Optimize or Advertise? Comparing Organic vs. Paid Social Media” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 23

ASSIGNMENT: Blogging Challenge – due by end of the day Monday, Oct. 24

Week 10 (Oct. 24-30): Influencer marketing and crowdsourcing

DUE: Blogging Challenge – end of the day Monday, Oct. 24

READ by Wednesday, Oct. 26

- Chapter 8 (Influencer Marketing)
- “TikTok and its Influencers Have a Secret Sponsored Content Problem” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Oct. 30

Week 11 (Oct. 31-Nov. 6): Measurement and analytics

READ by Wednesday, Nov. 2

- Chapter 13 (Measurement, Evaluation, Budget and Calendar Considerations for Social Media)
- “The Most Important Social Media Metrics to Track” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Nov. 6

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 2 – due by end of the day Monday, Nov. 7

Unit 3 – Ethics, responsibility, and professionalism

Week 12 (Nov. 7-13): Ethics and etiquette

DUE: Strategy Project, Part 2 – end of the day Monday, Nov. 7

READ by Wednesday, Nov. 9

- Chapter 2 (Ethical and Legal Fundamentals in Social Media)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Nov. 13

Week 13 (Nov. 14-20): Diversity, equity and inclusion

READ by Wednesday, Nov. 16

- Chapter 4 (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Social Media)
- “5 Strategies to Make Social Media Content More Inclusive” (on D2L)

QUIZ: Take by end of the day Sunday, Nov. 20

Week 14 (Nov. 21-27): Crisis communication

READ by Monday, Nov. 21

- “How to Use Social Media for Crisis Communications an Emergency Management” (on D2L)

NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, NOV. 23 (THANKSGIVING BREAK) 🦃

Week 15 (Nov. 28-Dec. 4): Personal and professional goals

READ by Monday, Nov. 28

- Chapter 3 (Personal and Professional Branding for Social Media)
- Chapter 5 (Industry Qualifications and Roles in Social Media)

ASSIGNMENT: Strategy Project, Part 3 – due during finals week (due date TBA)

Finals week (Dec. 5-9)

DUE: Strategy Project, Part 3 (due date to be announced)

NOTE: There is NO final exam in this course.