

# - BEYOND THE CLASSROOM -

- Seminars - Internships - Service Learning - Civic Engagement - Leadership -



## UNIV 389T: Social Media for Social Change

Spring 2014

Wednesdays, 3:30PM-6:15PM; 3 credits  
1102 South Campus Commons

### Instructors:

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301-314-6620

### Office Hours:

Monday: 3PM-4PM  
Tuesday: 2PM-3PM  
Wednesday: 2PM-3PM  
By Appointment

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### Office Hours:

Tuesday: 2PM-3:15PM  
Wednesday: 2PM-3:15PM  
By Appointment

### Course Rationale

In the United States and elsewhere, entry-level young professionals are increasingly expected by employers to possess the skills necessary to contribute to an organization's social media output and strategy. Non-profit organizations and grassroots activist groups are particularly drawn to social media, in part due to the low cost of using these services. Today's students have grown up in the digital age and are often familiar with a variety of social media platforms as casual users, but—upon entering the workforce or when attempting a grass-roots campaign using social media—they encounter a knowledge gap between being a regular user of a social media platform and being someone who uses social media for broader purposes. This course serves both to fill that knowledge gap and to equip students with a critical awareness of the impact that the global rise of social media has had on our world.

**Students should be aware that the focus of this course is on how the non-profit and civil sectors, as well as activists and other grassroots movements, use social media to advance citizen action and address pressing social and civic issues.**

### Course Goals

This course will equip you with specific skills for professional-level social media content development and strategy implementation, grounded in broad knowledge of how social media is used for social change; as well as the ability to think, speak, and write knowledgeably and critically about the impact of social media usage on society at the global, national, and local levels.

You may have noticed that the two aims of the course (developing knowledge and professional skills to use social media for social change, and critically analyzing social media usage in the context of civic issues) are in dynamic tension with each other. As a class, we will grapple with this tension, and you will be asked to decide: how can we ensure that our personal and professional usage of social media is ethical, mindful, and compatible with our goals for social change?

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## **Learning Outcomes**

In the first half of this course, students will develop technical skills on how to use social media for social change; in the second half, students will develop critical awareness of the social, ethical, and philosophical implications of social media usage in the world. By the end of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of a range of social media practices and platforms employed by agents of social change locally and globally, and assess the effectiveness of these practices and platforms.
2. Examine critically the rising usage and importance of social media—and, by extension, information/communication technology—in the global consumer economy, and the effects this has had on our world.
3. Formulate achievable goals for social change, create web content, and develop strategies for the social media platform(s) of your choosing; and *implement an authentic social media campaign to enact real social change.*
4. Show a willingness to take initiative and creative risks in the pursuit of solving and addressing civic issues through innovative use of social media campaigns and other digital technologies.
5. Use communication skills (spoken and written) and collaboration skills conducive to success in a professional setting, particularly in the context of using social media for social change.

## **Course Requirements**

All students are expected to:

- Possess an intellectual curiosity about the issues that arise in the course and readings;
- Attend all class meetings prepared to participate in discussions and activities;
- Schedule and attend all individual meetings with the instructor; and
- Check course email and Canvas space *regularly* for class updates

## **Course Philosophy**

This course – required to receive the BTC transcript notation – acts as a capstone experience for the Beyond the Classroom program. It is designed to draw on your learning throughout the program, the foundation course, internship experiences, and civic learning trips. It is highly experiential and intended to teach critical thinking and practical social media skills. It employs a project based approach that includes research, advocacy, activism, and engagement. You are required to work independently as well as in groups, and take initiative while fulfilling the requirements of the class.

## **Honor Pledge**

The University of Maryland adopted an honor code that prohibits cheating, plagiarizing, or fabricating any coursework. The code is available at [www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu), and all students are required to understand and comply with the terms of the code. This is especially important for this class since many of you will be conducting original research.

