



SYLLABUS

Social Media for Journalists
Instructor: Damian Radcliffe
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Language of Instruction: English
UO Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 40

Remote/London, UK, Summer 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social Media has changed the way that both journalists - and audiences - find and share the news. How are these changes affecting journalistic practice? And what are the social media skills that journalists and digital consumers need today?

This class will explore the social media strategies of major UK based news media outlets and journalists, exploring different social platforms and how you can use them effectively as journalists.

It will also teach you how to use social media to verify and manage content from different sources, as well as explore best practice in develop relationships with communities through online channels.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Strong social media skills are highly sought after by employers. But usage of these platforms in your personal life don't necessarily translate into effective use in a professional, journalistic setting.

This course will redress that by improving your knowledge of how major social networks are being used by audiences, journalists and news publishers. Questions that we will explore include:

- What is the role of social media in the way that audiences find, consume, and share news?
 - What are the implications of this for news organizations, brands and journalists?
- What are the characteristics of different social platforms?
 - What does this mean for journalism and storytelling?
- How are different social networks used by news organizations to tell + find stories?
 - What does that mean for the role of journalists in 2020?
- What can journalists and digital consumers do to mitigate online misinformation?
 - How are they responding to these challenges?

At the end of this course, you will have a firm grasp of these key issues, as well as the ability to tell your own stories through social media. TL;DR: This course will address the question: What social media skills and knowledge do I need to have to prosper as a journalist and online storyteller in 2020?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course you will be able to:

1. Understand and describe some of the major trends in social media usage.
2. Describe characteristics of major social platforms; including best practice for them.
3. Know where to look for relevant industry information/data/analysis about social media.
4. Use industry standard tools, such as Google Drive and Medium, for collaborative and individual work.
5. Demonstrate proficiency through industry accepted accreditation of the Hootsuite Platform.
6. Have a working knowledge of major – and emerging - social networks / types of channels:
 - *Established networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Pinterest.*
 - *Stories formats used on Instagram, Snapchat and other social platforms.*
 - *Live Video services such as YouTube Live, Periscope and Facebook Live.*
 - *Messaging based apps like WeChat, WhatsApp and Line.*
 - *Platforms growing in influence and impact such as TikTok and Reddit.*
7. Be able to critique your own ideas/output – and those of your peers – on social media topics.
8. Understand the implications of your digital – and social – footprint.
9. Discuss online misinformation and strategies to mitigate this.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will blend online + offline (i.e. recorded) lectures and discussion, alongside conversations with guest speakers, as well as practical exercises and your own reading and research.

You will be expected to critically consume social news (news stories told on social media platforms) throughout the course and to consistently share the findings with the class. Given how fast the social media landscape changes - and the sheer breadth of this space – each student will play a key role in helping their peers to develop their own knowledge of this rapidly evolving environment.

Learning methods will include:

- **Discussing** key market data and trends, developing your understanding of their implications.
- **Researching and analysing** emerging issues and players.
- **Presenting** your own research and social media output to your class peers and instructor.
- **Producing high quality journalistic work** (written and visual using social media apps).
- **Publishing** your work on a public facing class website/blog.
- **Online learning modules** from industry leaders like Facebook, Hootsuite and First Draft.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Using our extensive UK media network, as part of this class you will talk to, and hear from, leading journalists and communications professionals in the UK.

Previous speakers (2018 and 2019) in this class have come from some of the leading news and media organizations around the world, including:

BBC News, Conde Nast (Vogue), The Drum, The Economist, First Draft, Google, The Guardian, journalism.co.uk, the digital marketing agency Metia, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (Oxford University), Story Futures and What's New In Publishing.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each week there will be a guiding theme which will shape our discussions and creative/research work.

Where possible, work and guest speakers will be orientated around that theme. However, this is subject to their availability. The course schedule may also change depending on class needs and other developments. A more detailed schedule which will be made available at the start of the class.

Sample outline

Week 1: History and Evolution of Social Media

Week 2: Social Media Trends – Stories format, online sources/content, managing misinformation

Week 3: Your digital footprint – portfolios, LinkedIn, online security (preventing doxing)

Week 4: Tools, Apps and Tricks – Hootsuite accreditation, Facebook for Journalists Training

Week 5: What happens next? Emerging issues and storytelling techniques

COURSEWORK

Activity	Tasks	% of Grade	Points
Writing	1. Social Media Storytelling (<i>BuzzFeed style piece</i>)	20%	200
	2. Interview a Journalist / How I Work feature	10%	100
		30%	300
Research / Reflection	3. Weekly reflection x 5	15%	150
	4. Emerging Platforms (<i>group presentation/paper</i>)	10%	100
		25%	250
Portfolio, Tools and Apps	5. Professional LinkedIn site	5%	50
	6. HootSuite Platform Certification	5%	50
	7. Facebook for Journalists certification	2.5%	25
	8. First Draft Covering COVID-19 certification	2.5%	25
	9. Online Portfolio	10%	100
		25%	250
Other	10. Class participation and engagement	20%	200
		20%	200
TOTAL		100%	1,000

Notes on graded assignments

You'll be given a detailed brief, on Canvas and in class, for each assignment. This will include clear directions of what's expected and by when. I will also post a discussion board for each assignment on Canvas. So, if anything is unclear, please ask there, so that everyone can see my response(s).

