Social Media has become a vital part of news gathering and journalism with experts, citizens, and members of the media using networks to disseminate the news, report on breaking news, and find information.

This course will teach journalism students how to create and maintain a professional presence on social media, including Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

Students will select a beat to follow and report on for the duration of the course in the form of an on-going class project. Students will learn to use social media to enhance their reporting, build their personal brand, and drive traffic to their stories.

Course objectives

By the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand social media fundamentals
- Understand basic social media etiquette
- Publish social media updates and engage with a community
- Apply social media best practices to enhance their personal brand
- Drive traffic to their blog using social media
- Report breaking news responsibly
- Create and manage social media using the HootSuite dashboard
- Measure site traffic using Google Analytics
- Understand and follow a social media policy

This curriculum is made up of the following lessons:

1. Why Social Media?
2. The Digital Journalism Landscape
3. Social Networks, Part 1
4. Personal Branding & Social Media Etiquette
5. Social Media Tools & Applications
6. Social Media & Breaking News
7. Social Networks, Part 2
8. Engaging on Social Media
9. Social Media Analytics & Proving ROI
10. Social Media Policies

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HootSuite University

This curriculum incorporates readings from a variety of sources, opinions from various media outlets, and online video courses from HootSuite University. The curriculum takes a “flipped classroom” approach with the intent of students learning the lesson at home before class in order to collaborate about the application and theory in-class.

HootSuite University offers online and on-demand education about social media, and is available to professors and higher ed students for free as part of the HootSuite University Higher Education Program: hootsuite.com/higher-ed
Lesson: Why Social Media?

Social media has not only changed the way we communicate, it has changed the way we report and consume news. The Pew Research Center report on “The State of News Media 2013” states that “15% of US adults get their news primarily from social media, and the vast majority of them (77%) follow links to consume the full news stories.” This lesson introduces the relevance of social media in journalism and gives a high level overview of the top social networks.

Lesson Objectives:

• Understand how social media has created a shift in journalism
• Understand the current state of digital journalism
• Understand high level applications of the top 10 social networks: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Youtube, Foursquare, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, and Flickr

Watch

• SCMD 121: Introduction to Social Networks for Organizations

Read

• The State of the News Media 2013: Digital by the Numbers
• The Transition to Digital Journalism
• How Social Media is Supporting a Fundamental Shift in Journalism

Do

• Activate your HootSuite account and create your HootSuite University profile
• Complete your SCMD 121 workbook
• Complete the SCMD 121 exam
Lesson: The Digital Journalism Landscape

News organizations are shifting from a traditional media model into an ever-changing digital model ripe with innovation and experimentation. Journalism is coming into the modern, online era of paywalls, ads, and subscriptions. This lesson explores the changing digital journalism landscape using three business cases: Tumblr’s original-journalism project Storyboard, Buzzfeed’s expansion into political and business news, and Andrew Sullivan’s subscription model for The Dish.

Lesson Objectives:
- Understand current revenue challenges news organizations face
- Understand multiple approaches to creating paywalls
- Understand journalism subscription models

Read
- The Trouble with Tumblr’s Journalism Experiment
- David Karp Elaborates on Storyboard Shutdown
- Does Buzzfeed Know the Secret?
- Buzzfeed Adds Politico Writer
- How Buzzfeed Gives Business News Millennial Appeal
- Eulogy for the Blog
- New Year, New Dish, New Media
- The Dish Model: The Data
- What Andrew Sullivan’s New Venture Could Teach Us About the Web
- Trying to Make Paywalls Work
- BuzzFeed, Andrew Sullivan, and the Future of Making Money in Journalism
- Esquire Experiments with Online Paywall
- Paywall Lessons from Canada’s Globe and Mail

Do
- Compare and contrast how two of the business cases (Storyboard, Buzzfeed, or The Dish) sought out to innovate digital journalism. What were their challenges, successes, and failures, and how did they compare to each other? What was different?
Project Assignment:
Introduce the class project and have students research and select the beat that they will report on using social media.

Class Project:
Each student will select a beat to follow and report on for the duration of the course. Students will create a blog for their beat using the Tumblr platform and will use other social networks, tools, and applications introduced in this class to add depth to their reporting and drive traffic to their blog.

