Class: Online
Professor: Robert Quigley
Office hours: T-TH 10:30 to noon and by appointment
Email: robert.quigley@austin.utexas.edu
Personal social accounts: @robquig and facebook.com/robquig

TA: Miranda Mason: miranda.mason@utexas.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

It's no longer optional for journalists to use social media well. You'll learn from a social media pioneer and will work in a professional environment as social media editor for the Social News Network, a national news aggregator aimed at college students. Students will use various channels to become highly skilled, engaged social media journalists who could step into any social media role in a newsroom or other organization.

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
* Have 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 presence, making them more marketable to future employers

STRUCTURE

The platforms
The Social News Network consists of presences on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Snapchat and Pinterest. It has three channels: News, sports and entertainment. The students will be divided into three groups. Groups will take turns being in charge of different platforms.

After some instruction and organization time, the sites will go live, and the students will begin updating them by finding stories on the web that are interesting to college students and sharing them. They will also engage the audience heavily. Students running the Snapchat accounts will have to go out and find something to report on during their shifts.

See the schedule on Canvas under the "syllabus" tab for more information.

Groups
Based on last name, you are put in one of three groups. See Canvas for groupings. The first live week of socialnn work will begin Feb. 1. There will be three groups: Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3. On the first live week of socialnn: Group 1 will work on Twitter and Facebook. Group 2 will work on Snapchat. Group 3 will work on Tumblr and Pinterest. The groups will rotate after a four-week period, so everyone will get a chance to try each platform. Schedule for the rotations is posted on Canvas under "Socialnn Schedules."

Self-evaluations
Students will be required to evaluate his or her own work by filling out self-evaluations via Canvas. Students are also required to keep a Storify of their work. Students should use the same Storify throughout the course instead of starting a new one each time they turn in a self-evaluation.

Scheduling
Students will schedule their own work time on the network. In a Google doc, students will choose four hours each week to work once the sites go live. Students can choose whether they want to cover news, sports or entertainment during their time slots, though it is first-come, first-served. During that time, the student will find interesting stories, share them, interact with the public, work on building audience, search for people and organizations to follow, etc. Students working a Snapchat shift will have to either go out and find something to cover or give the news from wherever they are. Students can trade hours with a student if both agree and the schedule reflects the change. You must work one full hour at a time and no more than two hours in any single day.

Breaking news
This is a public-facing news organization, and breaking news might happen. If the news is big, in your judgment, please alert the professor as soon as possible. If in doubt on how to proceed with the news, get a response from the professor before posting content.

Learning modules
We will have eight learning modules, which are narrated presentations. There are quizzes at the end of each module. See the schedule for deadlines for completing the quizzes.

The modules are:
1. The syllabus explained
2. The platforms: What journalists use and how. What you need to know to operate in this class. It will also stress the importance of interaction.
3. Tool and analytics: The various tools that make a journalist's job more efficient and effective. Also, how do you measure social content's effectiveness?
4. 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?
5. Aggregation: There is very little original writing in this class. Instead, students will be finding information and sharing it. This will give some tips on finding gems.
6. Building an audience and driving traffic: Your first employer will be glad you have this skill.
7. Crowdsourcing breaking news. What have the big players done during the biggest news events to take advantage of social networks?
8. The future of journalism and social networking. Will we get our news through our contact lenses? Will Facebook become MySpace? We'll answer these questions and get you prepared for whatever might come.

Quizzes
All learning modules will have short quizzes with deadlines for completing the quizzes, though all modules will be available starting on the first day of class. The quizzes are designed to make sure you went through the modules and learned from them. Links to the modules and the quizzes will be available on Canvas. See Canvas for due dates.

Communication
This is a virtual course, so keeping in contact with the instructor, the TA and one another is critically important. To achieve that, and to foster good discussion, this course has a private Facebook group and a series of live chats. Students are encouraged to help answer one another's questions and learn from each other in the Facebook group.

ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments will be turned in through Canvas. NOTE: For details on what you need to do for the assignments, see Canvas – I put instructions right on the files you need to turn in.

Self-evaluations
There are three self-evaluations that must be turned in for work done on Socialnn. There are questions you must answer in the evaluation, and you'll be graded on the effort you put into answering the evaluation and the work you did for the week. **See Canvas for due dates.**

Live chats
There will be eight live text chats scheduled for various times and days throughout the course that allow for real-time interaction with the professor and each other. You are required to participate in at least four of the chats, though it's encouraged that you participate in all of them. They will be recorded so you can view the ones you miss. If you are unable to attend four live chats, you can alternately earn full credit for this (see the assignment on Canvas for details).

Quizzes
There are eight quizzes to go with the eight learning modules. The quizzes are each five questions long and are graded automatically in Canvas.

Analytics report
Part of being a social journalist is knowing whether the organization's efforts are working. To that end, there is an analytics assignment where you must measure our progress.

Live tweeting assignments
All students will be required to live-tweet two events during the course of the semester, using Storify to capture the results of the tweets. The events must be newsworthy (ask professor if unsure) and can be witnessed live or watched live on TV. No live-tweeting events that have been recorded (are not live). See Canvas for due dates.

Personal tweeting
Students will be required to tweet about news at least two times a day, at least five days a week from Jan. 25 to April 29 on their own accounts. This tweeting should not be done during the same time that you're working on the Social News Network.

Students will turn in a Storify midway through the term showing off what they think is their best work, with at least one tweet per day published on the Storify.

At the end, you'll be required to write an essay about what you learned in doing this 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.

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: Self evaluations: 30 percent
                      Personal tweets: 25 percent
                      Personal tweets midterm: 5 percent
                      Quizzes: 8 percent
                      Live tweeting assignments: 15 percent
                      Live chats: 5 percent
                      Analytics assignment: 12 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
D	60-69

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 unstrustworthy 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 Associated Press

Reuters
The Guardian
The BBC
Al Jazeera
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/