**JOUR282 Beyond Facebook: How Social Media are Transforming Society, Culture, Business, and Politics Spring 2023**

Philip Merrill College of Journalism

University of Maryland

Instructors: Prof. Sarah Oates (she/hers)

Graduate Teaching Assistants: Ms. Joey Chen, Lead TA

Mr. John McQuaid, TA

Undergraduate Teaching Assistant: Ms. Camryn Swan

This syllabus has two major parts:

1. ALL ABOUT THE COURSE
2. ALL ABOUT UNIVERSITY POLICIES/RULES ETC

**SECTION A: ALL ABOUT THE COURSE**

**Description**

This is an I-Series course, with the ‘I’ standing for Imagine, Investigate, and Innovate. I-Series courses are designed to engage students in broad, analytical thinking about contemporary problems and the enduring issues of human existence. This course explores the evolution of social media and its effects on self and society. Through readings, videos, online discussion posts, two tests that reflect on the material as well as a research paper, students will analyze how social media platforms are changing the ways we process knowledge and altering our sense of community and self.

This course is a two-for-one special in the UMD General Education program, because it fulfills the distribution requirements for both an I-Series course and Humanities. You can find detailed learning outcomes for these types of courses [here](https://gened.umd.edu/faculty/general-education-learning-outcomes-and-assessment-rubrics). They are woven into the fabric of the course for you and also listed in the syllabus below if you would like to reflect on them.

**This course will teach students to:**

1. Understand and explain the business model of social media companies.
2. Assess trends in the use of social media and how these trends affect society.
3. Understand the role of social media in supporting and challenging social change, especially as it relates to anti-Black racism and gender issues.
4. Describe and explain how government policies affect the operation of social media.
5. Analyze the concept of privacy and how it is challenged by social media.
6. Analyze the role of social media in creating and spreading disinformation.
7. Evaluate the role of social media in elections and U.S. politics.
8. Assess the role of social media in personal relationships, particularly on dating apps.
9. Evaluate the role of social media in sports.
10. Understand how to better protect and promote your own interests while using social media.
11. Analyze how social media can either empower or oppress citizens in the United States and beyond.

**How to contact the instructors**

Below are Zoom office hours (just drop in) for Prof. Oates, Ms. Chen, and Mr. McQuaid. You can reach Ms. Swan via her email and set a time to talk if you would like.

We encourage students to visit us in person, get in touch via email, text, or call with questions or issues. We’ve listed our individual emails below, but it’s probably most efficient to send us messages via ELMS -- they appear in our inboxes immediately and it keeps a clear record of communication.

We have kept Zoom hours (although you can still see us in person!) because we think students are more likely to ‘visit’ us electronically. We are always happy to meet in person as well. Ms. Chen and Mr. McQuaid share office space with other graduate students, so you can make an arrangement to meet them in a location in or near Knight Hall.

**Prof. Oates** (lead instructor) office hours: **11-1230 pm Mondays** in her Zoom Room AND in person in Knight 2215 during term. Just drop by during office hours (online or in person). Sometimes I have to adjust the time due to conflicts, but I’ll let you know in advance.

[**https://umd.zoom.us/j/5722131631**](https://umd.zoom.us/j/5722131631)

Email her at [soates@umd.edu](mailto:soates@umd.edu)

My cell is 301 455 2332

**Graduate TA**

**Ms. Chen**

Email: joeyc997@umd.edu

Zoom Room: <https://zoom.us/j/6892098330?pwd=NlhPVmRYNmVhTGZmVkZEak1penliZz09>

Zoom Office Hours:  2:00-3:00 pm Tuesdays or by appointment

**Mr. McQuaid**

Email: [jmmcquaid@umd.edu](mailto:jmmcquaid@umd.edu)

Zoom Room:

Zoom Office Hours:

**Undergraduate TA**

**Ms. Swan**

She can be contacted at camswan@terpmail.umd.edu

**Required textbook**

None, you will have assigned readings, videos, and Sways (these are a kind of online PowerPoint presentations) to do each week. Each weekly module is posted up to two weeks in advance of the due date. You may need to pay for access to some videos.