Students will be responsible for writing at least one blog post per week, and will set up a social media presence to follow their beat and engage with the community and other reporters on a daily basis. Students will use HootSuite & Google Analytics to manage their social media accounts, increase readership, and measure their social media success.

Students will provide a report on their successes and challenges, what strategies worked and didn’t work, what social networks and applications they found the most effective, and their overall experience.

Grading will be determined by the quality of content on the blog, social media activity, and effort. Students will also follow, read, and comment on their classmates posts.

Lesson: Social Networks, Part 1
Students will learn the fundamentals of creating and managing social presences on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Google+ and how journalists are using these networks. The material provided in this lesson is intended to give students the tactical knowledge of how to use these social networks, it is recommended that class time be used to cover the ideas, theory, or application of these networks.

Lesson Objectives:
• Create and maintain a professional journalist presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+
• Create and publish content to a Tumblr blog
• Engage with other journalists on social media
• Use social media to follow their beat and community
Facebook

Professor may choose to combine this with other sections of the lesson or have Facebook as a standalone lecture.

Learning Objectives:
• Setting Up Your Facebook Page
• Understanding Facebook Page Features
• Monitoring Facebook Insights
• Understanding How Journalists & Media Use Facebook

Watch
• SCMD 110: Creating a Facebook Brand Page
• Lecture Series: 5 Best Practices for New Facebook Pages
• NPR: How Reporters Can Use Facebook Subscribe

Read
• Community News and Facebook
• Best Practices for Journalists on Facebook
• How Journalists Can Use Facebook Graph Search for Reporting
• 12 Best Practices for Media Companies Using Facebook Pages
• Review the Media on Facebook portal

Do
• Create a Facebook presence as a journalist. Based on what you’ve learned and what you feel comfortable with, you can choose to either create a Facebook Page to use as a journalist, or enable subscriptions to your personal Facebook profile to have others “Follow” you.
• “Like” Facebook + Journalists
• Follow at least 5 journalists and Like at least 5 publications relevant to your beat
• Complete the Facebook portion of your SCMD 110 workbook
Twitter

Professor may choose to combine this with other sections of the lesson or have Twitter as a standalone lecture.

Learning Objectives:
• What is Twitter?
• Setting Up Your Twitter Account
• Understanding Twitter’s Web Features
• Following & Connecting with Your Community on Twitter
• Understanding Hashtags & Privacy Settings
• Understanding Journalism Best Practices for Twitter
• Engaging With Your Community on Twitter

Watch
• SCMD 110: Creating a Twitter Profile

Read
• “Mom, this is how Twitter works” by Jessica Hische
• Twitter Best Practices for Journalists & Newsrooms
• Review The Twitter Rules
• Review the Twitter for Newsrooms portal
• 10 Ways Journalists Can Use Twitter Before, During, and After Reporting a Story
• Optional: Twitter for Sports Journalists

Do
• If you don’t have one already, create your Twitter account
• Follow @TwitterforNews
• Subscribe to @Sree’s Social Media Editors list
• Create a Twitter list for your beat, including at least 10 journalists and 10 publications relevant to your beat
• Find your beat’s community on Twitter. Follow influencers and relevant accounts and find popular hashtags you can utilize.
• Complete the Twitter portion of your SCMD 110 workbook
Google+

It’s recommended that Google+ is combined with another section in this lesson, such as Tumblr.

Learning Objectives:
- What is Google+?
- Creating and Customizing Your Google+ Profile
- Understanding Google+ Features
- How to Grow Your Audience Using Google+
- Creating and Using Google+ Circles

Watch

- SCMD 110: Creating a Google+ Page

Read

- How Journalists are Using Google+
- Review recommended journalists on Google+

Do

- Create your Google+ profile. You will want to ensure you create a profile and not a page because your G+ profile will be one of your top Google search results.
- Create two circles for your beat: one for other journalists and another circle of influencers or prominent people in your beat.
- Complete the Google+ portion of your SCMD 110 workbook
Social Media for Journalism

Tumblr

It’s recommended that Tumblr is combined with another section in this lesson, such as Google+.

