AEC 3071: Social Media Strategy and Leadership for Agricultural and Life Sciences

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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.

Required Textbook  
Evaluation of Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Digital Content Assignments</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencer Assignment</td>
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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:

**Grading Scale:**

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

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

Please note: Under no circumstances will final grades be rounded. Please do not come to me at the end of the semester to negotiate your grade. If you want an A in this course, begin working toward that today.

**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 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.

**In-class Participation** – You will be responsible for discussion posts (sometimes written, sometimes via video) wherein you apply what you watch, listen to and read that week. You should read the assigned readings for that week *first* 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 a number of informed comments and questions for each class period.
On the whole, student participation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Meeting deadlines and expectations articulated by the instructor.
- Consistent participation and engagement with the class community.
- Listening and responding respectfully to ideas and questions posed by others.

POLICIES & GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS

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. If you deliver a poor, unprofessional presentation, your grade will suffer. 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.

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.

AEC Expectations for Writing:
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.
- NO use of contractions.
- Good thoughts/content throughout the writing assignment.
- For assignments that require citations, use American Psychological Association style. Proper APA citation and reference document is expected.
- 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:
In all courses in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication’s Communication and Leadership Development (CLD) specialization, the following design...
standards are expected to be followed, unless otherwise specified for a particular writing assignment. Not following these design standards will result in substantially lower grades on design-related assignments.

- Proper grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure are mandatory. Although these are design assignments, writing has to be perfect so as not to detract from the design.
- For assignments that feature more reporter-style articles (news stories, news releases, public relations writing), you are expected to follow Associated Press Style, as discussed in AEC 4031.
- Use the proper photographic settings for the assignment (300 ppi for printed photos; 72 ppi for Web). Pixilated photos will result in lower grades.
- 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.

**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.

**E-Learning:** All students are expected to check E-Learning (http://lss.at.ufl.edu) on a regular basis. Please ensure that you have access to this service. Additional handouts, readings and supplemental material will be housed on E-Learning. This includes your grades.

**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 (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/) 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.

(Source: 2017-2018 Undergraduate Catalog)

This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

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.

Campus Helping Resources: Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university’s counseling resources. Both the Health and Wellness and Academic Resources can be found below:

Health and Wellness
- U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS) Student Health Care Center, 392-1161. University Police Department, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

Academic Resources
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/
- Student Complaints Campus:

On-Line Students Complaints:
- http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaintprocess

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Late Assignments: Baring an unforeseen emergency, all work is due in class or via email to me by 11:59 PM on the assigned date. Should you fail to turn your work into me without contacting me, you will receive a grade of 0.
**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.

**Online Course Evaluation System:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. 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/.

**Final Thought**
I want you to be successful in this class, and I will do my best to help you succeed. I am happy to help you address any challenges you face this semester; please come visit me during office hours to discuss any concerns or challenges.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week beginning with:</th>
<th>Topic/Textbook Chapter (readings and assignments posted in Canvas)</th>
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| August 22           | Course Introduction  
Syllabus  
Introduction to Social Media – Chapter 1 |
| August 29           | Ethical and Legal Fundamentals – Chapter 2  
Personal and Professional Branding – Chapter 3 |
| September 5         | Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Chapter 4  
Industry Qualifications and Roles – Chapter 5 |
| September 12        | Research in Social Media – Chapter 6  
Creating, Managing and Curating Content – Chapter 12 |
| September 19        | Strategic Planning for Social Media – Chapter 7 |
| September 26        | Influencer Marketing – Chapter 8 |
| October 3           | Paid Media – Chapter 9 |
| October 10          | Strategic Writing for Social Media – Chapter 10 |
| October 17          | Audience Segmentation and Analysis – Chapter 11 |
| October 24          | Measurement, Evaluation, Budget & Calendar – Chapter 13 |
| October 31          | How Social Media is Applied (Part 1) – Chapter 14 |
| November 7          | How Social Media is Applied (Part 2) – Chapter 15 |
| November 14 & 21    | Social Media and Culture |
| November 28         | What is New? – Chapter 16 |
| Week of Dec. 5      | **Influencer Assignments Due & Peer Reviews** |