

SYLLBUS: ADV 402 (Section 730): Social Media Influences

Class Time: Asynchronous, May 29 – June 22, 2018
Location: Online
Instructors: Bree E. Holtz, PhD, bholtz@msu.edu
Office Hours: By appointment (phone or video chat: needs to be scheduled)
Facebook Group: “ADV 402: Social Media Influencer (Summer 2018)”

Introduction and Objectives

The course will provide students with an overview of social media influencers and their importance in today's public relations climate. By the end of the course you should be able to better:

- Describe the methods of how to evaluate influencers
- Evaluate case studies reviewed regarding influencers

Required Texts

You should have access to a 'principles of public relations' textbook (e.g. Seitel's *Practice of Public Relations*, Center and Jackson's *Public Relations Practices*, or Cutlip, Center and Broom's *Effective Public Relations*.) Additional readings will be provided as needed.

Assignments

- **Quizzes:** There will be seven quizzes throughout the course. These are multiple-choice quizzes to ensure you have completed the assignments.
- **Find an Influencer:** This is a short written assignment that will demonstrate your knowledge on how to identify a suitable social media influencer for a product. See the assignment handout for more information.
- **Case Study:** You will write a 400 – 500 word case study. This is due on the last day of class. See the assignment handout for more information.

Grade Scale

A = 90+ (4.0)	C = 70-74 (2.0)
B+ = 85-89 (3.5)	D+ = 65-69 (1.5)
B = 80-84 (3.0)	D = 60-65(1.0)
C+ = 75-79 (2.5)	F = Less than 59 (0.0)

For MSU grading policies, see: <https://www.reg.msu.edu/academicprograms/Print.asp?Section=521>

Make-up Work

Given the nature of the class, you must complete all assignments on time. There are no exceptions.

Points:

Quizzes (8) (10 points each)	80 points
Identify an Influencer	30 points
Case Study	50 points
	=====
Total	160 points

Cheating

The university lays out serious consequences for cheating, including plagiarism. If you get caught, it will not be pleasant for anyone involved. At minimum, you will fail the assignment. If the offense is egregious, or if you commit a second infraction, you will fail the class. I am also obligated to report you to the appropriate university review body. In some cases, academic dishonesty may be grounds for expulsion from the university. Cite all sources you use and do not try to

pass off the work of anyone else as your own. For additional information, see:

<https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/student-faq.html>

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities are entitled to academic and classroom-based adjustments and accommodations. If you require accommodations in this class, please make sure to fill out the V.I.S.A. form and notify me.

Religious Observances:

Students must notify the instructor within the first week of class of the specific days or dates on which s/he requests relief for religious reasons.

Feedback for your Instructor:

MSU takes the opinion of students seriously and has implemented the SIRS (Student Instructional Rating System) process to gather student feedback. This course uses the “online SIRS” system. You will receive an e-mail sometime during the semester asking you to fill out the SIRS online form. Please note the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO for seven days following the University grade submission deadline published by the Office of the Registrar unless the SIRS online form has been filled out. You will have the option in the online SIRS form to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course – we hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future.

Extra lectures are not required, but you may find them helpful.

- D2L review
- Find an Influencer Short Assignment
- Case Study Assignment

Week	Topic	Assignment
Week 1: May 29 – June 3	Welcome • Overview of course Where have we been & how did we get here? • Looking to the past (traditional endorsements & sponsorships) • Frontline “Generation Like”	All due by June 3, noon (EST) to D2L Quiz 1: Overview of the course Quiz 2: Looking to the past Quiz 3: Generation Like
Week 2: June 4 – June 10	Where are we now? • 60 Minutes “The Influencers” • Current Landscape • Reading: Self-branding, ‘micro-celebrity’ and the rise of Social Media Influencers (Khamis et al., 2017)	All due by June 4, noon (EST) to D2L Quiz 4: The Influencers Quiz 5: Current Landscape Quiz 6: Self-branding, ‘micro-celebrity’ and the rise of Social Media Influencers (Khamis et al., 2017)
Week 3: June 11 – June 17	How do we identify an influencer? • Identifying, working with and measuring. • Guest Speaker video	Due by June 17, noon (EST) to D2L Dropbox Assignment: Identify an influencer (see assignment sheet) Quiz 7: Identifying and working with an influencer Quiz 8: Guest Speaker

Week 4: June 18 - 22	• Is this regulated? • Where do we go from here?	All due by June 22, 5 p.m. (EST) Assignment: Case Study
-------------------------	---	---

Find an Influencer Assignment

Step 1: You are looking for an influencer for a protein breakfast bar. You want to break into the “mommy” market. Find unique “mommy” blogger using Meltwater (see video tutorial) that you think might be a good fit. (DO NOT CONTACT THEM).

