

COM 525: Social Media Analytics & Strategy



Shippensburg University, Fall 2022 (Oct. 17-Dec. 9)

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This course is **100% online**. Most instruction will be asynchronous, using the university's course management system, Desire2Learn (D2L) Brightspace (<https://d2l.ship.edu>). However, there also will be **four required synchronous meetings via Zoom** at the following dates and times:

- Tuesday, Oct. 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Nov. 15, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, Dec. 6, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Zoom link: <https://ship.zoom.us/j/93225822784> ♦ Passcode: 525 ♦ Meeting ID: 932 2582 2784

Office hours (in-person or via Zoom)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1 – 2 p.m.

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 – 3:30 p.m.

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

If none of the available times works for you, please email me, and we can arrange a different time.

Required courseware

You must purchase access to **Mimic Social**, a web-based social media simulation program. It is available from Stukent for **\$59.99**. You will begin using Mimic Social in Week 4 (the week of Nov. 7).

Purchase Mimic Social and set up your account at this link:

<https://home.stukent.com/join/900-7CE>.

Please use your Ship email address when creating your account.



Course overview

Course description

As organizations increasingly use social media platforms to build relationships with their publics, they must develop strategies to evaluate and enhance their social media performance. In this course, you will learn how to leverage social media for strategic communication purposes. You will gain hands-on experience using various methods and tools for collecting, interpreting, and presenting analytical data from social media platforms. You will use insights gained from the data to formulate social media strategies and provide actionable recommendations.

Course objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop social media strategies that align with organizational goals and objectives
- Craft effective organic and paid social media content to build relationships with key publics and influencers
- Identify key performance indicators to measure the success of social media campaigns and initiatives
- Analyze social media data using platform-specific analytics and industry-standard tools
- Effectively communicate social media insights and recommendations in a professional and ethical manner

Professional competencies

In its guidelines for Certification in Education for Public Relations (CEPR), the Commission on Public Relations Education recommends that graduate curricula in public relations address several content areas. The content areas addressed in this course are indicated in bold:

- **Strategic public relations management, best practices in a digital environment**, crisis communication, risk communication, and written and oral communication skills
- Basic business principles and processes
- Communications/public relations theory and research methods
- Ethics (ethical and legal issues)
- Global influences on the practice of public relations (understanding of cross-cultural and intercultural communications, and public relations practices worldwide)

Coursework and course structure

Course format

D2L site: All course materials will be posted to the course D2L site. It is your responsibility to check the site regularly and make sure you are completing all work by the specified deadlines. Clicking “Content” in the menu bar at the top of the D2L site will bring up a vertical listing of modules, organized by week. Clicking on a weekly module will bring up a listing of submodules containing all the materials for the week. Some material will be posted in advance, but other material may not be available in D2L until the week in which it is listed on the syllabus.

Videos: Most weekly modules will contain one or more short videos previewing the week’s tasks, introducing key concepts and providing general guidance. Please watch any videos before completing the other work for the week.

Reading: Each week will include assigned reading relevant to the topics and assignments of the week. All the readings are web-based articles. Links to the readings are provided in the schedule at the end of this syllabus and in the weekly D2L modules.

HubSpot Social Media Marketing certification: Create a free HubSpot account during the first week of the course (you will receive an invitation sent to your Ship email address) and enroll in HubSpot's Social Media Marketing certification. The certification provides online training in social media strategy, social media listening and monitoring, digital advertising, measuring return on investment and more. **You must complete the training during the first three weeks of the term (several modules are assigned each week) and take the online certification exam no later than 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11.**

The online certification exam contains 70 multiple-choice questions, which you must answer one at a time. You will have up to 3 hours to complete the exam. If you answer at least 53 of the questions correctly (75% or better), you will be awarded the certificate. You may retake the exam as many times as you wish, but you must wait at least 12 hours between attempts. **Your exam score (as of 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11) will count toward your course grade, plus you will be awarded 30 additional points if you successfully completed all the training modules.**

Mimic Social simulation: Beginning in Week 4 (week of Nov. 7), you will use Mimic Social, a web-based social media strategy simulation. You will begin in the role of social media specialist for Buhi Supply Co. (a fictitious e-commerce retailer specializing in backpacks, purses, satchels and duffel bags) and earn promotions along the way. You will create organic and paid social media content and influencer marketing campaigns, working within a specified budget.

