

The University of Western Ontario
Faculty of Information and Media Studies

DC 3209G: Social Media & Organizations
Winter 2016

Instructor Information

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Course Information

Lectures: Monday 6-9 PM / NCB 117
Course website: <https://dc3209socmediaorg.wordpress.com/>

Description and Objectives

This course provides hands-on experience with using major and alternative social media tools such as blogs, wikis and social networking websites within an organizational context. Relevant issues such as user privacy, social media policies, effective planning and implementation and organizational impact will be addressed. This course is a study of the principles and production of social media, their strategic and tactical uses. Students will gain an understanding of online information architecture and organization. Emphasis will fall on the professional and applied purposes of platforms.

Materials

All **required readings** are available in PDF format on OWL, where they are organized by week. The course website lists online resources and tools that might be handy for your course projects.

Lesson Outline

| Week / Date | | Topic | Readings / Talks / Assignments |
|-------------|------|---|---|
| 1 | 1/4 | Course introduction. Social media landscape of 2016. Corporate and alternative platforms | Welcome to DC 3209! |
| 2 | 1/11 | Community. Organization. Corporation Social media as part of the military-industrial-entertainment complex | <i>The Net</i> (Lutz Dammbeck, 2003) <i>The Corporation</i> (Mark Achbar & Jennifer Abbott, 2003) Talk Jan 13 - Antoine Bousquet: Under a Martial Gaze: The Logistics of Military Perception (NCB 293 at 12-1:20 pm) |
| 3 | 1/18 | Tactical media | <i>Defining Tactical Media</i> – Web collection Geert Lovink, “Tactical Media, the Second Decade” |

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| 4 | 1/25 | Reverse engineering social media | Robert W. Gehl, "A Manifesto for Socialized Media" Brendan Van Alsenoy et al., "From Social Media Service to Advertising Network. A Critical Analysis of Facebook's Revised Policies and Terms" (Public draft – March 2015) Presentations: TCP/IP and DNS, News Feed, WWW, Social Graph, IP address, website certificate |
| 5 | 2/1 | Power relation and power struggles: net neutrality "Facebook Internet," or When will the Internet disappear? | Subhashish Panigrahi, "Millions of Indians Slam Facebook's 'Free Basics' App" Leo Mirani, "Millions of Facebook users have no idea they're using the Internet" "Net Neutrality: What You Need to Know Now" Presentation: ISP Talk Feb 3 - Ron Deibert: Inside the Battle for Cyberspace: A Perspective from Citizen Lab (SH 3345 at 4-6 pm) |
| 6 | 2/8 | The filter bubble. Facebook's News Feed | Quiz 1 Eli Pariser, "The You Loop"; "Escape from the City of Ghettos" Victor Luckerson, "Here's How Facebook's News Feed Actually Works" Presentations: Citizen Lab, algorithm, protocol |
| 7 | 2/15 | Reading week | No class |
| 8 | 2/22 | Mid-term group project discussion / presentation | Presentation feedback is due in class. |
| 9 | 2/29 | Social media and the state. The Filternet Algorithmic surveillance and protocological control | Steven J. Murdoch & Ross Anderson, "Tools and Technology of Internet Filtering" "Iranian Internet Infrastructure and Policy Report" Robert Faris & Nart Villeneuve, "Measuring Global Internet Filtering" [diagrams only] EFF: "Protecting Yourself on Social Networks" Presentations: Tor, VPN, PRISM, SORM, 'friends of friends' Talk March 2 – Andrei Soldatov & Irina Borogan: Surveillance and Control in Russia Talk March 3 – Andrei Soldatov & Irina Borogan: <i>The Red Web</i> book launch (Museum London at 7-9 pm) |

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| 10 | 3/7 | Complicity and disobedience | Presentations: Cyberfeminism (i.e. Sadie Plant, VNS Matrix, Shu Lea Cheang, subRosa, Sandy Stone, Deep Lab); Electronic Disturbance Theater (original and 0.2), Deterritorial Support Group, RSG (Radical Software Group), The Yes Men, Francesco Finizio, Zack Blas, Josh Bagley, Laurel Ptak |
| 11 | 3/14 | Alternative social media. Wikipedia Wikileaks: a platform and an organization | Christian Fuchs & Marisol Sandoval, "The Political Economy of Capitalist and Alternative Social Media" Geert Lovink, "Techno-politics at Wikileaks" Presentations: Riseup, Crabgrass, Diaspora*, Kloak, Creative Commons, Reddit |
| 12 | 3/21 | Anonymous (dis)organization | Deterritorial Support Group, "All the Memes of Production" Gabriella Coleman, "Anonymous: From Lulz to Collective Action" Presentation: 4chan Talk March 23 - Gabriella Coleman: How Anonymous Narrowly Evaded the Cyberterrorism Rhetorical Machine |
| 13 | 3/28 | Reading the Snowden files | Quiz 2 Friedrich Kittler, "No Such Agency" <i>Citizenfour</i> (Laura Poitras, 2014) Snowden Doc Search |
| 14 | 4/4 | Final project presentations | |

