

Social Media 3307

Spring 2016 | 10:00 am - 11:15 am | Monday / Thursday | FMH 317

Professor Alice Marwick

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Office Hours:

M/Th 2-3pm

Course Description

This class examines the relationship between society and the current crop of computer-mediated communication technologies known as “social media,” including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and more. These technologies are often regarded with fear or awe; the purpose of this class is to break down the mythologies of social media and develop methods of analysis and critical understanding. To do this, we will draw from a broad range of social theory including science and technology studies (STS), communication theory, linguistics, cultural studies, and media anthropology to critically evaluate the impact of social media on relationships, activism, branding, politics, news media, and identity. We will focus on the “sociotechnical,” the relationship between the technical affordances of a website/technology and the social norms of a user community, and how to use this to understand emerging technologies (and social media that doesn’t exist yet!). Students will also gain basic practical social media skills: understanding the landscape, learning “best practices,” and using different social media technologies throughout the class to create and propagate content.

Course Materials

Sign up for a Tumblr.com, a Twitter.com, a Medium.com and a BuzzFeed.com account. You can use any name, alias, or pseudonym you want. Keep in mind if you use your “real name” or your Facebook/Google account, if someone searches for your name, they may find content you write for this class.

The following textbook is required. Please make sure you buy the second edition from 2015.

Baym, Nancy (2015) *Personal Connections in a Digital Age*. Second Edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. ISBN: 0745670342

Other class readings, assignments, and announcements will be posted on Blackboard. Please print out the readings and bring them to class. This is a reading-heavy class. If you do not plan on doing the reading, do not plan on doing well in the class.

Assignments

Attendance & Participation	10%
Critical Reading Tumblr	20%
Midterm	25%
Written Assignment #1	15%
Written Assignment #2	15%
Written Assignment #3	15%
TOTAL:	100%

Attendance & Participation (10%)

You must do the reading or this class will be a waste of time. I randomly call on people to encourage everyone to fully absorb the readings and share your thoughts with your classmates. This class is predicated upon active participation by all members. At the college level (especially in a communication class) you must take responsibility and participate as an active learner.

If you're not in class, you can't participate. Attending class sessions—showing up on time and staying the entire period—is required. However, life is full of unexpected events; therefore, each student gets 2 unexcused absences over the course of the semester. These can be used for any reason: sickness, family vacations, sample sales, etc. But once they are gone, your final grade will drop a half a grade with every excess absence. Please be aware that absences are not an acceptable excuse for not having done the required work. You are expected to find out from a classmate what you missed in the event that you are absent. I am under no obligation to allow makeups for unexcused absences.

Excused Absences include religious holidays, family emergencies, serious illness, and athletics: the university has specific policies about all of these. Any student with one of these issues should talk to me individually.

Critical Reading Tumblr (20%)

- Our class has a blog at <http://http://socialmedia16.tumblr.com/>. You should:
 - Create an account at <http://www.tumblr.com>. You can use your existing Tumblr account if you already have one. You're welcome to use a fake name/pseudonym/nickname, just let me know what it is.
 - Fill out the form at <http://bit.ly/3307form> including the email address you used to set up your Tumblr account, e.g. fordhamstudent1991@gmail.com. I will add you as a member.

- I will regularly give specific instructions for blog posts. **Those are due by 5pm the night before class.** I encourage you to post articles, Tweets, videos, songs, pictures, etc. that you think relate to what we're studying, along with your analysis of why.
- Casual language is fine, but minimal profanity ("damn" is OK, anything stronger is not).
- Blog posts can be short and sweet but should be at least a paragraph.
- Read the class blog. **Please comment on at least two of your classmates' posts each week.** I encourage you to reply to comments and discuss with your classmates!
- You can post more if you'd like. The blog could be used for asking questions, coordinating study groups, working on midterm and final reviews, and so forth.
- Grading: If you do it, you get credit. In other words, you can get an easy A in this assignment by writing every single post listed in the syllabus on time. Late or missing posts will decrease your grade.
- I am available to help with technical issues but they are not an excuse for not posting—if you have problems, bring them up as soon as possible.
- I will write periodic evaluations on your posts. Don't expect comments on every one, but I'll give you feedback and let you know how you are doing.

