



RPSY400 – Psychology of Social Media

Master Course Syllabus

Course Overview (QM Standards 1.2)

Course description: *Psychology of Social Media* is an eight-week online, three credit hour course. This course is an in-depth exploration of the psychological influences and impacts of digital technology and social media on information processing/learning, prosocial and antisocial human interactions, education, and marketing/branding.

Course Goals:

1. Articulate the concept of digital literacy in the multiple contexts.
2. Discuss the key concepts of the psychology of social media.
3. Describe ways social media is affecting learning and the ways we organize and share information, and be able to demonstrate mastery of the key concepts and applications of knowledge.
4. Analyze and critique the overload of digital information available to them.
5. Analyze, appraise, critique, and prioritize their own uses of social media as informed consumers.

Pre-Requisites (QM Standard 1.6)

There are no course prerequisites for this course other than being an RBA (Regents Bachelor of Arts) student.

Minimum Technical Requirements and Online Resources (QM Standards 1.5 & 1.7)

In addition to a web browser (preferable Firefox) that is Blackboard compatible, you will need the other WVROCKS supported technologies outlined in the student policies section.

Online Resources: This course makes use of many online resources. I have made every effort to make sure the links I have are up-to-date. However, due to the changing nature of the web, you may find that a resource is temporarily unavailable or has been removed. If this should happen, please send me an email and I will find an alternative resource or modify the assignment accordingly.

Instructor Information (QM Standards 1.8 & 5.3)

Individual instructors complete this information.

Virtual Office Hours

I am available in my virtual office by appointment only. Send me an email to set up an appointment.

Personal Commitment

My personal commitments to you as a participant include:

- I will reply to course mail messages within 24 hours;
- I will read all discussion postings and will reply where appropriate within 3 days
- I will acknowledge my receipt of every course mail message immediately upon reading it. If I am unable to respond to the request or concern at the time of initial reply, I will give you an estimated time for my next reply.
- If I am going to be away from the course space for more than a day or two, I will send a message to you indicating the length of my absence.
- I will regularly update information regarding due dates in the course announcements.

Optional/Required Course Materials (QM Standard 4.6)

- Weinberger, D. (2007). *Everything is miscellaneous: The power of the new digital disorder*. New York: Times Books.
- Shirky, C. (2008). *Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without organizations*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Ghonim, W. (2012). *Revolution 2.0: The power of the people is greater than the people in power: A memoir*. New York: Times Books.
- Other materials will be available in the course

Grading Policy (QM Standard 3.2)

Evaluation and Grading

Each module consists of a series of assignments, worksheets, discussions and reviews, each having specific point values designated in the table below. For each assignment, you will be given the rubric or grading criteria from which you will be evaluated.

Reflection Blog: After each week of instruction, students will write a brief, informal, and personal reaction to and personal analysis of the ideas expressed in the assigned reading and classroom discussions/activities.

New Social Media Project: Students will select a social media tool/platform that they have not used and are unfamiliar with. They will then conduct extensive research (using reputable sources including peer reviewed empirical research) about the uses and influences of the tool relating to the six themes of the course. Students will also use the tool throughout the semester. This project will culminate in a term paper in which students will weave their own experiences using the tool into their analysis of available empirical research (and other reputable sources). The paper should include anecdotal and evidence-based descriptions of: the tool, its purpose, and how they used it throughout the semester; how these uses relate to the six themes of the course; any difficulties they encountered learning to use or implementing the tool in their daily routines; how the tool either helped or hindered their social experiences; what benefits, if any, the tool provided; and whether they would recommend this tool to someone else. 6-8 pages. Max 10

Online Group Presentation: The class will be divided into five small groups and assigned to teach the class about a common social media platform: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. Each 40 minute group presentation will include: 5-1