## **Religious Observances**

The University of Maryland policy states that students should not be penalized in any way for participating in religious observances. Students will be allowed, whenever practical, to make up assignments or course activities missed in these cases. Also per University policy, all arrangements for such absences must be made within the **first two weeks of the course.**

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## ***Inclement Weather***

In the event of inclement weather that leads to the official closing of the campus, please check your email and Canvas for updates on the course requirements and any changes to the course syllabus. Check <http://www.umd.edu/emergencypreparedness> for updates on the university's status, but because this is an online course, closures should not effect this course.

## ***Students with Disabilities***

Students with documented disabilities should contact the instructor within **by the end of the schedule readjustment period** to make sure they receive accommodations. For information about services offered to students with disabilities, refer to the Counseling Center website at [www.counseling.umd.edu](http://www.counseling.umd.edu).

## ***Course Evaluation***

You are highly encouraged to participate in the campus-wide online course evaluation system, CourseEvalUM, in order to provide you valuable feedback about this course. Go to the web site: [www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete your evaluation.

## ***Course Format***

The new online learning platform Canvas (available at [myelms.umd.edu](http://myelms.umd.edu)) is an essential component to this course and students' overall learning experience. Students are responsible for understanding and using this new technology. The instructors will assume that students who do not contact them are capable of using Canvas, so unfamiliarity with this technology is not a legitimate excuse for failing to complete coursework. The components of Canvas that are used in this course include appointment scheduler, readings, file upload, assignment submission, discussion board, and gradebook.

## ***Course Structure***

This course will be conducted face-to-face once per week, and will be supplemented by Canvas discussions. All readings will be downloadable from Canvas, and all assignments will be submitted on Canvas. Your grades will be calculated and posted in Canvas throughout the course. This is to allow for as transparent a grading process as possible. Rubrics for all assignments will be available for download on Canvas; please read them carefully.

**Course Readings:** You are expected to complete all reading assignments before class. All readings are available in the "Files" section of the course Canvas page, and organized by week on the "Modules" page in Canvas.

## ***Assignments and Grading***

**All assignments must be submitted on Canvas, not in class.** Full assignment descriptions, rubrics, and any other necessary documents are available through Canvas. For work submitted late *without prior instructor approval*, the instructor will deduct one letter grade from the assignment's final grade for each day of lateness. Late work cannot be submitted via Canvas (the submission form will close automatically on the deadline) and must be submitted via e-mail to the instructor.

*The assignments in this course are:*

## **Blog Post:**

Each student will sign up for a week when he or she will write a blog post on any social issue, providing resources and ideas for using social media to address this issue. Students will post a draft of the blog post on Canvas and will receive feedback from students in that week's class. The final draft will be posted on the Beyond the Classroom blog.

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## Case Study Brief:

Each student will write a 1-page single-spaced summary and assessment of a case of social media being used for social change. The case should be relevant to the social issue that the student hopes his/her social media project group will work on. Students need not limit themselves to institutional cases (such as NPOs, governments, foundations, etc.); other kinds of cases are equally encouraged: individuals/grassroots groups; social media being used in response to natural disasters and other crises; cases of social media used for or against terrorism or cyberterrorism, etc. With prior instructor approval, cases of for-profit organizations using social media for social change may also be considered, provided that the case is analyzed in a manner consistent with the goals and philosophy of this course.

## Social Media Project Proposal:

This assignment is a 1-page single-spaced document comprised of a summary of a current social issue or other civic problem, and a proposal for how a campaign involving innovative use of social media and other digital technologies might be used to address a specific aspect of this problem. This course is built around a semester-long, student-initiated social media project. The projects will be completed in groups, but before the groups are assigned, all students will individually write social media project proposals that the entire class will review on Canvas, discuss in class, and vote on to decide which proposals will be used for project groups.

