

COM 218: Communication Technologies and Impacts

Section 1, Fall 2019 Course Syllabus

School of Communication @ Illinois State University

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Nathan J. Carpenter, Ph.D.
"Dr. Carpenter / Dr. Nate"

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Office Hours: TW 11AM-noon, or by appointment

Course Information

Section: 01

Location: Fell 275A (SMACC)

Meeting Time: MWF 10:00AM – 10:50AM

Credit Hours: 3.0

Prerequisite: COM 111 or 160 or consent of instructor

Course Description

COM 218 introduces you to the study of the relationships between communication technologies and individuals, groups, organizations, and society. This section pays special attention to social media and emerging communication technologies.

Course Objectives

1. Help you identify, assess, and critique contemporary issues and problems associated with contemporary communication technologies
2. Help you apply relevant communication theories to contemporary communication technologies
3. Introduce you to methods of collecting and analyzing social media data
4. Help you develop stronger information literacy and analytical skills

Required Course Materials

1. Textbook: Humphreys, Ashlee (2016). Social Media: Enduring Principles. Oxford University Press
2. Access to ReggieNet for additional readings, quizzes, and assignment submission
3. An Illinois State University email address (@ilstu.edu) for course communication

Strongly Recommended Course Materials*

We will regularly use social media data to help us explore the topics covered in this course. It is strongly recommended (but not required) that you have the following resources and tools available on a laptop computer that you can bring to class on lab days:

1. A Twitter developer account (Dr. Carpenter will send you an invitation)
2. R and RStudio Desktop (R can be downloaded here: <https://cran.mtu.edu/>, RStudio Desktop here: <https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/>)
3. Gephi (download here: <https://gephi.org/>)
4. Microsoft Excel (available for download with your ISU <https://office365.ilstu.edu> account)

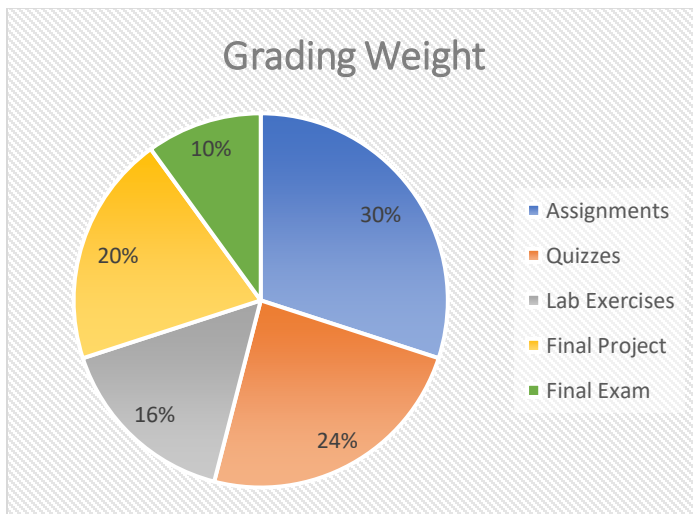
**Datasets and software will also be made available in select Fell Hall computer labs for those who do not have access to their own computing equipment. Talk to Dr. Carpenter if you do not have your own computer and need access to these resources.*

Class Structure

The course will loosely follow the structure of the Humphreys textbook and will be supplemented with appropriate outside readings to initiate conversation and demonstrate the application of theories to contemporary topics. On days where readings are due, I will lead discussion and activities based on the readings that are due that day, with occasional lecture to frame the issues or introduce advanced concepts. On days where labs are listed, we will be engaging on an in-depth hands-on activity with groups or teams. After Spring Break, most of the discussion and activities will be geared toward helping you complete the final project, which will involve short research presentations during the final two weeks of class.

Deliverables and Grading

Your final grade is earned through accumulating up to 1000 points. Assignments, quizzes, lab exercises, projects, and exams are all worth a certain number of points, depending on their weight. Please keep track of the points you earn, and do not overestimate your performance in class by relying on ReggieNet's automatic grade calculator. Point weights are broken down accordingly:



Assignments (4 total X 75 pts each = 300 pts)

Assignments are completed on your own and ask you to explore a topic in more depth for academic, industry, and lay audiences. Most assignments will require that you collect and analyze your own data, so it is important that you begin them on time and seek help early in the process. The four assignments will include the following:

- A. Analysis essay examining theories of media change
- B. Social network analysis of Twitter activity produced during an event
- C. Analysis of a hashtag related to a social movement
- D. Annotated bibliography in support of your final research project

Full assignment descriptions and rubrics will be provided in class and on ReggieNet approximately 2 weeks before each assignment is due.