The simulation consists of 10 rounds (3 rounds of organic posts, 3 rounds of paid posts, 3 rounds of influencer marketing and a concluding round combining all the tactics). You will receive instructions from your supervisor and some additional tasks from me in a separate strategy memo. In each round, you will respond to questions and comments from customers, and plan and execute a social media strategy. At the end of each round, you will be able to track the success of your efforts, according to several key performance indicators, and see where you rank among your classmates.

Scoring in Rounds 1-9: You may earn up to 20 points per round: 10 points based on revenue generated and 10 points for a key performance indicator (impressions for Rounds 1-3 and 4, engagements for Round 5, and conversions for Rounds 6 and 7-9). Your score in each category in each round will be determined by your rank among your classmates in that category in the round: Roughly the top half of the class will earn 10 points; the next quarter of the class, 9 points; and the bottom quarter of the class, 8 points. However, I will look at how the data cluster when awarding points. For example, if everyone in the class generates nearly the same revenue in a round, I may award 10 points for revenue to the entire class in that round. If you do not complete a round by the deadline, you will earn 0 points for that round. **Your best score in Rounds 1-3, best score in Rounds 4-6, and best score in Rounds 7-9 will count toward your course grade.** All other scores will be dropped.

Scoring in Round 10: You may earn up to 40 points in the final round: 10 points for revenue, 10 points for impressions, 10 points for engagements, and 10 points for conversions.

The three students who generate the most total revenue in the simulation (based on the final revenue totals for all 10 rounds combined) **will be awarded 10 extra-credit bonus points.**

In addition to the simulation, you will complete two assignments related to the experience: a **reflection** assignment (worth up to 30 points) in which you address several questions about your experience in the organic and paid content rounds and lessons learned, and a **final report** (worth up to 70 points) to the Buhi board of directors in the form of a video with accompanying slides, summarizing the social media strategies and tactics you used, evaluating the success of your posts and campaigns, and providing strategic insights and recommendations for the company going forward.

Social media audit: In this assignment (worth up to 50 points), you will conduct a social media audit for a business or organization by summarizing and evaluating its usage of social media across multiple platforms.

Analytics exercise: In this exercise (worth 50 points), you will engage in some social listening and monitoring of two of Buhi’s real-world competitors: Osprey and Herschel Supply. You will use analytic data tracked and compiled in Keyhole, a web-based social media analytics platform, to generate insights.

NOTE: All assignments must be completed by the deadlines to earn credit. Failure to take the HubSpot Social Media Marketing certification exam by the deadline will result in a score of 0. Mimic Social rounds not completed by the deadline will earn 0 points. For written assignments (the social media audit, analytics exercise and Mimic Social reflection assignment), extensions are granted only in exceptional cases. Extensions must be requested at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Grading and evaluation

Grades will be recorded on the course D2L site. It is your responsibility to monitor your grades. Any questions about grades should be raised when an assignment grade is posted, not at the end of the term.

A total of **400 points** are available during the term, broken down as follows:

HubSpot Social Media Marketing Certification (100 points)	
Completion of all training modules by noon Tuesday, Nov. 8	30 points
Certification exam score – due 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11	70 points
Mimic Social Simulation (200 points)	
Best score in Rounds 1-3 (Organic Social Media)	20 points
Best score in Rounds 4-6 (Paid Social Media)	20 points
Best score in Rounds 7-9 (Influencer Marketing)	20 points
Score in Rounds 10 (Conclusion)	40 points
Extra credit for 3 students who generate the most total revenue	(10 bonus points)
Reflection – due by noon Tuesday, Nov. 22	30 points
Final report – due by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9	70 points
Other Assignments (100 points)	
Social media audit – due by noon Tuesday, Nov. 1	50 points
Analytics exercise – due by noon Tuesday, Nov. 8	50 points
TOTAL	400 points

Point totals at the end of the term will be converted to letter grades using a 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		

Communication and technology

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. When corresponding with me by email, please use your Ship account, include a subject line and always mention that the email is regarding this course.