- **Writing (30%)**

Social Media Storytelling feature (20%)

Working on your own, you will produce a social media driven story, on the topic – and format - of your choice. This is the type of content popular on BuzzFeed and many other digital news sites.

Your story could be: live blogging from an event, a human interest story, a breaking news feature or a myriad of other (hard and soft news) possibilities. The key thing is that your story **MUST** include a combination of text, video, still photography, audio and curated links/material produced elsewhere – and available on social media.

You will be expected to pitch two ideas to the class – outlining your idea and the platform(s) you propose to use. The class will then commission you to produce this story. Once the assignment is completed, you will share with the class the lessons you learned from this task.

The assignment will be submitted via Medium, as this is the easiest platform to embed tweets, YouTube videos, Instagram posts etc. *Aim for 800-1,000 words.*

Interview a Journalist / “This is how I use social media” (10%)

How do journalists use social media? We'll find this out in two ways: through conversations with guest speakers and through finding – and interviewing a UK journalist about their work.

In doing this, you will need to find – and reach out to – a journalist from an outlet of your choosing. Use this opportunity to find out more about your dream news organization, or role, identify your own personal skill/knowledge gaps, and to expand your personal/professional network.

Together, we will shape the format of this write-up, inspired by the Lifehacker series “How I Work.” <https://lifehacker.com/c/how-i-work>.

- **Research, Evaluation and Critical Thinking (25%)**

Weekly reflections (15%)

Taking the time to pause and reflect about what you have learned helps with retention of knowledge. As a result, at the end of each week, I'll ask you to produce a short reflection as a Twitter thread.

If you don't know how to do this, have a look at: <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/create-a-thread> and <https://slayingsocial.com/twitter-thread-case-study/>

You must include a minimum of 5 tweets in your thread to get the points.

This task will help build your Twitter footprint, get you comfortable with using the platform for journalistic / professional purposes, as well as give you experience of producing threads – a very popular tool for communicating used by journalists and brands on Twitter.

Your thread should include:

- Takeaways from class discussions, assignments and conversations with guests.
- Thoughts on your industry reading. Don't just share a link, add value by saying why the development you are posting is noteworthy. (More on this below.)

Tips

- Post the link for your first tweet each week to Canvas.
- In the first tweet of the thread, use the class #tag - #SM4J
- @me - [@damianradcliffe](#) - so I can RT your submission.
- @ others – people, orgs etc. that you mention – to drive engagement from/with them
- Do search for the #tag on Twitter to see what others in the group have shared, RT, comment and engage with them – this is how communities on social media work, so it's good practice!

I will also use this feedback and insights to shape the class as we go throughout the term.

Work will be graded as Complete/Incomplete.

Industry Reading

Because the social media landscape changes rapidly, there are currently no set readings for this class (although that may change). You are, however, expected to keep up to date with the latest developments in this space.

Your weekly reflection is one place to share this. We may also discuss major developments in class.

There are a number of websites, and newsletters, which students will find it helpful to subscribe to.

These sources regularly feature “how to guides,” discussions about new social storytelling techniques and data/analysis of new research related to social news.

Recommended resources include: *Nieman Lab*, *CJR (Columbia Journalism Review)*, *IJNET*, *Reliable Sources (CNN)*, *recode*, *Pew Research Center (Journalism and Media project)*, *Poynter*, *journalism.co.uk*.

Recommendations:

- [41 Must Read websites and newsletters for journalists interested in social media](#)
- [50 Must Read websites and newsletters for journalists and students interested in the media, tech and communications](#)
- [Journalism, Media and Tech: 19 must read newsletters for journalists in 2019](#)

NB: there is some overlap between these lists.

Emerging Platforms – presentation (In Groups, 10%)

Working in groups you will be allocated a social network that you will become the class experts in. Together you and your group will produce a “User Guide” for journalists and brands about how to use this social channel.

To help develop your expertise in this space, you will use a mixture of desk analysis and field research to determine best practice for this platform. Field research will include getting hands on with this tool, as well as identifying how other major news organizations use this application.

Combining your own first-hand experience of using this platform, with the expertise of others, will enable you to produce a handy “how to” guide for use by the rest of the class and other journalists.

The guide should include hyperlinks, screenshots, embedded tweets/images/videos etc. to help others to understand the best way to use this platform. You will present your initial findings (via a presentation) to the class.

We will then give you and your group feedback on this, so you can revise your submission based on any additional points from our class discussions that you wish to incorporate.

- **Portfolio, Tool + Apps (25%)**

Having a strong online presence is vital for prospective employers; and represents a great opportunity for you to showcase your personal brand - and work - online.