Quizzes & Short Assessments (16 total X 15 pts each = 240 pts)

Reading quizzes are to be completed on ReggieNet on your own BEFORE class on the day they are listed. Quizzes and short assessments may seem like busywork, but they help hold you accountable for completing course readings or other activities required for fully participating in class.

Lab Exercises (8 total X 20 pts each = 160pts)

Lab exercises are to be completed in class with a randomly assigned partner or team, and will help you apply a new method for collecting or analyzing social media data. You will receive points for participating, so it is in your best interest to review / practice ahead of time and to attend classes with lab activities. These methods will also be helpful to learn as you work on assignments and your final project.

Final Research Poster Project (200 pts)

The final project will ask you to explore a contemporary technology issue or major course theme by defining a research question, conducting a literature review, collecting and analyzing social media data, visualizing your findings, creating a conference poster, and presenting your findings during a research poster session. A full project description and grading rubric will be distributed during the 10th week of class.

Final Exam (100 pts)

Demonstrate your mastery of the course material by responding to a series of writing and analytical prompts during a 2-hour examination period during finals week. Anything we have covered in class is fair game, including discussions, lectures, labs, and assignments.

Final Grading Scale

- A = 900 – 1000 pts
- B = 800 – 899 pts
- C = 700 – 799 pts
- D = 600 – 699 pts
- F = 0 – 599 pts

Due Dates

No late assignments, quizzes, or exercises will be accepted. Late work will receive zero points. Only a notification from the [Dean of Students Office](#) will provide a basis for exceptions to this rule. If you are sick or if you know in advance of any conflicts that will prevent you from being in class, it is YOUR responsibility to make arrangements to turn in any assignments or lab activities on or before the due date.

Attendance Policy

As stated in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#), you are responsible for attending class and completing all academic work. Make arrangements with me in advance if you will be missing class due to participation in a Sanctioned University Activity or to fulfill a religious obligation. If you have to miss class due to an [extended illness](#) (3 or more consecutive class days) or a [bereavement](#), the [Dean of Students Office](#) can help. It's located in Room 387, Student Services Building.

Course Communication

All students enrolled in this course have access to the course website on ReggieNet (<https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu>). Important announcements, readings, assignment instructions, and will be available through ReggieNet. Course announcements will be made in class and via announcements on ReggieNet. It is YOUR responsibility to check both ReggieNet and your ISU email on a regular basis. If you need to contact me by email, please feel free to do so at my Illinois State e-mail address (njcarpe@ilstu.edu). Please do not contact me through ReggieNet. As a student of higher education, it is expected that all of your communication is of professional quality. When writing through e-mail to me, **identify the subject matter in the subject line of the email and identify your section number**. Please be sure to address me in a professional manner. Always sign your name in your e-mails. Please follow these guidelines so your e-mail is given full consideration, and expect one to two full business days for a response.

Academic Integrity & Classroom Behavior

You are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the [Code of Student Conduct](#). All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on any work, or the presentation of someone else's work, is plagiarism. In certain circumstances, I may be required to refer violations to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). Academic misconduct also includes, but is not limited to: disruption of classes, threatening an instructor or fellow student, giving or receiving unauthorized aid on examinations or the assignment preparation.

Mental Health and Student Well-Being

Life at college can get complicated. If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, lost, anxious, depressed or are struggling with personal issues, do not hesitate to call or visit [Student Counseling Services](#) (SCS). These services are free and completely confidential. SCS is located at 320 Student Services Building, 309-438-3655. I also understand that it's hard to learn if you're hungry or couch surfing. If you are having difficulty affording groceries, accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or securing a safe and stable place to live, help may be available. I urge you to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) to learn more.

Campus Safety and Security

Illinois State University is committed to maintaining a safe environment for the University community. Please take a few moments to make sure you are signed up for ISU Emergency Alerts at IllinoisState.edu/EmergencyAlert. Additional safety information is available on the Campus Safety and Security website, Security.IllinoisState.edu.

Student Access and Accommodation Services

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at <http://StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu>

Religious Observances

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required class work that may fall on religious holidays. You may arrange to take an exam on an alternative date if the exam falls on a religious holy day. Let me know in the first two weeks of the semester if any exam date or other due date falls on a religious holy day.