**Learning Objectives:**

- What is Tumblr?
- Understand How Tumblr is Similar and Different from Other Blogging Platforms
- Understand How News Organizations Are Using Tumblr
- Create and Customize a Tumblr blog
- Publish Content to Tumblr

**Watch**

- Lecture Series: How the Best Brands Tell Stories Using Tumblr with Ari Levine
- NPR: Melody Kramer of Fresh Air on the Digital Life of Shows (from 16min - 27min)

**Read**

- Unwrapping Tumblr for Journalists, Mykl Novak
- A Journalist’s Guide to Using Tumblr, Poynter
- How Some News Orgs Use Tumblr, Poynter

**Do**

- Create a Tumblr blog for your beat. You can customize your blog from a variety of free themes available from Tumblr.
- Once you have created your blog, tweet the URL with the class hashtag. Using the hashtag, find your classmates’ blogs and follow them.
- Follow Newsweek, The Atlantic, and Anthony de Rosa on Tumblr
- Find and follow other Tumblr accounts relevant to your beat, be it personalities, publications, organizations, governments, etc.
- Explore Tumblr’s **featured tags**, and research which tags are most popular for your beat.
- **Note:** You can only follow blogs from a primary Tumblr account. If you have an existing Tumblr account you can easily create a secondary blog, but note that you will only be able to follow, like, and reply to posts using your primary Tumblr account (which would be your personal). Students can choose whether they want to create a secondary blog under their personal profile or create an entirely new account.
Project Assignment:
Now that you have a working knowledge of how to create and maintain a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Tumblr, it’s time to get started with your class project. Write your first blog post, publish it to Tumblr using appropriate post tags, and promote it on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ using best practices gleaned from reviewing assigned material.

Lesson: Personal Branding & Social Media Etiquette

Understanding how to communicate with social media is key to your success in today’s digital landscape. In this lesson, you’ll learn the guidelines and best practices around social media etiquette as well as the nuances of specific social networks to help you communicate effectively online.

It’s important for journalists to have a consistent personal brand and professional online presence to help you find stories and sources, report breaking news, and drive readership to your stories.

Lesson Objectives:
• Understand the Fundamental Dos & Don’ts of Social Media
• Understand Why Social Media Etiquette is Important
• How To Build A Network of Connections That Reflects You
• How To Disclose Bias and Represent Yourself Accurately
• Understand the Nuanced Etiquette for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn
• Create a Consistent Personal Brand Online

Watch
• SCMD 115: The Dos & Don’ts of Social Media Etiquette
• HOOT 100, 105, 110: Getting Started With HootSuite

Read
• Personal Branding Helps Journalists, Media Professionals Stand Out
• 5 Ways to Avoid Sabotaging Your Personal Brand Online
• Why Profile Photos Matter - Is Yours Appropriate?
• Reuters Editor Discusses Social Media Etiquette for Professionals
Do

- Complete your SCMD 115 worksheet & pass the SCMD 115 exam
- Review @Sree’s Effective Twitter Bios Twitter list. Is yours working for you?
- Get started with your HootSuite dashboard by adding social networks and following the steps outlined in your course workbook

Project Assignment:

Now that you understand why personal branding and social media etiquette is important, it’s time to take an audit of your existing profiles: is there a consistent branding scheme (color/cover photo/avatar)? Based on what you’ve learned, update your pages on Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and Tumblr.

Create a personal website of all your social media profiles to show off your personal brand using Flavors.me or About.me and tweet your URL using the class hashtag. You should update this site as the class progresses and you add more social profiles.

Lesson: Social Media Tools & Applications

Social media and reporting are both on-the-go activities, and with the rise in mobile readership it’s important to understand what tools you can use to help you with real-time reporting. With effective listening, newsrooms can track real-time, trending conversations on social channels to understand how their audience is interacting with content.

However, it can be difficult to manage multiple social profiles, networks, and accounts as new ones spring forward all the time. Organizing your social media and conversations is important so you can then add opinion and provide engaging content in the form of a story.