**Course schedule and assignments**

This course is taught completely online, but the entire course is not posted at once. The course has 11 weekly subject modules + one "Tips for Paper Writing" module. We try to post each module up to two weeks in advance of the due date (Wednesday night at 11:59 typically). Due dates for other assignments are listed on ELMS.

**Assessment overview**

Here is how you will be graded in the class:

**20% of your grade is from weekly discussions/engagement exercises**

There are 10 discussion assignments – one for each subject module except the final module. These are short discussion posts (about 200 words).

***Please note you cannot repeat the same text from your weekly assignments on your tests or paper as that is self-plagiarism.***

**15% of your grade is from weekly quizzes**

You need to complete 11 module quizzes. They are all open-book, open-note **but you cannot discuss your answers or get help with the weekly assessments**. If you do get help or give help by discussing your answers on the weekly assessments, this is a violation of University academic integrity and can lead to university sanctions.

**35% of your grade is from a midterm and a final test**

Midterm = 15% of your overall grade

Final test = 20% of your overall grade

As this is an online course, the tests are open-book, open-note but **must be your own work without help from anyone else and you cannot discuss your work with others (i.e. give help or hints). If you do get help or give help by discussing your answers on the assessments, this is a violation of University academic integrity and can lead to university sanctions such as failing the course.**

The tests will be short answers and/or essay questions.

**30% of your grade is from a paper**

This will be a research paper of about 1,500-2,000 words. It should include citations (you can use in-text citations or footnotes or endnotes -- if you're new to citation just ask one of the instructors for help) and a bibliography. It should follow proper research paper style. The word count does NOT include the bibliography, but this word count does include any footnotes. You will come up with a topic.

5% of your grade will be for a paper outline (due before the paper so you can get feedback) that you do the week we have the Tips for Paper Writing module

25% is for the final paper

Full instructions and material for the final paper will be posted under Assignments in ELMS well in advance of the due date.

**There is no final exam -- the open-book second test is the last assessment in the course.**

(More details and exact due dates are provided in the individual listings on ELMS assignments).

**Late penalties and excused absences**

You lose 10% of the assignment grade for every 24 hours an assignment is late. Please get in touch if you are having trouble keeping up in the course.

While recognizing that the past three years have been difficult, students need to provide medical or other evidence in order to be excused from late penalties in the course (see below for more details).

\*\*\****Please note that you are expected to back up your work regularly. We cannot accept as an excuse a computer failure, lost USB, etc. If the entire ELMS network goes down late Sunday, don't panic -- if ELMS is down and you cannot submit we will provide an extension but only for the time the system was down. Note that ELMS is imperfect, so save your work!\*\*\****

**Weekly topics/plan**

The weekly material appears as a **MODULE** on the ELMS home page.

ELMS can be confusing, but as long as you stick to the modules it should be fine. Please let Prof. Oates or a TA know if you need help in navigating the online system. ELMS was definitely NOT designed by digital natives … If you are new to ELMS, this training orientation can help (it's not part of our course, I just list it here FYI): <https://myelms.umd.edu/courses/1157772>

Note: all reading is on ELMS or available through a link provided unless otherwise stated.