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 term. 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.

Mimic Social technical assistance: Sometimes, Mimic Social can be a little slow. Be patient if the site lags or a screen doesn't load immediately. If you're experiencing technical problems with the Mimic Social website, you may email support@stukent.com or call (855) 788-5368.

University resources and policies

Graduate Writing Center

The Shippensburg University Graduate Writing Center helps students become more confident, effective writers and believes that all writers benefit from sharing writing with an interested reader. Graduate consultants work alongside graduate writers to offer collaborative writing consultations in a low-stakes environment. Highly trained consultants guide sessions to fit writers' goals at any stage of the writing process--from brainstorming ideas, developing an argument, revising drafts, improving clarity, to citing and documenting sources. Three appointment options provide scheduling flexibility for your busy schedule: in-person consultations, synchronous consultations via Zoom, and asynchronous sessions that provide written comments, a recorded video that explains feedback, and guidance for revision. For more information, visit the [Graduate Writing Center website](#).

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.

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.

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

This schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced via email and D2L. Please see each week's D2L module for the full list of materials for the week.

WEEK 1 (Oct. 17-23): Listening, Planning and Strategizing

- **Zoom meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 18, at 6:30 p.m.**
 - Introducing yourself, introduction to the course
 - Zoom link: <https://ship.zoom.us/j/93225822784>
 - Passcode: 525
 - Meeting ID: 932 2582 2784

- **HubSpot Academy Social Media Marketing Certification**
 - **Set up HubSpot account** (Follow the instructions in the invitation email sent to your Ship email address. Also see the PowerPoint posted in this week's module on the D2L site.)
 - **Complete the following training modules (about 1½-2 hours) by noon Tuesday, Oct. 25:**
 - Welcome to the Social Media Certification
 - Developing a Social Media Strategy
 - Social Media Listening and Monitoring

- **Reading (links also posted on D2L)**
 - Christina Newberry, "What is Social Listening, Why It Matters, and 10 Tools to Make It Easier," *Hootsuite*, Nov. 22, 2021. ([link](#))
 - "Social Media Marketing Strategy: Eight Easy Steps to Develop Your Social Media Presence," *Hootsuite*. ([link](#))
 - **Southwest Airlines social listening case study:** Evan Hoopfer, "Social Media LUV: How Southwest Airlines Connects With Customers Online," *Dallas Business Journal*, March 3, 2019. ([link](#))

- **Key terminology**
 - buyer persona, SMART goals, KPIs, vanity metrics, reach, engagement, return on investment (ROI), retention and loyalty, sentiment, five social media team structures (decentralized, centralized, hub and spoke, dandelion, holistic), social listening vs. social monitoring, social media audit, social media content calendar, 80-20 rule, rule of thirds

WEEK 2 (Oct. 24-30): Content Strategy and Creation

➤ HubSpot Academy Social Media Marketing Certification

- **Complete training modules (about 2½ hours) by noon Tuesday, Nov. 1:**
 - Building a Content Strategy for Social Media
 - Social Media Calendar Template Tutorial
 - Extending Your Reach on Social Media
 - Using Social Media to Build One-on-One Relationships

➤ Reading (links also posted on D2L)