## Social Media Project:

Students will be put into groups at the beginning of the semester after deciding as a class on which Social Media Project Proposals will be made into actual campaigns. Each group will then design, launch, and analyze the results of a semester-long campaign for social change using social media. The Social Media Project will consist of several graded elements, **all of which will be completed and graded as a group:**

- **Project Plan** – 3-page single-spaced outline of the social issue to be addressed, project goals, intended project methods, necessary project resources, project measures of effectiveness, and project timeline.
- **Project Status Updates** – Weekly Canvas discussion post, summarizing activities, accomplishments, problems, concerns, and desired changes from the original plan (*note: these updates will be graded as part of your overall class participation grade*)
- **Project Presentation** – 10-minute presentation with supporting materials (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) to summarize the campaign and its results, and to offer reflective analysis of what students have learned through this experience about both the social issue being addressed and about using social media for social change.
- **Final Report** – 8-page double-spaced report that includes and builds upon the information addressed in the Project Presentation. This must be delivered as MS Word doc, but must also be optimizable for online sharing; quantitative and qualitative analyses are required

## Beyond the Classroom “Social Media for Social Change” Spring 2014 Guidebook:

By compiling the lessons learned throughout the semester and through doing these various assignments and projects, the class will create a guidebook of social media best practices for undergraduate students seeking to enact social change by leveraging social media. (*Note: your work on this project will be graded as part of your overall class participation grade*)

- Step 1: class will determine what sections the guidebook should have
- Step 2: class will determine who will work on which sections
- Step 3: class will determine how they should be assessed on this project (instructors will provide input and revise as needed)

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**Community Participation:** (*Community participation report form due on the final week of classes*)

Beyond the Classroom is a community of learners. The program offers a variety of engaging events throughout the semester intended to build community and teach students new perspectives. As a member of this community, you are expected to actively engage and participate in BTC events over the semester, and you pledged to do so when you signed up for the program. Participating in these opportunities optimizes your living-learning program experience. For the course, students are required to complete several community events, following the guidelines outlined in detail on Canvas. One opportunity to take particular note of are the screenings of two films on social media's role in civic engagement, shown as part of BTC's "People Power" seminar. Look on Canvas for details.

**Class Participation:** (*Assessed weekly*)

Your participation grade includes contributing to the course overall. This aspect of your grade is calculated by your level of participation in all aspects of the course, including (but not limited to) coming to class prepared on a regular basis, completing well-thought out assignments, sharing your experiences with other participants through a variety of different avenues (online, group meetings, in class), being a constructive member of your group, and contributing to Canvas discussions. You will also be given the opportunity to assess the other members of your group and their contributions to your Social Media Project.

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## Course Assignments Overview:

<b>Individual Assignments</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Due Date(s)</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<i>Blog Post</i>	MS Word & Blog Post	Varies (students will sign up)	3%
<i>Case Study Brief</i>	MS Word (1 page)	Week 3: Feb. 12	3%
<i>Social Media Project Proposal</i>	MS Word (1 page)	Week 4: Feb. 19	4%
<i>Class Participation</i>	Weekly activities in class & on Canvas (including weekly Project check-ins and contributions to Guidebook)	Throughout	25%
<i>Community Participation</i>	Participation in activities, reported on form	May 5	20%
<b>Team Assignments</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Due Date(s)</b>	<b>Weight</b>
<i>Social Media Project Plan</i>	MS Word (1 page)	Week 6: Mar. 5	5%
<i>Social Media Guidebook</i>	MS Word	Week 15: May 7	10%
<i>Social Media Project Presentation</i>	10-minute Presentation & Supporting Materials	Week 13: Apr. 23	15%
<i>Social Media Project Final Report</i>	MS Word (8 pages)	Week 13: Apr. 23	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>100%</b>

**Reminder: All assignments must be submitted via Canvas, not in class.**

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## Course Schedule:

*Note: Due to the ever-changing nature of the social media landscape, the below schedule and assigned readings are subject to change. Any changes will be announced at least 1 week in advance.*