**Course topic outline (all materials on ELMS)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Module | Due date (but always double check on ELMS) | Module Title |
| 1 | 1 | Wed Feb 1 | Module 1/Introduction: Social Media Platforms |
| 2 | 2 | Wed Feb 8 | Module 2/A Deeper Dive into Meta |
| 3 | 3 | Wed Feb 15 | Module 3/Visual Social Media |
| 4 | 4 | Wed Feb 22 | Module 4/Privacy Online |
| 5 | 5 | Wed Mar 1 | Module 5: How to Write a Paper (outline instead of discussion post and no quiz) |
| 6 | 6 | Wed Mar 8 | Module 6/ Disinformation, Journalism, and Social Media |
| 7 |  | Wed Mar 15 | No Sway -- Test 1 due |
| 8 |  | SPRING BREAK |  |
| 9 | 7 | Wed Mar 29 | Module 7/Love Online |
| 10 | 8 | Wed Apr 5 | Module 8/Sports and Social Media |
| 11 |  | Fri Apr 14 | Paper due (note two extra days so that does not fall due during Passover) |
| 12 | 10 | Wed Apr 19 | Module 9/Social Activism Online |
| 13 |  | Wed Apr 26 | Module 10/COVID & Infodemic |
| 14 | 10 | Wed May 3 | Module 11/Elections and Insurrection |
| 15 | 11 | Wed May 10 | Module 12/Global Information Warfare Online (no discussion post) |
| 16 | 12 | Sun May 14 | Final Test Due |

Grading scale:

We mark on the standard scale, rounding up:

96.5 and above = A+

92.5-96.4 A

89.5 to 92.4 A-

86.5-89.4 B+

82.5-86.4 B

79.5 to 82.4 B-

etc.

**General Education Courses: The UMD I-Series**

What should you learn in a UMD I-Series course? Here is information from <https://gened.umd.edu/faculty/general-education-learning-outcomes-and-assessment-rubrics>

Courses in the I-Series must address at least 4 of the 6 Learning Outcomes, which are:

* Identify the major questions and issues in their I-series course topic.
* Describe the sources the experts on the topic would use to explore these issues and questions.
* Demonstrate an understanding of basic terms, concepts, and approaches that experts employ in dealing with these issues.
* Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in the course.
* Communicate major ideas and issues raised by the course through effective written and/or oral presentations.
* Articulate how this course has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the University and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest.

This course is designed to meet all six of these learning outcomes.

Here is a [link](https://gened.umd.edu/faculty/assessment-rubrics/i-series) to the concepts we use to assess student work in an I-Series course. All of these concepts are used to make our rubrics and give grades in the course.

This course also fulfills the Humanities requirement for Gen Ed. Here are the required learning outcomes (the one in bold is critical):

* **Demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental terminology and concepts in a specific topical area in the humanities (in JOUR282 that is journalism studies -- which includes the fields of communication, political science, and information studies).**
* Demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in a specific field in the humanities.
* Demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works in the humanities.
* Describe how language use is related to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.
* Conduct research on a topic in the humanities using a variety of sources and technologies.
* Demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

Here is a [link](https://gened.umd.edu/sites/default/files/2020-12/Humanities.pdf) to the assessment (grading) rubric for Humanities I-Series courses. This rubric is used as the basis for how we grade the final paper, although we look for evidence-based writing throughout the course.

**SECTION B: ALL ABOUT UNIVERSITY POLICIES/RULES ETC**

**Here is a link to university academic policies:** <https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

## If you become seriously ill during the semester, please contact me as soon as possible. Please include a note from a doctor, if possible. Please also let me know if someone in your immediate family is hospitalized, or if there is a death in your immediate family. I understand how difficult these situations can be, and I will work with you through any such crisis to try to help you finish this class.

## Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it.  I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [UMD’s Student Academic Support Services website](http://tutoring.umd.edu) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need ([UMD’s Student Resources and Services website](https://sph.umd.edu/content/student-resources-and-services) may help).

**Staying Healthy**

One of the keys to success in college (and life) is staying as healthy as possible both physically and mentally. Thankfully, UMD has resources to help students with this.

The [University Health Center](https://health.umd.edu/) offers telemedicine and in-person appointments as well as an after-hours help line. Please reach out to the Health Center or your personal physician if you are feeling ill.

It’s also crucial to look after your own mental health. These are difficult times in many ways, and many students struggle in ways they never expected. If you find yourself needing to speak with someone about a personal struggle, please consider visiting [UMD’s Counseling Center](https://www.counseling.umd.edu/).

