

Social Media Journalism
J336F – Unique ID: 08170
Spring 2014

Class: Online

Professor: Robert Quigley

Office hours: **Tuesdays** 9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and **Tuesdays:** 10 a.m. to noon. Also, by appointment. Office: BMC 3.344

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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

*** Note: There is a separate schedule with deadlines**

The platforms

The Social News Network consists of presences on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr 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 for four weeks at a time.

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.

See the separate schedule 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 Jan. 27. 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. Group 2 will work on Facebook and Pinterest. Group 3 will work on Tumblr. The groups will rotate after each four-week period, so everyone will get a chance to try each platform. See schedule for details.

Self-evaluations

Students will be required to evaluate his or her own work by filling out a self evaluation via Canvas. Students are also required to keep a Storify of their work and must show off two good examples of their work for each week they work. Students should use the same Storify throughout the course instead of starting a new one each time they turn in a self-evaluation.

Peer evaluations

We are partnering with students from the University of Utah, who are also running a Socialnn service for their campus. Twice during the semester, students will evaluate their work. You will write an analysis in essay style of their work.

Scheduling

Students will schedule their own work time on the network. In a Google doc, students will choose four hours per week to work once the sites go live (maximum of two hours per day). 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 can trade with a student if both agree and the schedule reflects the change. You must work at least one full hour at a time.

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 with a phone call or a text message at 512----- . If in doubt on how to proceed with the news, get a response from the professor before posting content.

Learning modules

We will have 10 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. Location-based services: How to use the power of GPS in your reporting.
7. Building an audience and driving traffic: Your first employer will be glad you have this skill.
8. Crowdsourcing breaking news. What have the big players done during the biggest news events to take advantage of social networks?
9. Marketing/monetizing your network: The days of ignoring the business side of the equation are gone. We'll explore how others have made money off social and how you can achieve that without irritating the community you build.
10. 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 the separate schedule 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 six 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 schedule for due dates.**

Peer evaluations

You are to review the work of the University of Utah students. You will be graded on the effort and depth of analysis. **See schedule for due dates.**

Crowdsourcing

Your group will attempt one crowdsourcing project. We will use the class Facebook group to come up with project ideas, which must be solidified by March 25. Individual students on their personal accounts will ask their friends to contribute as well as using social media to push the project. Previous projects will be shown as examples. To turn in this assignment, you will write a few paragraphs showing what you did to contribute to the larger project. **Due at midnight, April 13.**

Live chats

There will be 10 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. Ask the instructor. **See schedule.**

Quizzes

There are 10 quizzes to go with the 10 learning modules. The quizzes are each five questions long and are graded automatically in Canvas. **See schedule for due dates.**

Analytics reports

At the end of the semester, you will be turning in an analytics report, which is a way of measuring how successful we have been as a news network on social media. You should start on this early in the semester and then gather information throughout the semester before the due date. **Due at midnight April 27.**

Live tweeting assignment

All students will be required to live-tweet one news event over 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. **Due at midnight, March 30.**

Personal tweeting

Students will be required to tweet about news twice a day, at least five days a week from Jan. 15 to April 25 on their own accounts. This tweeting should not be done during the same time that you're working on the Social News Network. At the end, you'll be required to write an essay about what you learned in doing this. **Due at noon, on April 30.**

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: 27 percent
	Peer evaluations: 6 percent
	Quizzes: 10 percent
	Live tweeting assignment: 5 percent
	Crowdsourcing project: 8 percent
	Analytics report: 8 percent
	Live chats: 6 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 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 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

Schedule

Subject to change

Week 1 (Jan. 13-19)

- Look at course introduction material on Canvas
- Join Facebook group (link on Canvas)
- Begin personal tweeting assignment: Starting this week, you are to tweet twice a day about news, five days a week, throughout the semester. See Canvas for details.
- Live chat No. 1 at 10 a.m. Wednesday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

Jan. 19, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz 1

Week 2 (Jan. 20-26)

- Read about analytics report assignment
- Make sure you are a Facebook admin (see instructions on FB group)

- Live chat No. 2 at 9 p.m. Tuesday at robquig.tumblr.com
- Live chat No. 3 at noon Friday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

Jan. 26, 11:59 p.m.: Quizzes Nos. 2 and 3 and fill out Socialnn schedule for week

Week 3 (Jan. 27-Feb. 2)

- Begin Socialnn work
- Live chat No. 4 at 9 p.m. Monday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

Feb. 2, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz No. 4

Week 4 (Feb. 3-9)

Live chat No. 5 at 9 a.m. Tuesday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

Feb. 9, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz No. 5
Self-evaluation No. 1

Week 5 (Feb. 10-16)

Due:

Feb. 16, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz No. 6
Peer review No. 1

Week 6 (Feb. 17-23)

Live chat No. 6 at 1 p.m. Wednesday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

Feb. 23, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz No. 7
Self-evaluation No. 2

Week 7 (Feb. 24-March 2)

Change platforms

Due:

March 2, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz 8

Week 8 (March 3-9)

Live chat No. 7 at 9 p.m. Tuesday on Twitter (use hashtag #socialnn)

Due:

March 9, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz 9

Self-evaluation No. 3

**** SPRING BREAK, March 10-16, no Socialnn work****

Week 9 (March 17-23)**Due:**

March 23, 11:59 p.m.: Quiz 10

Week 10 (March 24-30)

Groups must come up with idea for crowdsourcing and post it on Facebook group by time of our live chat, which will be at 9 p.m. on Tuesday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

March 30, 11:59 p.m.: Self-evaluation 4

Live tweeting assignment

Week 11 (March 31-April 6)

Platform change for Socialnn

Week 12 (April 7-13)**Due:**

April 13, 11:59 p.m.: Self-evaluation No. 5

Crowdsourcing assignment

Week 13 (April 14-20)

Live chat no. 9 at 9 p.m. Monday on Twitter (hashtag #socialnn)

Due:

April 20, 11:59 p.m.:

Peer review No. 2

Week 14 (April 21-27)

Live chat no. 10 at 10 a.m. Friday at robquig.tumblr.com

Due:

April 27, 11:59 p.m.: Self-evaluation No. 6
Analytics report

Week 15 (April 28-May 2)

Due:

April 30, noon: Personal tweets assignment
Live chats assignment