Social Media Strategy and Leadership for Agricultural and Life Sciences
AEC 3071
Fall 2021 – 3 Credit Hours
Department of Agricultural Education and Communication

Instructor

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Office Hours by Appointment

Class Meetings

- Each week's module in Canvas will open on Monday morning and will need to be completed by the following Monday at 11:59 p.m.
- We will have a live class session in Bryant Hall 107 each week on Wednesday, from 10:40 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
    - Please note that attendance will be taken each week, and this is a required class meeting time unless an excused absence is noted.

Course Description

Social media are changing the way we all communicate. With this in mind, this course aims to present students with the core concepts of social media acknowledging that this course's content will continually evolve. Students will learn how, when and why to use various social media tools. Students will also learn to measure the effectiveness of these tools in reaching audiences with agricultural and natural resources messages.

Course Objectives

Students will

- Describe the concepts and theories that inform the use of social media.
- Compare and contrast how various traditional and social media strategies and tools can contribute to organizational effectiveness.

- Provide strategic counsel to organizations, based on an understanding of core concepts of public relations and social media, about how, why and when to use social media tools.
- Develop digital messages for agriculture and natural resources.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of digital messages for agriculture and natural resources.

Course Readings and Resources

Textbook:

Social Media for Strategic Communication: Creative Strategies and Research-Based Applications by Karen Freberg

Assignments

- **Quizzes** – Most weeks, you will have a quiz via Canvas on the assigned materials for the week leading up to class.

- **Digital Content Assignments** – Each week, you'll be asked to use social media in one way or another to tell a story about an issue in agriculture or a life sciences field. Sometimes you'll be asked to (in-person or virtually) attend an event and "live tweet" about the event. Sometimes you'll be asked to interview someone about an agricultural issue and post a short video. These assignments are intended to help you learn to develop content for social media.

- **Participation** – You will be responsible for attending each class session having read and studied the assigned readings for that week so that you can contribute to our class discussions. You should be able to provide an overview of each reading and explain how the readings relate to one another as a whole. High-quality participation means that you offer informed comments and questions for each class period.

- **Influencer Assignment** – Throughout the semester, you will work to identify internal and external influencers of a specific organization. You will analyze social networks of the leaders or influential members of an organization and identify messages those individuals could share to increase online visibility of the organization. Similarly, you will also identify individuals who are not part of the organization but can bring visibility to a particular organization. Students will submit a brief report outlining how social networks were analyzed, what influencers were identified, and suggested messages.

Course Grading

Assignment	Percent of Grade
Quizzes	25
Digital Content Assignments	25
Participation	25
Influencer Assignment	25

Grading scale

Unless otherwise noted, every component will be evaluated on 100 points. Your final grade for the course will be calculated on the previous percentages, which will then lead to your final letter grade as based on the following scale

A = 93-100%	C+ = 76 – 79.99%	D- = 60 – 62.99%
A- = 90 – 92.99%	C = 73 – 75.99%	F = Below 60%
B+ = 86 – 89.99%	C- = 70 – 72.99%	
B = 83 – 85.99%	D+ = 66 – 69.99%	
B- = 80 – 82.99%	D = 63 – 65.99%	

Note: For information on current UF policies for assigning grade points, see
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

General Course Expectations

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/

Policies & Guidelines for Success

Professionalism
The reality of this field is that people judge you by how you present yourself. Your use of language, the clarity of your speaking and your general appearance and professional bearing will shape the opinions of those who are listening to you. I will also grade you on the basis of the facts you assemble, the astuteness of your analysis of the problem and the soundness of your recommendations.

AEC Expectations for Writing
* To be successful in today's world, it is critical that you write well. As such, your grade for each aspect of this course will be based on the quality of your thinking and writing. All assignments should be free of inaccuracies, weak thinking, typos, spelling errors and grammatical problems. Never turn in a first draft.

- In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication's Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following writing standards are expected to be followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these writing standards will result in substantially lower grades on writing assignments.
  - Proper grammar and punctuation are mandatory. Proper sentence structure is required. This means...
    - Not using "tweet-talk" in your assignments.
    - Making sure that your sentences have a subject, verb, and (when needed) an object.
    - Not having sentence fragments.
    - And anything else that would pertain to "proper sentence structure."
- No use of first person (I, me, my, mine, our) unless denoted within the assignment rubric (this is generally okay for discussion posts).
- Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.
- For assignments that are more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.

AEC Expectations for Design:
- Students should not use copyrighted materials for design assignments. For example you may not "borrow" a graphic or design. Commercial artwork that is purchased may be used for assignments. Similarly, you may use *ideas* for a graphic/design assignment, but the use of the *actual* graphic/design is not acceptable.
- The following minimal design skills are expected to be demonstrated on all design assignments. The ability to resize an image, create documents in multiple columns, insert a graphic on a page, insert text with a graphic, alter the color of text and/or graphics. Additionally, the student should have moderate ability with design software in order to complete design assignments.

Deadlines

Deadlines will be given for all work; these deadlines will not be extended. Meeting deadlines is essential to be successful in this course and in our field. Your work must be completed and handed in by the specified date and time. Incomplete work turned in by the deadline will receive partial credit. If you miss a deadline without having a valid excuse, you will receive zero points on the late work.

Absences

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Should you be unable to attend class, please contact me prior to the class session you will be absent from.

Academic Integrity

- UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."
- The Honor Code (https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.
- This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

Course Add/Drop

Courses may be dropped or added during the Drop/Add period without penalty. The Drop/Add period is the first five days of classes during fall or spring semester, and the first two days of classes for summer terms. The specific dates are listed in each term's academic calendar.

After Drop/Add, students may withdraw from a course up to the date established in the university calendar. A grade of W will appear on the transcript, and students will be held liable for course fees. All drops after Drop/Add must be submitted to the Office of the University Registrar by the deadline.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/.

Software Use

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness Resources

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources.

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website]() to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website]() or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website]().
- University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website]() or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website]().

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: [Contact the UF Computing Help Desk]() at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu]().
- [Career Connections Center](): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- [Teaching Center](): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.]()
- On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process]().

Course Schedule

(see Canvas modules for details)
Fall 2021

Week of Aug. 23	Introduction to Social Media: An Art and Science
Week of Oct. 11	Audience Segmentation and Analysis
Week of Aug. 30	Ethical and Legal Fundamentals in Social Media
Week of Oct. 18	Creating, Managing, and Curating Content
Week of Sept. 6	Personal and Professional Branding
Week of Oct. 25	Measurement, Evaluation, Budget, and Calendar
Week of Sept. 13	Industry Qualifications and Roles
Week of Nov. 1	How Social Media is Applied, Part 1
Week of Sept. 20	Research in Social Media
Week of Nov. 8	How Social Media is Applied, Part 2
Week of Sept. 27	Strategic Planning for Social Media
Week of Nov. 15	What Does the Social Media World Have That Is New?
Week of Oct. 4	Strategic Writing for Social Media
Week of Nov. 29	Course Wrap-Up