Here are some other important links:

[The UMD Mental Health Service](https://health.umd.edu/medical-behavioral-health-behavioral-health-services/behavioral-health-emergencies) offers walk-in services for students suffering from mental health crises. Please go there if you are feeling suicidal, if you are experiencing panic attacks or if you are concerned about a friend or a student who may be at risk.

[The UMD Substance Abuse Intervention and Treatment (SUIT) Office](https://health.umd.edu/medical-behavioral-health/substance-use-intervention-and-treatment-suit) is the place to go if you or a friend may be struggling with a substance abuse issue.

[Campus Advocates Respond and Educate to Stop Violence](https://www.health.umd.edu/care) provides free, confidential advocacy and therapy services to primary and secondary survivors of sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking and sexual harassment.

## Academic Integrity

## Along with certain rights, students have the responsibility to behave honorably in an academic environment. Academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Adhering to a high ethical standard is of special importance in journalism, where reliability and credibility are the cornerstones of the field. Therefore, the college has adopted a “zero tolerance” policy on academic dishonesty. Any abridgment of academic integrity standards in a College of Journalism course will be referred to the college’s associate dean and will likely be referred to the university’s [Office of Student Conduct](https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/). To ensure this is understood, all students are asked to sign an academic integrity pledge at the beginning of the semester that will cover all assignments in this course. Students found to have violated the university’s honor code may face sanctions, including a grade of XF for the course, suspension or expulsion from the university.

## Religious holidays

## There will be no tests or major assignments scheduled on religious holidays identified by the university. If you expect to miss a class during the semester due to a religious holiday, please notify the instructor in writing before the start of the second class.

## Inclement weather

## Inclement weather does not affect this class as it is completely asynchronous and online. However, sometimes inclement weather can cause power or internet outages (on campus or in your homes) can affect access to ELMS etc. Please let me know as soon as possible if this is the case.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The University of Maryland has long promoted diversity, equity and inclusion as core values. We recognize a diverse educational community as one of our greatest strengths. Recognizing that all individuals have a unique background, we strive to create a vibrant learning community for all participants in class. Visit the websites of the [Office of Diversity & Inclusion](https://diversity.umd.edu/) to learn more about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Maryland.

**Land Acknowledgement**

Every community owes its existence and strength to the generations before them, around the world, who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy into making the history that led to this moment.

Truth and acknowledgement are critical in building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference.

So, we acknowledge the truth that is often buried: We are on the ancestral lands of the Piscataway People, who are the ancestral stewards of this sacred land. It is their historical responsibility to advocate for the four-legged, the winged, those that crawl and those that swim. They remind us that clean air and pristine waterways are essential to all life.

This Land Acknowledgement is a vocal reminder for each of us as two-leggeds to ensure our physical environment is in better condition than what we inherited, for the health and prosperity of future generations.

## Names and self-identification

## The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit the [Rainbow Terrapin Network](https://lgbtq.umd.edu/rainbow-terrapin-network) and [Why Pronouns Matter](https://pronouns.org/) to learn more. Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion and disability is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for your fellow Terps.

## Students with disabilities

## Students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning) needing accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to meet with the instructor as soon as possible after the first class. Students will be asked to provide the instructor with the accommodation letter developed for the student by the [Accessibility and Disability Service](https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/) on campus. To schedule an appointment with the ADS, call 301-314-7682 or stop by the Disability Support Service front desk in the Shoemaker Building, Room 0106. The office is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Find additional resources  [here](https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/currentads).

## This is the full link to the Accessibility and Disability Services website: <https://counseling.umd.edu/ads>

## Communication with Peers

## I encourage you to exercise your right to free speech. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which you feel comfortable voicing thoughts without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned or devalued. But this course is NOT the space for intimidation or harassment.

## Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

## Copyright Notice

Course materials are copyrighted and may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission. But if your roommate or a friend is intrigued, feel free to share :)