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam is an objective, in-class exam, consisting of true-false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the blank questions. The exam will cover the course material from the first six weeks of the class.

Written Assignment #1: Community Norms and Breaching Experiments (15%)

Instructions will be handed out in class. 5 pages, double-spaced

Written Assignment #2: BuzzFeed Community Post (15%)

Instructions will be handed out in class. You'll be asked to write a BuzzFeed Community post and spread it virally, and then write 2 pages about the experience.

Written Assignment #3: Medium Post (15%)

You will pick one of your blog posts or written assignments and convert it into a Medium post. You will write and edit this post throughout the second half of the semester with input from your classmates. Further instructions will be handed out in class.

Schedule

- Thursday 1/21 **Introductions & Course Overview**
 Syllabus
 Class objectives
 What is social media?
In class assignment: set up Tumblr accounts.
Join class blog and post first assignment.
- Monday 1/25 **Key Concepts**
 Nancy Baym “New Forms of Personal Connection” Chapter 1
 Terms: *interactivity, temporal structure, social cues, storage, replicability, reach, mobility*
- Blog Assignment: Pick a social media technology and analyze it in terms of one of the seven key terms. Include a photo, video or audio file, and a link.*
- Thursday 1/28 **Social Media in Context**
 Tom Standage, “Introduction,” “The Ancient Foundations of Social Media: Why Humans Are Wired for Sharing” and “The Roman Media: The First Social-Media Ecosystem” (from *Writing on the Wall: Social Media, the first 2,000 Years*). Note: do not miss the section “GNAEUS ALLEIUS WROTE ON YOUR WALL” as it is hilarious.
 Terms: *social media, mass media, social grooming, Dunbar number*
- What’s similar about these previous forms of media? What’s different? What’s the difference between the internet and the web?*
- Blog Assignment: Pick a pre-web technology and compare it to one of your favorite websites, apps, or games (e.g. record player vs. Spotify).*
- Monday 2/1 **History of Social Media**
 Ellison & Boyd, “Sociality of Social Network Sites” (2013)
 Terms: *social network site, profile, social network, friend, context collapse, social graph, user-generated content, social awareness stream, strong ties, weak ties, computer-mediated communication, Web 2.0, virtual communities, asynchronous, synchronous, one-to-one, one-to-many, bi-directional, uni-directional.*

Blog Assignment: What is your personal history with social media? What is your social media use like now compared to when you were 13? How have your personal practices changed as the technologies you use have changed?

Thursday 2/4

Public Communication of Technology

Baym Chapter 2, “Making New Media Make Sense”

Nelkin, *Selling Science: How the Press Covers Science and Technology* (selections)

Watch in class: Ben Goodacre, Battling Bad Science TED talk

http://www.ted.com/talks/ben_goldacre_battling_bad_science.html

Terms: *Technological Determinism, social construction of technology, Social Shaping, utopian, dystopian, domestication, moral panic*

How are new technologies represented in the media?

Blog assignment: Pick a news story about social media and post it.

Analyze whether you think the claims and evidence presented in the story are correct. If the news story includes a study, find the original study the story reported on, if possible.

Examples: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/12/selfies-narcissism-psychopathy_n_6429358.html

<http://www.cnet.com/news/only-4-of-your-150-facebook-friends-are-actual-friends-says-study/>

Monday 2/8

Computer-Mediated Communication

Baym, Chapter 3, “Communication in Digital Spaces”

Goldfield, “I Heart Emoji.” *The New Yorker*, October 16 2012

<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/i-heart-emoji>

Terms: *reduced social cues, social presence theory, media richness theory, flaming, trolling, cues filtered out, non-verbal cues, mixed modality, social norms, emoji*

Blog Assignment: Pick a politician’s Twitter account. Analyze his or her speech. What features of CMC does he/she show, or not? Compare this with the account of a musician or celebrity like @kimkardashian or @rihanna.

Tip: Find your hometown Senator or Representative:

<http://www.contactingthecongress.org/>

Thursday 2/11

Affordances

Gibson, J. "The Theory of Affordances." *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. 127-143.

Norman "The Psychopathy of Everyday Things"

Terms: *Affordance, delegation, anthropomorphism, re-inscription*

What is an affordance?

How does this play into social construction or technological determinism?