### **Week 1: January 29 –Course overview & student experiences with social media**

*(Note: class will end 30 minutes early)*

- In class: Course overview
- Out of class: 30-minute 1-on-1 meetings to discuss individual students' goals and background

### **Week 2: February 5 –Social media strategy for social change: welcome to the digital commons, where everyone has an opinion and a megaphone**

- Read before class:
  - Boothe, Ivan. “Going Big Picture: How to Craft a Winning Strategy” (p. 4-8). *The Most Amazing Online Organizing Guide*. 2013. E-Book.
  - Crawford, Michael & Tolle, Cameron. “Facebook 101” (p. 13-17). *The Most Amazing Online Organizing Guide*. 2013. E-Book.
  - Becker, Beth. “Twitter 101” (p. 26-31). *The Most Amazing Online Organizing Guide*. 2013. E-Book.
  - Mansfield, Heather. “Introduction” (p. xi-xx) and “Chapter 2” (p. 45-70). *Social Media for Social Good: A How-To Guide for Non-Profits*. McGraw Hill: New York, 2012. Book.
  - Infographic: “How to Create Perfect Posts on Social Platforms”.
  - Idealware. *NPO Social Media Workbook*. 2012. E-Book. *(Just skim this—ask: who is the intended audience and what seem to be the things they care most about?)*
- In class:
  - Discussion: What strategies are non-profits and grassroots agents of social change using to further their causes? How do we measure the success of using social media for social change measured? What problems does the rise of social media introduce for non-profits?
- On Canvas, due before next week: Facebook for social change

### **Week 3: February 12 – Using stories, creating experiences, and establishing authenticity**

- Watch before class:
  - “The Naked Brand”: <http://www.bloomberg.com/video/the-naked-brand-the-future-of-marketing-wTo1reeNTNugBjR1Qj~gnA.html>
- Reading before class:
  - Meisel, Duncan. “Storytelling: Why It Matters & How to Get It Right”. *The Most Amazing Online Organizing Guide*. 2012. E-Book.(p. 9-12)
  - Dooley, Robert. (2013) “Nonprofits Drive Behavior with Social Media”. *Forbes.com*.
  - Pearman, Ian. (2014). “How social media can change the face of fundraising”. *TheGuardian.com*.
- In class:
  - Discussion: Case studies
  - Discussion: What should we make of the relationship between non-profit use of social media, marketing techniques, and behavioral psychology? What
- On Canvas, due before next week: YouTube & Flickr for social change
- **Due: Case Study Brief**



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## **Week 4: February 19 – Aligning your cause, audience, and choice of social media tools**

- Read before class:
  - McDonald, Soraya Nadia. (2014). “Black Twitter: a virtual community ready to hashtag out a response to cultural issues”. *WashingtonPost.com*.
  - Levine, Adam. (2013). “Closing the Achievement Gap in an Increasingly Diverse Country”. *HuffPost.com*.
  - Image: Conversation between Social Capital, Inc. and BTC on Twitter.
  - Holcombe, Jesse et al. (2013). “News Use Across Social Media Platforms”. Pew Research Journalism.
  - Magdirila, Phoebe. (2013). “5 Ways that Social Media Rocked the Philippines in 2013”. *TechInAsia.com*.
- In class:
  - Discussion: How do different audiences use social media platforms differently? What benefits and risks are there to examining social media usage along lines of race, gender, and age? How do the varying demographic populations existing in the UMD community use social media?
  - Activity: Present and vote on Social Media Project Proposals
- On Canvas, due before next week: Twitter for social change
- **Due: Social Media Project Proposal**

## **Week 5: February 26 – Focus on the issues you’re trying to address, not on the tools you use to address them: Design Thinking I and project management**

- In class:
  - Workshop: Design Thinking I, by Erica Estrada-Liou, UMD Lecturer on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
  - Discussion: Project management, time management, and measuring success
  - Discussion: Class consensus on making Social Media for Social Change Guidebook
- On Canvas, due before next week: Design thinking for your Social Media Project