To encourage you to establish this presence online, this task will ensure that you have the following in place by the end of term:

1. A LinkedIn profile (5%)
2. A professional looking Online Portfolio (10%)

Your LinkedIn profile and Online Portfolio will be graded A-F.

Alongside this, you will also undertake online learning modules enabling you to receive free certification in leading online tools.

1. HootSuite Platform Certification (5%)
2. Facebook for Journalists certification (2.5%)

Finally, given concerns about “fake news” and misinformation online, especially in the current climate, you will undertake a module looking at disinformation in the age of the coronavirus.

1. First Draft Covering COVID-19 certification (2.5)

Hootsuite, Facebook and First Draft certificates are Complete/Incomplete quizzes.

- **Participation and Engagement (20%)**

Our classroom operates like a newsroom or an agency. This means that you need to be comfortable pitching ideas, receiving – and giving – feedback, and treating everyone in the room with due respect.

You'll ask questions of guest speakers, share - and produce - work in class throughout the term. This work feeds into this grade.

This includes, for each guest speaker, two students who will be assigned (you will be selected at random, with names taken out of a hat) to take the lead in asking questions of our guest.

Examples of work captured by this participation grade:

- In-class writing/production exercises
- Engagement with guest speakers
- Contribution to in-class discussions
- Pitching ideas
- Giving helpful, respectful feedback to your peers, on their work

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Damian Radcliffe, Professor of Practice, Carolyn Chambers Professor of Journalism



Damian Radcliffe is the Carolyn S. Chambers Professor in Journalism, a Professor of Practice, and an affiliate of the Department for Middle East and North Africa Studies (MENA), at the University of Oregon.

Alongside holding the Chambers Chair at the School of Journalism and Communication (SOJC), he is also a [Fellow](#) of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, an [Honorary Research Fellow](#) at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture Studies, and a fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

An experienced digital analyst, consultant, journalist, and researcher, Damian has worked in editorial, research, policy, and teaching positions for the past two decades in the UK, Middle East, and USA. This includes roles in all media sectors (commercial, public, government, regulatory, academic, and nonprofit/civil society) and all platforms (print, digital, TV and radio).

Damian continues to be an [active journalist](#), writing monthly columns for [ZDNet](#) (CBS Interactive, 58 by-lines to mid 2019) and twice-monthly columns for [What's New in Publishing](#) (23 bylines as of 20th June 2019). He also regularly appears in [journalism.co.uk](#). He writes about digital trends, social media, technology, the business of media, and the evolution of journalism.

These themes are also at the heart of the [Demystifying Media](#) speaker series, which Damian curates. He launched the series in January 2016, with the goal of bringing leading academics and industry professionals to the SOJC. To date, more than 40 experts have participated in the program. He hosts a podcast interviewing guests in the series: <https://soundcloud.com/demystifying-media>

Outside of this series, Damian has chaired sessions, provided training, and spoken at events, around the world including: USA (New York, Portland, Philadelphia, Colorado Springs, Albany; New York, Chicago and Washington D.C.), UK (London, Edinburgh, Oxford, Cardiff, Belfast, Bristol), Europe (Paris, Strasbourg, Vienna, Barcelona, Istanbul, Amsterdam, various cities in Germany) and the Middle East (Doha and Dubai).

Before joining the University of Oregon in 2015, Damian previously worked full-time for The Local Radio Company, BBC, Volunteering Matters, Ofcom (the UK communications regulator), and Qatar's Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (ictQATAR).

He has also written, spoken to, or provided consulting services, for a wide range of additional industry and academic organizations, such as:

Abramis Academic Publishing, ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, Association of Information and Communication Media (AMIC, Spain), BBC Media Action, BBC Monitoring, BBC World Service, Carnegie UK Trust, Cass Business School, Centre for Research on Communities and Culture (Canterbury University), City University London, Cognizant, European Journalism Observatory, Eyewitness Media Hub, FJUM (forum journalism and media, Vienna), German-American Institutes, The Guardian, IBC Content Everywhere, Media Development Investment Fund, Middle East Broadcast Network (MBN), NESTA, Northwestern University in Qatar, Online Journalism Blog, Qatar Today, Street Fight, TEDx Reset (Turkey), The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University and Your Middle East.

Other outlets to feature Damian's work include: [BBC College of Journalism](#) and [BBC Academy](#) (36 bylines), [The Conversation](#) (6 bylines), [Digital Content Next](#) (6 bylines), [Huffington Post](#) (12 bylines), IJNet (9 bylines) and - prior to their closure - PBS [MediaShift](#) (14 bylines) and [TheMediaBriefing](#) (35 bylines). Additional bylines can also be found in [Columbia Journalism Review](#) (CJR), Harvard's [Nieman Lab](#), [Poynter](#) and [elsewhere](#).

Find out more about him on his [website](#).

<http://journalism.uoregon.edu/member/radcliffe-damian/>