Blog post: Analyze a physical object (anything you have lying around).

What are its affordances? Do you think Norman would approve? Could it be improved? How else could it be used? How do you know how it should be used?

Monday 2/15 – President's Day, Fordham Closed

Tuesday 2/16

Monday Schedule

Online Communities

Baym, Chapter 4, "Communities and Networks"

Correll, "The Ethnography of an Electronic Bar: The Lesbian Café"

Terms: *community, shared space, shared practice, speech community, norms, social capital, bonding capital, bridging capital, maintained capital, network support, emotional support, esteem support, informational support, networked individualism, social support, lurkers*

Blog Assignment: Pick an online site that you participate in (something smaller than "Facebook" or "Twitter," e.g. a particular Facebook community, or a fan forum for a sports team). Do you consider it a "community"? Why or why not?

Thursday 2/18

Norms

Garfinkel, "Studies of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities" (warning: This is a difficult piece. Concentrate on the experiments and how Garfinkel's students responded to them.)

Monroe, "From Pickup Artist to Pariah"

<http://nymag.com/thecut/2016/01/jared-rutledge-pickup-artist-c-v-r.html>

Terms: *social norms, context collapse, impression management, persistence, scalability, searchability*

Short Paper #1: Social Media Breaching Experiments Assigned

Blog Assignment: Return to the group you wrote about in the last assignment. What are its norms? Talk about one or two in a short post.

Monday 2/22

Online Identity

Baym Chapter 5, “New Relationships, New Selves”

Terms: *Disembodied identities, identity cues, self-presentation, latent tie, self-presentation, disembodied audiences, cognitive misers, platforms*

Blog assignment: Pick three digital photos of yourself that you think are flattering, and three that you find to be unflattering, funny or embarrassing in some way.

Label your six photos A-F, post them to the class Tumblr, and then write a blog post—including the photos-- in which you explain which pictures would be the best and worst to use for the purposes below. In your explanations, be as specific as you can (e.g. don’t say “this photo looks professional,” explain how and why you came to that conclusion, based on signifiers like clothing, background details, and so forth.)

- Facebook profile page
- Company profile for someone who works in a bank
- Dating site profile page (or Tinder pic)
- History book showing what everyday life was like in 2016 in your country

Thursday 2/25

Case Study: The Selfie

Saltz. J. 2014. “At Arm’s Length: A History of the Selfie.” New York Magazine. Online at <http://www.vulture.com/2014/01/history-of-the-selfie.html>

Senft & Baym, “What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon.” (2015)

Terms: impression management, the “I” and the “Me”, interpellation, imagined audience, give/give off,

Short Paper #1: Social Media Breaching Experiments Due

Monday 2/29

Relationships

Baym, Chapter 6, “Digital Media in Relational Development and Maintenance”

Gershon, “Fifty Ways to Leave Your Lover” (from *Breakup 2.0*)

Terms: *early idealization, relational development, relational maintenance, "friending," idioms of practice, media ideologies, second-order information*

Thursday 3/3

Midterm

Monday 3/7

Creativity and Participation

Jenkins, Ito & boyd, "Defining Participatory Culture"

Schifman, "When Memes Go Digital" and "Defining Internet Memes"

Blog assignment: Peruse knowyourmeme.com's Meme Database for a half hour or so. Pick a meme (either one you found there or one you were previously familiar with) and write a quick analysis of what the meme involves. What social norms or assumptions underlay the meme? (E.g. what assumptions about relationships does Overly Attached Girlfriend represent?)

Paper #2: Buzzfeed Community Post Assigned

Thursday 3/10

Social Media & News

Rosen, J. "The People Formerly Known as the Audience" (2006)

http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html

Starr, "Goodbye to the Age of Newspapers (Hello to a New Era of Corruption)"

<http://www.tnr.com/article/goodbye-the-age-newspapers-hello-new-era-corruption>

Blog post to be assigned in class

Monday 3/14

Social Media & News

Petre, "The Traffic Factories: Metrics at Chartbeat, Gawker Media & the New York Times" <http://towcenter.org/research/traffic-factories/>

Blog post: Analyze the top 10 stories on any online news site (newspaper, news channel, blog, aggregate site like Buzzfeed or Upworthy, entertainment site like TMZ, Vulture, Entertainment Weekly). What do these stories cover? Who might be the intended audience? Are these the most politically important sites? What type of content is emphasized and what is left out?