## **Week 6: March 5 - University Career Center event**

**\*\* (NOTE: WE WILL NOT MEET IN SCC 1102) \*\***

**\*\*Class will meet at 4PM at 3100 Hornbake Library, University Career Center\*\***

**\*\*Event ends at 6:30PM\*\***

- Attend Industry Networking Series: Careers & Internships in Social Media:  
[http://www.careercenter.umd.edu/events\\_description.cfm?event\\_id=4722](http://www.careercenter.umd.edu/events_description.cfm?event_id=4722) and  
[http://www.careercenter.umd.edu/events\\_description.cfm?event\\_id=4144](http://www.careercenter.umd.edu/events_description.cfm?event_id=4144)
- On Canvas, due before next week: Research on networking event attendees and reflections on event
- **Due: Social Media Project Plan**

## **Week 7: March 12 – In-class workshop: Design Thinking II & project brainstorming**

- In class:
  - Workshop: Design Thinking II, by Erica Estrada-Liou, UMD Lecturer on Innovation & Entrepreneurship
  - Workshop: Social media project group brainstorming
- On Canvas, due before next week: What should the Spring 2014 “BTC Social Media for Social Change Guidebook” contain, and how should the workload be distributed?



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## **Week 8: March 19 [No class – Spring Break]**

- On Canvas: (Optional/Extra Credit) Personal life vs. private life on social media

## **Week 9 – 3/26: In-Class Workshop**

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, 3/30 at 11:59PM:**

- Blog Post 4 feedback
- Social Media Project Status Update 2

## **Week 10 – 4/2: In-Class Guest Lectures: “Social Media for Community Organizing” & “Activism for Gender Equality & Inclusiveness”**

**Optional Seminar on Tuesday, 4/1 at 6:30PM in SCC 1102:**

*(Attending will earn you 15 community participation points + 3 extra class participation points)*

- “Organizing, Mobilizing & Advocating for Transgender Equality” by Andy Bowen (UMD '08)

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, 4/6 at 11:59PM:**

- Blog Post 5 feedback
- Social Media Project Status Update 3

## **Week 11 – 4/9: Big brother, little brother: Privacy, power & social media**

**Read before class (and discuss in class):**

- Shirky, Clay. *Cognitive Surplus*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd, 2010. (**Read: All pages**)
- Lanier, Jaron. *You are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto*. London: Penguin Books, Ltd, 2010. (**Read: Introduction; Part I; Part III; Afterword**)
- Moran, Marissa & Griffin, Douglas. “Legal and ethical implications of regulating online commentary in OSCE countries.” (p. 43-54)

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, 4/13 at 11:59PM:**

- Critical Analysis Paper
- Blog Post 6 feedback
- Social Media Project Status Update 3

## **Week 12 – 4/16: Social media and the world in April 2014**

**Come to class prepared to discuss:**

- Critical Analysis Paper
- At least one current event related to (or influenced by) social media

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, 4/20 at 11:59PM:**

- Blog Post 7 feedback
- Blog Post 8 feedback

## **Week 13 – 4/23: Project Presentations**

**Submit online before class (4/23 at 3PM) & bring 1 copy per group to class:**

- Social Media Project Presentation
- Social Media Project Final Report

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, 4/27 at 11:59PM:**

- Social Media Guidebook Status Update 1

## **Week 14 – 4/30: Applying this course in your professional life**

*(Note: class ends 30 minutes early; register on Canvas for a 30-minute mock interview with the course instructors)*

**Due on Canvas by Sunday, May 4 at 11:59PM:**

- Social Media Guidebook Status Update 2

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- Discussion: Describing your achievements for resumes, cover letters interviews

### **Week 15 – 5/7: Final class session**

#### **Due on Canvas before class (5/7 at 3PM):**

- Social Media Guidebook (*one student should upload the guidebook and all student should explain their contributions*)