Assignment Overview

There is no exam in this course; thus, you will do different weekly assignments, on the basis of which I will evaluate your performance in this course.

Readings. You are required to do the readings before class for which they are assigned. Come prepared: be ready to discuss the points raised by the authors as well as the terms and concepts mentioned in the texts. Your participation will be evaluated weekly (except for the days of group presentations.)

Talk response. You are required to attend at least two (out of five) public talks by the invited speakers in the series "Information Wars and Struggles" organized by the FIMS faculty. A joint response / review of two talks is due any time before or on **March 28**. Format: four (4) pages, double space, 12 Times New Roman. No cover page.

Individual presentation. Each of you will give one short (5-7 min / 5 slides) presentation on the term of your choice. The list of terms and notions can be found on the course website. Some of the terms are discussed in the assigned readings and you will have to summarize them and to provide examples and/or wider contexts. Other terms and notions are not mentioned in the readings and will require some research beyond the assigned material. If you don't know where to start looking, ask me. In most cases, I either have the resources or know how to access them and I will be happy to share this information with you.

Quizzes. There will be two quizzes – 20 minutes each – on **February 8** and on **March 28**. You will be asked to provide four (4) paragraph-long definitions of the terms we will learn during the course. These definitions will come from the assigned readings, our class discussion, your presentations and my lectures.

Group project. During the first weeks of the term, you will assemble 4 groups to work on a course project related to the topic of social media and organizations. The form and content of these projects may vary: from a case study or other research project as an essay for publication in a journal or a website demonstrating the results of your research; a panel discussion on a relevant subject drawn from or inspired by the course content; or else. I will discuss the specifics of this assignment with you in class on **January 18**. I will also provide the templates for your midterm project presentation. And then your collaboration will commence!

The stages of project development:

| Date | Task |
|------------|---|
| 1/22 | Submit the list of your team members by adding it to a designated google document. |
| 1/25 – 2/2 | During this time, your team or several team representatives should meet with me to discuss the preliminary idea of your project including social media platforms and strategies to use. Mind that my office hours are limited: schedule a meeting in advance. No further consultations will be provided after February 2. |
| 2/3 – 2/21 | Work on your project plan and rationale. |
| 2/22 | Midterm presentation of the project concept and rationale with a detailed plan of its implementation, a timetable with the division of responsibilities within your team. Immediate feedback from your colleagues and I will be provided by the end of our class. (The quality of your feedback will be evaluated – see the Grade Composition table below). |
| 2/23 – 4/3 | Project execution. |
| 4/4 | Presentation of your work. |

Both mid-term presentations and final presentations will be evaluated on the basis of 1) **performance** (i.e., keeping the schedule above), 2) **content** (i.e., significance of your project, its viability and the division of labour between team members) and 3) **presentation** (i.e., clarity).

Both parts – developing a plan and executing it – are equally essential, which is reflected by the equal weight given to them (see the Grade Composition table). It is because designing a good plan is just as important and difficult as implementing a project itself.

Grade Composition

| Type of assignment | Worth /one | Weight /all |
|---|------------|-------------|
| Talk response | 15 | 15 % |
| Individual presentation | 10 | 10 % |
| Quizzes | 10 x 2 | 20 % |
| Mid-term project content & presentation | 20 | 20 % |
| Presentation feedback | 5 | 5 % |
| Final project content & presentation | 20 | 20 % |
| Participation | 1 x 10 | 10 % |

Late Assignments

Extensions will only be granted for family emergencies, illness, and other University-recognized legitimate reasons for missing assignments. Otherwise late assignments will receive a deduction of 5 % per day. Please contact academic counselling to receive accommodation for family emergencies or illness.

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

We will be using pens & paper for taking notes in class, not laptops (unless I notify you to bring your computers for work on special assignments). Phones are prohibited to use in class; you can only use phones during the breaks.