

Social Media Journalism
J336F – Unique 77950
Meets with J395 – Unique 08175
Fall 2017

Class: Online

Professor: Robert Quigley

Office hours: Mondays 12 to 1:30; Tuesdays 12:30 to 2 and by appointment

Email: robert.quigley@austin.utexas.edu

Personal social accounts: @robquig and facebook.com/robquig

This is a large class, so we have several TAs in this class. Margaret and Kaulie are full-time TAs for this course; Jordon and Vinicio are part time. You can contact any of them if you need help, though:

Margaret Ng – margaretnym@gmail.com

Kaulie Lewis – kaulielewis@gmail.com

Jordon Brown – jordonbrown@utexas.edu

Vinicio Sinta Morales – v.sinta@utexas.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It's no longer optional for journalists to now hot to use social media effectively. In this course, students will learn the top tips and trends in the industry and practice what they learn through hands-on projects. This is an online course. Students will not be required to attend any in-person meetings. The class is set up in a way that allows for flexibility in schedule, though there are some things that must be done each week. Students may work ahead on much of the material in the course. The class is based on the following main components: Hands-on projects and learning modules based on social media topics with quizzes.

OBJECTIVES

Students who complete all of the work for this course will be ready to run the social media efforts for any organization.

To that end, they will:

- * Understand what separates a journalist on social networks from the millions of others who use social networking
- * Gain intimate knowledge of the top social media platforms and how to use each one to engage audiences, drive traffic and market themselves and their organizations
- * Know how to measure success for a social media campaign and build reports
- * Learn how to cover breaking news using social media and crowdsourcing
- * Build up their personal social media presence, making them more marketable to future employers

STRUCTURE

Hands-on projects

Students will work as social media editor for two platforms: Socialnn Twitter and Snapchat. Students will sign up for times to work on these platforms and produce content for a news source that was created for this class. Students will have work at the end that they can add to their digital portfolios.

Readings with quizzes

We have several quizzes, which include selected readings and tips from the professor and professionals. There are quizzes to go with each module.

The quiz topics are:

- * Personal branding – how can you build up your own online presence through social media?
- * Ethics - What does it mean to be a journalist on social networks? What separates us? How do we verify information? How do we know something to be true?
- * Interaction – how do you reach your community at a media organization?
- * Twitter – still one of the most powerful social platforms for news organizations
- * Facebook – the king of social networks and of driving traffic to websites
- * Snapchat – the way to reach a younger audience while having fun with journalism
- * Instagram, Reddit and other platforms – how to adapt to new platforms and use them in a unique way
- * Analytics – how to measure the success of your efforts
- * Finding stories – how journalists can be more effective in their jobs by embracing social media.
- * Verification – what separates journalists from everyone else on social media
- * Breaking news – social media is fantastic for breaking news, though it can also lead to errors. Get tips on how to do this without making mistakes.

Quizzes

Each quiz includes 10 questions that covers the material found in the readings and the professor's tips. Students will have 20 minutes to take each quiz, so they should study and prepare for it as if it were not an open-book quiz. Note – the quizzes are available from the start of the semester and can be done early. They lock after the due date and students are unable to take the quiz past the due date for each quiz.

Personal tweeting

Students will be required to tweet about news at least three times a day, at least five days a week from Sept. 11 to Nov. 10 on their own accounts.

After that period, students are required to put together a Storify of all of their tweets related to this assignment and write an essay. Interaction is the most important part of this assignment. Note that students can interact with classmates, including

when students are running our Socialnn accounts, and that each @reply about news will count toward your three tweets a day

Live chats

There are four live chats throughout the semester. This is your opportunity to talk in real time with your professor and fellow students. They are scheduled at various times of day (see Canvas for the times and dates). You are required to attend two of them for full credit. If you cannot attend two, there is an alternate assignment. Instructions for how to get credit for this, as well as the instructions for the alternate assignment are listed on the assignment called "Live chats assignment."

Late work

All assignments turned in after deadline will be marked down 10 percentage points for the first 24 hours after the due time and then 10 percentage points for every 24 hour period after that. Discussions will not be accepted late for credit, though the student can still earn bonus points. Quizzes cannot be taken late and will be counted as a zero if a deadline is missed. Remember, you can work ahead.

Graduate section assignment

If you have registered for J395F, the graduate-level section of this course, and you are a graduate student, then you have one extra assignment, a self-reflective essay. You can find the essay instructions on Canvas.

How you will be graded

There are rubrics on Canvas with each assignment. Please study them before you turn in each assignment to be sure you're doing all that is required.

Breakdown:

- Running accounts: 40 percent
- Personal tweets: 35 percent
- Quizzes: 20 percent
- Live chats: 5 percent

Grade scale:

Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72

Attendance

There is no attendance policy outside of doing the required work and participating in the chats. I hope you engage regularly on the Facebook group and elsewhere so we can have a great discussion.

Contacting the professor

The professor will be checking the Facebook group regularly, so that's a great place to ask a question. Plus, you might get an answer even faster from a fellow student. Email is the next-best option. Email the professor at robert.quigley@austin.utexas.edu with any questions. You will receive an answer within 24 hours, though usually faster.

Trusted sources

When students are seeking information to post on social networks, they should try to post content from the original source when possible (not from an aggregator). Also, if there's a sensational story from an untrustworthy or unknown source, students should see if they can verify the information from a trusted, known news source. For the purposes of this class, the instructor believes the students can trust the information coming from the following sources (not an exhaustive list):

Top tier

The New York Times
The Washington Post
The Associated Press
Reuters
The Guardian
The BBC
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today

Other trusted sources:

Daily metropolitan newspapers
Major network TV – CNN, ABC, Fox, MSNBC, CBS
Major market TV stations
Major national news magazines
Major news blogs, including Huffington Post, if properly sourced

Note – I'm not saying smaller blogs, alternative publications, etc. can't be trusted, but if there's a major breaking story, I'd feel more comfortable if one of the above had the story.

Other important information

* Your grades and the submission of your evaluations will be handled through Canvas. Quizzes will be administered through Canvas as well.

* University Honor Code: All students are expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code, which reads: "The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community."

* Students with Disabilities Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities. <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

*Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php. For the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty, see Section 11-802, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

<http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi08-09/app/gi08.appc03.html#sec-11-802-scholastic-dishonesty19>

* Campus emergency information
<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/terms/>