March 17 – 28 – Spring Break

Thursday 3/31

Celebrity & Authenticity

Swerdlove, "Shop Jeen is So Scene"

<http://nymag.com/thecut/2015/08/shop-jeen-erin-yogasundram.html>

Essena O'Neill Quits Instagram

<http://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/nov/03/instagram-star-essena-oneill-quits-2d-life-to-reveal-true-story-behind-images>

Marwick, A. (2013). “They're really profound women, they're entrepreneurs’: Conceptions of Authenticity in Fashion Blogging.” *ICWSM, International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*. Cambridge, MA: July 7-11.

Blog Post: Pick an “internet celebrity” from Instagram, Vine, or YouTube. Do they try to be ‘authentic’? How? What do they do? What acts are ‘authentic’ and what might be ‘inauthentic’?

Monday 4/4

Algorithms and Platforms

Gillespie, “The Politics of Platforms”

Screening in-class: “The Filter Bubble” TED talk by Eli Parisier

http://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles

Assignment #2 Due – Buzzfeed Community Post

Thursday 4/7

Legal Aspects of Social Media

Lessig, “Property” (from *Free Culture*)

Optional: Zittrain, “Tethered Appliances, Software as Service, and Perfect Enforcement” (from *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It*)

<http://futureoftheinternet.org/static/ZittrainTheFutureoftheInternet.pdf>

Blog Post to be assigned in class

Monday 4/11

Transgression and Deception

Phillips, *This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things* (excerpt)

Donath, “Identity and Deception in the Virtual Community”

<http://vivatropolis.com/papers/Donath/IdentityDeception/IdentityDeception.pdf>

Blog Post to be Assigned in Class

Thursday 4/14

Case Study: Gamergate

Hathaway, “What is Gamergate and Why? An Explanation for Non-Geeks”

Miltner & Banet-Wiser, “#masculinitysofragile: Culture, Structure, and Networked Misogyny”

Screening in-class: *Feminist Frequency* video

Blog Post: Go to the Kotaku in Action subreddit

(<http://www.reddit.com/r/kotakuinaction>) and analyze the community there. What community norms and values do you observe? What positions are popular and what are unpopular?

Assignment #3 – Medium Post – Assigned

Monday 4/18

Extra Credit for Attending Liz Losh Lecture

Education

Jenkins, Ito & boyd, “Learning and Literacy”

Konnikova, “Will MOOCs be flukes?”

<http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/moocs-failure-solutions>

Blog Post: Where do you learn? Give an example of a time you learned something from a “non-formal” source online (not a textbook, a class site, or from a professor). Think YouTube tutorials, Wikipedia, video game walkthroughs, etc. What types of things are available online for learning and what are not? How might traditional educational institutions integrate social media?

Topic for Medium post due

Thursday 4/21

Branding

Eric Qualman, *Socialnomics* Chapter 1 & 2

Ivey, “Domino’s Pizza Case Study.”

Blog assignment: How can companies engage well on social media? Post an example of a company you think is doing it “right” or “wrong.” Why or why not?

Monday 4/25

Politics

George, “The Internet as a Platform for Civil Disobedience”

Jones, “Parody, Performativity, and Play”

Blog Assignment: Pick an online political or activist meme, campaign, blog, or similar (NOT KONY2012 or the Ice Bucket Challenge). How does it take advantage of the dynamics explained in both Schiffman and Jones? (Or does it?)

*Rough draft of Medium post for Peer Grading Exercise
Peer Grading Exercise in Class*

Thursday 4/28

Privacy

Andrews, “Facebook Nation” and “George Orwell...Meet Mark Zuckerberg”

Solove, “Why Privacy Matters Even if you Have Nothing to Hide”

<http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Privacy-Matters-Even-if/127461/>

Blog Assignment: How do you protect your privacy online? What would you never post about? How are your Facebook privacy settings set? Why? Log out and try to view your profile. Were you correct about how you had set your settings?