- 5-10 minute historical background

- A brief description of the social media platform
- The initial intended purposes/uses of the social media platform
- A brief history of its inception as well as any innovations, transformations, and/or evolutions in its design, functionality, and use.
- 20-30 minutes citing evidence from reputable sources (including peer reviewed empirical research) related to the following:
 - Potential positive social functions of the platform.
 - Potential negative social consequences of using the platform.
 - How the platform is used in marketing and branding.
 - How the platform is used in learning and education
 - Any other uses discovered.
- 5-10 minutes presenting an overall analysis of their research:
 - Weighing the pros and cons of using this platform
 - Based on this analysis making an evidence-based recommendation to the class whether or not they should use (or continue using) the tool.
 - Each member of the group will contribute equally to the project in both preparation and presentation. Each classroom presentation should utilize the technology tools available in the classroom.

The grading scale is as follows:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = < 60

Course Outcomes	Opportunities to Practice Course Outcomes	Course Outcome Assessments
Students will be able to <u>articulate</u> the concept of digital literacy in the multiple contexts.	Course reading, discussions, & participation	Weekly blog posts, group presentations, new social media project
Students will <u>engage</u> in informed reading, writing, and discussion of key concepts of the psychology of social media.	Course reading, discussions, writing, & participation	Weekly blog posts, new social media project, group project/presentation
Students will be able to <u>describe</u> ways social media is affecting learning and the ways we organize and share information, and be able to demonstrate mastery of the key concepts and applications of knowledge.	Course reading, discussions, writing, & participation	Weekly blog posts, new social media project, group project/presentation
Students will be able to <u>analyze and critique</u> the overload of digital information available to them.	Course reading, discussions, writing, & participation	Weekly blog posts, new social media project/presentation
Students will be able to <u>analyze, appraise, critique, and prioritize</u> their own uses of social media as informed consumers.	Course reading, discussions, writing, & participation	Weekly blog posts, new social media project, group project/presentation

Week	Topic/Assignments	Materials
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions/Course Requirements/ What is Social Media? • Historical Contexts/Evolution of the Internet and Social Media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweet • Watch Social Media Evolution (quiz) • History of the Internet (quiz) videos • Read FB Articles 1 , 2, 3 & 4 • Read Prologue and Ch 1-3 of Everything is Miscellaneous (Quiz)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Information Age • Digital Revolution • User Generated Content • Crowd Accelerated Innovation • Memes and Viral Content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Global Innovation TED Talk • Read science of memes article • Watch science of viral video article • Read “The Dress” • Read Predicting Sharing Cascades • Watch Katie Couric Special 1, 2, & 3, • Read “Here Comes Everybody” Ch 3
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalism and Social Media • Confirmation Bias, Misinformation, and Fake News 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read “Here Comes Everybody” Ch 4 • Read Assigned Fake News Articles • Watch Digital Nation Clip 2 (16:00-26:25), • Read “Focus and Priorities” • Read excerpts from Video game addiction website
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addiction, Priorities, & Setting Limits • Amplifying Anti-Social Behaviors • Isolation, Pseudorelationships, Risky Behaviors & Oversharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch video “What is social media really doing to society?” • Listen to Risky Behavior NPR story. • Read Oversharing and Narcissism • Listen to NPR Tor story, • Watch The Dark Side of the Web
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplifying Anti-Social Behaviors, The Deep and Dark Webs (Guest speaker Steve Wilson) • Amplifying Anti-Social Behaviors • Privacy vs. Anonymity & Bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to NPR piece on anonymity • Listen to Jon Ronson public shaming interview. Watch 20/20 Catfish video (4 segments) • Read “Here Comes Everybody” Ch 1, 5-6, 8
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplifying Prosocial Behaviors Lost & Found, Connecting Socially • Amplifying Prosocial Behaviors Digital Altruism & Slacktivism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read digital altruism articles 1, 2, 3, & 4 • Video and Random Acts of Kindness slideshow, • Read “Revolution 2.0” Ch 1-5
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplifying Prosocial Behaviors Promoting Social Change • Psychology of Social Media Marketing (Guest speaker Paul Wilson) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch marketing videos 1, 2, 3, & 4 • Read marketing tips article
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Virtual Presentations 	