Lesson Objectives:

- How to Track the Success of a Story From Tweet to Pageview
- How to Measure Site Traffic Using Google Analytics
- Understand Why Social Media Management Tools Are Important
- Understand the Mobile App Landscape

Watch

- End to End ROI Tracking with HootSuite & Google Analytics
- HOOT 120, 130, 140: Getting Started With HootSuite
Read

• 3 Ways Social Media Command Centers Improve Newsrooms
• Using Google Analytics & Tumblr
• Report: News “more mobile, more social, more real-time”
• How Vine is Changing the Face of Online Journalism
• What Works for News Orgs on Foursquare?
• Disqus Comments on NPR

Do

• Create your profile on Muckrack.com and spend some time using the platform, connecting with your beat, and seeing what journalists are talking about.
• Create a Disqus account, install it on your Tumblr, and enable comments for your readers.
• Complete the appropriate sections in your coursebook

Project Assignment:

Create a Google Analytics account and start tracking your Tumblr blog! Apply the best practices you learned from the Google Analytics webinar and track how much traffic each of your social media posts is generating. Based on your analytics in the coming weeks, make adjustments to your social media messages and experiment with different ways of driving traffic, and include these strategies your final report.

If you have a smartphone, research apps that will be helpful to your reporting, download them, and start experimenting with using them for your reporting. Some inspiration: Soundcloud to record and share interviews, Evernote to record notes/audio/articles, Dropbox to quickly share files, IFTTT to set up news alerts, Vine for on-location video, etc. If you choose, you can post your experiences or the media you created to your blog.
Lesson: Social Media & Breaking News

In a world where everything is real time, Twitter has been key in reporting breaking news for everything from the Arab Spring to the Miracle on the Hudson crash landing. Reddit has also become a forum for citizen journalism, help, and support during tragedies like the Aurora shooting or Boston bombing. This lesson will prepare students with best practices for reporting live over social media.

Lesson Objectives:
• Understand the Role that Social Media Plays with Breaking News
• Understand Common Mistakes Used when Reporting Breaking News
• How To Verify Information During Breaking News
• How To Curate Content from Multiple Sources Over Social Media
• How To Live Tweet an Event and Report With Integrity
• How To Create a Storify Using Multimedia from Citizens and Journalists

Watch
• Social Media vs CNN in Breaking News (up to 30 minute mark)
• HOOT 200-240: Advanced Tactics with HootSuite Pro

Read
• Social Media Editor Role Expands To Include Fighting Misinformation During Breaking News
• Conflicting Reports of Giffords’ Death Were Understandable, but not Excusable
• A Journalist’s Quick Guide to Reddit
• Reddit is Far Greater Than The Future of Journalism
• Tips for Live Tweeting an Event
• Aggregation Guidelines: Link, Attribute, Add Value
• The Update Guide to Storify for Journalists

Do
• Complete your coursebook & pass the HootSuite Certification exam
Project Assignment:
Research upcoming events for your beat and select one to attend in the coming weeks, either virtually or in person. Live-tweet the event using appropriate hashtags and best practices based on what you have learned in class and in readings. Create a Storify, share it to your social media accounts, and include it in one of your blog posts, along with a brief summary of the event you covered (tip: You can add the Storify plug-in to HootSuite's to make creating a Storify easier using one of your search streams).

Lesson: Social Networks, Part 2

Students will learn the fundamentals of creating and managing social presences on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Youtube, and how journalists are using these networks. The material provided in this lesson is intended to give students the tactical knowledge of how to use these social networks, it is recommended that class time be used to cover the ideas, theory, or application of these networks.