Permission Required to Record

Students must obtain written permission from me if they wish either to photograph classroom lectures or discussions or to record them using audio or video devices. This restriction includes visual materials that accompany the lecture/discussion, such as lecture slides, whiteboard notes/equations, etc. Such recordings are to be used solely for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the class in that semester. They may not be reproduced, shared in any way (including electronically or posting in any web environment) with those not in the class in that semester. Students with disabilities who need to record classroom lectures or discussions must contact [Student Access and Accommodation Services](#) to register, request and be approved for an accommodation. Students who violate this policy may be subject to both legal sanctions for violations of copyright law and disciplinary action under the University's [Code of Student Conduct](#).

This Syllabus is Subject to Change

Any aspect of this syllabus, including course calendar, due dates, content, and schedule, may be adjusted to meet the needs and pace of the class. Changes will be announced via class, Email, or ReggieNet. It is YOUR responsibility to regularly check your ISU email and ReggieNet accounts.

COM 218 SECTION 1, TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR – FALL 2019

Week 1, August 19 - 23: Course Introduction; Communication Technologies and Change

M: First class: just show up - nothing due because we're reviewing the syllabus

W: READ Humphreys Ch. 2, Slack & Wise "Modes" PDF

F: READ McLuhan "Laws of Media" PDF; Review Assignment 1

Week 2, August 26 - 30: Defining & Measuring Social Media

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 3 and Carr & Hayes "Social Media" PDF (reading quiz)

W: READ Humphreys Ch. 4 and Fan & Gordon "Power of SM Analytics" PDF (reading quiz)

F: READ Meltwater Introduction and Lab Exercise 1 PDF

Week 3, September 2 - 6: Collecting Social Media Data

M: NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

W: READ Lab Exercise 2 PDF – have Twitter Developer keys ready!!!

F: READ boyd & Crawford "Critical Questions for Big Data" PDF (reading quiz)

ASSIGNMENT 1 DUE SEPTEMBER 6

Week 4, September 9 - 13: Co-Creation; Uses & Benefits

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 5 (reading quiz)

W: READ Humphreys Ch. 6 (reading quiz)

F: REVIEW Lab Exercise 3 PDF

Week 5, September 16 - 20: Digital Divides

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 7 (reading quiz)

W: READ Andrejevic "Big Data Divide" PDF (reading quiz)

R: REVIEW Lab Exercise 4 PDF

Week 6, September 23- 27: Race & Gender

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 8 (reading quiz)

W: Popular Readings – ReggieNet Links

F: REVIEW Lab Exercise 5 PDF

ASSIGNMENT 2 DUE SEPTEMBER 27

Week 7, September 30 – October 4: Networks & Communities

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 9 (reading quiz)

W: READ Humphreys Ch.10 (reading quiz)

F: REVIEW Lab Exercise 6 PDF

Week 8, October 7 - 11: Commerce & Marketing

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 11 (reading quiz)

W: Guest Speaker (TBD)

F: Guest Speaker (TBD)

Week 9, October 14 - 18: Cultural Representations & Practices

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 12 (reading quiz)

W: Popular Readings - ReggieNet Links

F: REVIEW Lab Exercise 7 PDF

ASSIGNMENT 3 DUE OCTOBER 18

Week 10, October 21 - 24: Final Project Overview; Political Life

M: REVIEW Final Project Overview

W: READ Humphreys Ch. 13 (reading quiz)

F: REVIEW Lab Exercise 8 PDF

Week 11, October 28 – November 1: Social Media Research

M: FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE (quiz grade); READ Social Media Research PDFs

W: Research Day 1 (in class)

F: Research Day 2 (in class)

Week 12, November 4 - 8: Project Conferences

MT: Conferences – GROUPS A & B & C

WR: Conferences – GROUPS C & D & E

F: Conferences – GROUPS E & F

ASSIGNMENT 4 DUE NOVEMBER 8

Week 13, November 11 – 15: Poster Symposia

M: Poster Presentations – GROUP A

W: Poster Presentations – GROUP B

F: Poster Presentations – GROUP C

Week 14, November 18 - 22: Poster Symposia

M: Poster Presentations – GROUP D

W: Poster Presentations – GROUP E

F: Poster Presentations – GROUP F

Week 15, November 25 - 29: THANKSGIVING BREAK

NO CLASSES

Week 16, December 2 - 6: Economic Structures & Privacy

M: READ Humphreys Ch. 14 (reading quiz)

W: READ Determann "Social Media Privacy" PDF (reading quiz)

F: Final Exam Review

REVISED FINAL PROJECT MATERIALS DUE DECEMBER 6

Week 17, December 9 - 13: FINALS WEEK

FINAL EXAM - TBD