Thursday 5/2

Gaps & Divides

Baym, Conclusion

Jenkins, Ito & boyd, “Gaps & Genres in Participation”

Blog Assignment: Choose a social media technology we’ve never discussed in class. Post a brief analysis of its affordances and norms, and how it may impact social or political issues. (The point of this assignment is to show that you can use the tools developed in this class to discuss technologies that we can’t even imagine yet!)

Optional Blog assignment: What worked in this class? What didn’t work? What would you alter and change if YOU were teaching the class?

Dr. Marwick returns rough drafts w/ comments

Student Evaluations

Class Policies

E-Mail and Office Hours

I have more than 150 students; as a result, I cannot promise a quick turnaround on emails. The best way to talk to me about something specific is to come to my office hours. You do not need an appointment. If you can’t make my office hours because you have class during those times, I offer very limited hours by appointment. Internships are not an excuse. Please do your best to come to scheduled office hours.

Attendance

I take attendance at the beginning of each class. Fordham’s attendance policy is as follows:

The maximum number of total excused absences will not exceed six class meetings for a course that meets three days per week, four class meetings for a course meeting two days per week, or two class meetings for a course that

meets once a week. If a faculty member chooses to allow unexcused absences, the number of excused and unexcused absences combined may be limited to the maximum number noted above. Faculty members are under no obligation to allow make-up work for unexcused absences.

Excused absences include athletics, illness (with a doctor's note), and family emergencies. They do not include leaving early for spring break, internship obligations, or other non-essential situations. **If you miss more than four classes, excused or unexcused, you may fail the class.** Please talk to me as early in the semester as possible about excused absences.

Written Work

Paper grades are based, in part, on the strength of your ability to communicate effectively through writing. Papers with typos, misspellings, grammatical errors, and the like will receive low grades. All papers must have a thesis statement, an introduction, a conclusion, and a works cited page. All material should be sourced, not only direct quotations. They must be in 12-point Times New Roman and must be stapled. I expect students who have trouble with written work to talk to me in office hours or seek help at the Writing Center.

Late Paper Policy

All assignments must be completed on time in order to receive full credit. Late assignments will be penalized by half a grade for each 24-hour period it is late. After five calendar days, the assignment will not be accepted and you may fail this class. No incompletes are given for this course. I will only give extensions on final papers in consultation with your class dean.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is not tolerated, and will result in failing the course: this includes falsifying sources, failing to cite source material, and using unattributed quotations. All instances of plagiarism will be reported through official channels. Please read [Fordham's policy on plagiarism](#), which is part of the Standards of Academic Integrity.

Grading

If you come to every class and turn in every assignment, you are guaranteed to get a C. If you put in extra effort, you may get a B. I only give As for honors-level work that is outstanding, in accordance with Fordham's grading policy.

I try to be very transparent with my grading and am happy to explain any grade to you during office hours.

Challenging a Grade

If you disagree with a grade on an assignment or paper, please email me a written, detailed

explanation of why you think the grade should be re-evaluated. **DO NOT COME TALK TO ME ABOUT IT IN OFFICE HOURS OR AFTER CLASS UNTIL YOU EMAIL ME YOUR EXPLANATION.** If I find your explanation convincing (hint: “I think you should give me an A because I worked really hard” is not convincing) I will re-grade the paper. This means the grade may go up; it may go down; it may stay the same.

Resources

Office of Disability Studies

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

Writing Center

If you are really struggling with writing, I suggest you head to the Rose Hill Writing Center—their entire reason for existence is to help undergrads become better writers.

http://www.fordham.edu/info/20126/writing_center

“Providing more than a proofreading service, our tutors will work with you on a variety of logical, rhetorical, and grammatical concerns in your writing. We can assist you with any type of writing from your curriculum, from conception, to composition, to completion. Our aim is not only to help you perfect an individual essay; we want to help you develop the tools you need to become a better writer. Our service is free and, if you come with the right expectations and the willingness to participate actively in the session, extremely effective.”

Rose Hill
Walsh Library, Reference Area, Room 121
Phone: 718-817-0077
Mon-Thur 9am-8pm; Fri 9am-3pm

Schedule an appointment online: <https://fordham.mywconline.com/>

CMS on the Web

Answers to many common questions can be found on the department’s website, <http://www.fordham.edu/cms>

We post internships and announcements frequently on the CMS Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/FordhamCMS>