Meltwater website: app.meltwater.com
Username: adv402@msu.edu
Password: meltwater

Step 2: In the D2L Discussion group “Find an Influencer List,” list the author of the blog. (See my example in D2L.)
➤ If you see that someone has already identified that person, you will need to find someone else.

Step 3: In a Word document, answer the following questions and submit to the D2L dropbox (NOW CALLED ASSIGNMENTS), **June 17, 2018 by noon.**

1. What is the name of the blogger?
2. What is the URL (website address) of the blog?
3. In 50 words or less summarize the blog (what is the overall purpose of it)
4. Research the blogger and locate contact information.
 - a. Do they have a personal website? If yes, include the URL (website address)
 - b. Can you find an email address for her/him? If yes, what is it?
 - c. Does s/he have a YouTube channel? How many followers does s/he have? About how often does s/he post videos? What is her/his YouTube name?
 - d. Is s/he active on Instagram? How many followers does s/he have? How often does s/he post? What is her/his Instagram name?
 - e. Is s/he active on Twitter? How many followers does s/he have? How often does s/he post? What is her/his Twitter name?
 - f. Is s/he active on Snapchat? How many followers does s/he have? How often does s/he post? What is her/his Snapchat name?

- g. Is s/he active on Facebook? How many followers does s/he have? How often does s/he post? What is her/his Facebook name?
5. In 50 – 75 words, tell me why you think this blogger should be contacted as a possible influencer.

Case Study: Pick **ONLY 1** of these cases

Case 1: Logan Paul

Logan Paul is one of the top social media influencers in the world. Forbes has estimated that in 2017 he earned \$12.5 million. He has sponsorship deals with HBO, Hanes, Bic, Dunkin, Nike, Verizon, and Pepsi.

In January 2018, Paul shared a video in which he and a group of friends came upon the corpse of a man hanging from a tree — apparently a death by suicide — in a Japanese forest known for suicides. The highly-edited video, which showed the body and the onlookers' reactions, was viewed by millions globally before being removed. In response to that YouTube cancelled his channels from the Preferred Platform and halted the release of this original programming. He later apologized for his actions. Later, he posted a video of him tasing a dead rat, causing another suspension of advertisers starting on Feb. 8. On Feb. 27, the video-sharing site has re-enabled ads on Paul's channels. Paul's channels remain ineligible for Google Preferred. His channels also were in a 90-day probation period (ending May 9, 2018), and his content will not appear on the trending tab or in non-subscriber notifications.

Case 2: #fyrefest

Starting in Fall 2016, the #fyrefest hashtag began showing up in top models Instagram posts. Fyre Fest was the idea of McFarland and Ja Rule. This festival was to be a "luxury" music festival. Tickets were sold from \$1500 - \$10,000 (however, due to low sales were extremely discounted). McFarland reportedly paid Kendall Jenner somewhere between \$250,000 to \$300,000 per Instagram post. He also paid other influencers to post about the festival (none less than \$20,000). Emily Ratajkowski, model, was the only influencer to tag her posts as a promotion using the #ad hashtag, as required by the Federal Trade Commission.

Many people who purchased tickets were lured by the promises of the festival through social media. This is even as there were news reports as early as March that the festival was not guest-ready. However, festival goers arrived and soon realized the festival was not ready. Currently, models and influencers who promoted the event (except Ratajkowski) are now facing a class-action lawsuit because they were in direct violation of the FTC's guidelines requiring influencers to disclose connections between advertisers and endorsers.

DIRECTIONS:

Due: June 22, 2018 to the "Case Study" dropbox (NOW CALLED ASSIGNMENTS) by 5 p.m. (EST)

Pick **ONE** of the cases (either Logan Paul or Fyre Fest)

Thinking in terms of the impacts and influence of social media influencers answer the following questions:

1. What is the issue?

2. What is the context of the problem?
3. What are the key facts that should be considered?
4. What take-aways or lessons learned should be taken from the case? **Do NOT state the obvious** (i.e., you should not post videos of you tasing dead animals, or you need to put #ad on your posts).

Format & References

You must find **at least** five (5) reputable NEWS stories (not opinion pieces) about the case you select.

Your case study requires a title (letting me know which case you selected), must be between 300-400 words, have 1” margins, 12-point font and include full citations for all of your sources (these include your news stories).