- Kevan Lee, “How to Find Your Social Media Marketing Voice: The Best Examples, Questions and Guides,” *Buffer*, Nov. 30, 2018. ([link](#))
- **FDA ivermectin tweet case study:**
 - Dan Lewis, “The FDA Snarked on People Who Take Horse Drugs to Treat Covid. But Was Its Tone a Good Idea?” *Medium*, Aug. 23, 2021. ([link](#))
 - Anna Merlan, “The FDA Was Internally Thrilled Over That Viral Horse Paste Tweet,” *Vice*, Oct. 1, 2021. ([link](#))
- **Merriam-Webster Dictionary case study:** Julia Carpenter, “‘We’re descriptivists, not jerks’: An interview with Twitter’s edgiest dictionary,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 19, 2016. ([link](#))
- **Burger King UK International Women’s Day tweet case study:** Suzanne Rowan Kelleher, “‘Women Belong in the Kitchen’: Burger King’s International Women’s Day Tweet Goes Down in Flames,” *Forbes*, March 9, 2021. ([link](#))

➤ Key terminology

- real-time marketing or newsjacking, influencer content, user-generated content (UGC), tone vs. voice, campaigns, hashtags, calls-to-action (CTA), tagging, content curation, influencer marketing, celebrity influencers, industry influencers, microinfluencers, the three factors that determine how easily influencers can impact behavior (reach, relevance, and resonance), crowdsourcing, earned media, push channel, social customer service (or social care), service level agreement (SLA), social selling

➤ Assignment: Social media audit

- **Due to D2L by noon Tuesday, Nov. 1**

WEEK 3 (Oct. 31-Nov. 6): Analytics and Measurement

➤ HubSpot Academy Social Media Marketing Certification

- Complete remaining training modules (about 2 hours) by **noon Tuesday, Nov. 8:**
 - Introduction to Social Media Advertising
 - Measuring Your Social Return on Investment
 - Essentials for Continued Success with Social Media

➤ Reading (links also posted on D2L)

- “Social Media Analytics: The Complete Guide,” *Emplifi*, April 18, 2022. ([link](#))
- Christina Newberry, “16 Key Social Media Metrics to Track in 2022,” *Hootsuite*, June 23, 2022. ([link](#))
- Alex York, “Reach vs. Impressions: What’s the Difference in Terms?” *Sprout Social*, Aug. 7, 2020. ([link](#))

➤ Key terminology

- types of advertising audiences (core audiences, custom audiences, and lookalike audiences), Facebook’s key metrics to rate expected performance of ads (quality, engagement, and conversion), return on investment (ROI), social media audit, social media policy, three stages of a social media crisis (preparation, response, recovery), crisis plan, employee advocacy program, social media analytics, reach, impressions, audience growth rate, engagement rate, amplification rate, click-through rate (CTR), conversion rate, social share of voice, social sentiment

➤ Assignment: Analytics exercise

- **Due to D2L by noon Tuesday, Nov. 8.**

WEEK 4 (Nov. 7-13): Organic Content

- **Zoom meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 8, at 6:30 p.m.**
 - Guest speaker from WebFX
 - Zoom link: <https://ship.zoom.us/j/93225822784>
 - Passcode: 525
 - Meeting ID: 932 2582 2784

- **Assignment: HubSpot Academy Social Media Marketing Certification**
 - **Complete Social Media Certification Exam by 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11.**

- **Reading (links also posted on D2L)**
 - Paige Cooper, “Paid vs. Organic Social Media: How to Integrate Both into Your Strategy,” *Hootsuite*, Nov. 1, 2021. ([link](#))
 - Sophia Bernazzani, “The Decline of Organic Facebook Reach & How to Adjust to the Algorithm,” *HubSpot*, Jan. 7, 2020. ([link](#))
 - Maxwell Gollin, “15 Essential Tips to Increase Your Organic Reach on Facebook,” *Brandwatch*, March 2, 2022. ([link](#))

- **Key terminology**
 - organic social media, paid social media, A/B testing, algorithms, paid reach, post reach, engagement bait

- **Assignment: Mimic Social Simulation**
 - **Complete Introduction and Rounds 1-3 (Organic Content) by noon Tuesday, Nov. 15.**
 - **Read the Strategy Memo posted in D2L for a list of additional tasks to complete in Rounds 1-3, plus some tips to help you succeed in these rounds.**