Lesson Objectives:
- Create and Maintain a Professional Presence on LinkedIn
- Understand How To Incorporate Multimedia Into Reporting
- Understand How YouTube and Instagram Can Be Used in Journalism

LinkedIn, Instagram, & YouTube

Watch
- SCMD 110: Creating a LinkedIn Profile
- Lecture Series: How to Strategically Grow Your LinkedIn Network with John Hill
- Lecture Series: Building a Powerful Community on YouTube with Ryan Nugent

Read
- 10 LinkedIn Tips for Journalists
- How Journalists Are Using Instagram
- Photojournalists Debate Ethics of Instagram, Hipstamatic
- Instagram Video Highlights: News
Do

• Complete your SCMD 110 workbook by filling out the LinkedIn section
• Take the SCMD 110 Exam
• Create/update your LinkedIn profile based on the best practices you learned, link it to your About.me or Flavors.me profile, and add it to your HootSuite dashboard
• If applicable, add any Instagram or Youtube accounts to HootSuite via their App Directory

Project Assignment:
For this week’s blog post, follow a recent story for your beat and write your post incorporating citizen journalism from YouTube and Instagram. Search for your beats’ influencers and publications on Instagram or YouTube and follow them (tip: you can set up streams in HootSuite to monitor tags and feeds alongside your other social media accounts).

Lesson: Engaging on Social Media

Using social media to drive traffic to your stories, find sources, and follow news is important to your success as a journalist. But social media also provides an opportunity to engage with the community involved in your beat, which can be a great way to build relationships with key influencers and make you a trusted sources of news.

Lesson objectives:

• How To Engage With Your Community Over Facebook
• Understand Social Media Best Practices for Engaging With Your Twitter Followers
• Understand Why It’s Important for News Organizations to Build Community

Watch

• Lecture Series: Facebook Brand Pages: Rules of Engagement with Jason Li
• Lecture Series: Tactical Tips & Tricks for Social Media Success with Josh Ochs

Read

• The Importance of Engagement
• Measuring Community Engagement: A Case Study from Chicago Public Media
• What “Engagement” Means to The Guardian’s Meg Pickard
• 13 Ways to Make Something Go Viral
**Do**

- Start applying the best practices you learned to your social media activity this week. Did you notice an increase in comments, retweets, or mentions?

**Project Assignment:**
Apply these best practices when promoting your blog post this week. Try to choose a topic that would best engage your community with the goal of creating conversation and having readers engage with your content through comments and shares. Include the result and reaction in your final project report.

**Lesson: Social Media Analytics & Proving ROI**

Einstein famously said “not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.” Social media is no different, and with a lot of data to sort through, how do you know what you should be paying attention to and what you can discard? This lesson is an introduction to social media analytics to help you find out what it’s important to track in your journalism career.

**Lesson Objectives:**

- Understand Basic Analytics Modules
- Create a Social Media Analytics Report Using HootSuite
- Compare Social Media Analytics with Site Traffic Using Google Analytics

**Watch**

- Lecture Series: The Science of Social Media with Dan Zarrella

**Read**

- Social Media Metrics That Matter
- Metrics, Metrics, Everywhere: How Do We Measure The Impact of Journalism?
- The Journalist’s Guide to Analytics

**Do**

- Create a custom report for your blog and social media accounts using HootSuite’s analytics modules.
Project Assignment:

Now that you’ve come full circle with your social media education, it’s time to apply all of your knowledge and track your progress. Based on your experiences and what you learned in this class, create a final report on your successes and challenges, what strategies worked and didn’t work, what social networks and applications you found the most effective, and your overall experience.

Be sure to include both hard analytics like site traffic and follower growth along with soft metrics like quality of comments, community engagement, and influence.

Lesson: Social Media Policies

You’ve learned how to conduct yourself professionally online, but now you have to learn how to follow a social media policy put out by an organization. Depending on your future workplace, you will have to tailor your activity to fit their social media guidelines. This lesson explores how various news organizations approach social media policies.

Lesson Objectives:

• Understand the History of Social Media Policies
• Understand Why Social Media Policies are Important
• How To Follow a Social Media Policy Responsibly

Read

• Guidelines for Guidelines: Social Media Policies Spark Debate
• There’s No One-Size-Fits-All Social Media Policy in Journalism
• Associated Press Social Media Guidelines
• Reaction to AP Social Media Updates
• CBC: Use of Social Media
• Reuters: Reporting From the Internet and Using Social Media

Do

• Continue work on your final report!

Project Assignment

For your final blog post of the class -not to be counted in your final report- use your knowledge of social media and journalism to analyze a social media policy of a news organization or publishing company, and highlight what you think is effective and what you think could be improved.