WEEK 5 (Nov. 14-20): Paid Content

- **Zoom meeting: Tuesday, Nov. 15, at 6:30 p.m.**
 - **Discussion of Mimic Social Rounds 1-3:** Come to the meeting prepared to discuss what worked or didn't work, lessons for future rounds, any technical issues or concerns, etc.
 - **Zoom link:** <https://ship.zoom.us/j/93225822784>
 - **Passcode:** 525
 - **Meeting ID:** 932 2582 2784

- **Reading (links also posted on D2L)**
 - Nate Brooks, "The Elephant in the Room — Dark Marketing: What It Is and How to Illuminate the Darkness," *BrandTotal*, July 6, 2017. ([link](#))
 - Serenity Gibbons, "How Dark Marketing Is Improving Startups' and Large Brands' Social Strategies," *Forbes*, Dec. 20, 2018. ([link](#))
 - Laura Moore, "11 Facebook Ads Campaign Objectives and When to Use Them," *Social Media Examiner*, June 8, 2021. ([link](#))
 - Jeremy B. Merrill, "How Facebook's Ad System Lets Companies Talk Out of Both Sides of Their Mouths," *The Markup*, April 13, 2021. ([link](#))
 - **Apple case study:** Nick Hessler, "Apple's Totally Bizarre Social Media Strategy That Makes Perfect Sense," *Medium*, April 9, 2018. ([link](#))

- **Key terminology**
 - dark marketing, fragmentation, segmentation, personalization, retargeting, Facebook Ads campaign objectives (brand awareness, reach, traffic, engagement, app installs, video views, lead generation, messages, conversions, catalog sales, store traffic)

- **Assignment: Mimic Social Simulation, including reflection**
 - **Complete Rounds 4-6 (Paid Content) by noon Tuesday, Nov. 22**
 - **Read the Strategy Memo posted in D2L for a list of additional tasks to complete in Rounds 4-6, plus some tips to help you succeed in these rounds.**
 - **Reflection assignment due to D2L by noon Tuesday, Nov. 22**

WEEKS 6 and 7 (Nov. 21-Dec. 4): Influencer Marketing

➤ Reading (links posted on D2L)

- Christina Newberry, “Influencer Marketing Guide: How to Work With Influencers,” *Hootsuite*, Aug. 10, 2021. ([link](#))
- Uma Bhat, “Top 8 Types of Influencer Marketing Campaigns,” *CloohawkBlog*, July 9, 2018. ([link](#))
- **Fyre Festival case study:** Tarandip Kaur, “The Power of Influencer Marketing: Fyre Festival Case Study,” *Meltwater*, March 17, 2019. ([link](#))

➤ Key terminology

- nano-influencers, micro-influencers, macro-influencers, mega-influencers, UTM parameters, eight types of influencer marketing campaigns (host giveaways, social media takeovers, affiliate marketing, sponsored social media content, gifts, sponsored blog posts, guest blogging, brand ambassador programs)

➤ Assignment: Mimic Social Simulation

- **Complete Rounds 7-9 (Influencer Marketing) by noon Tuesday, Nov. 29**
- **Complete Round 10 (Conclusion) by noon Tuesday, Dec. 6**
- **Read the Strategy Memos posted in D2L for a list of additional tasks to complete in Rounds 7-9 and Round 10, plus some tips to help you succeed in these rounds.**

WEEK 8 (Dec. 5-9): Course Wrap-Up

➤ **Zoom meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 6, at 6:30 p.m.**

- **Final meeting:** Discussion of Mimic Social experience, final report due Friday, course-wrap up
- **Zoom link:** <https://ship.zoom.us/j/93225822784>
- **Passcode:** 525
- **Meeting ID:** 932 2582 2784

➤ Assignment: Mimic Social Simulation final report

- **Final report submitted to D2L by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 9**