

## Syllabus

### **Social media impact on communication processes - examples from Poland and the USA**

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#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to present various contexts of social media communication. We will discuss historical conditions, as well as current challenges, comparing the situation in Polish and American social media space. We will focus primarily on the perspective of the social and political consequences of these media presence. The topics discussed will concern interpersonal and public communication changes caused by the emergence of social network platforms. We will also discuss the cultural, ethical, and legal contexts of social media, including issues such as Web 2.0 and the new media audience, the impact of social media on journalism, filter bubbles, algorithms, privacy concerns, and online disinformation. During this course, we will learn from each other: I will provide you with examples of various types and forms of communication from Polish social media, and you will present me examples from American social media. We will compare and discuss similarities and differences, as well as put it in a broader social, political, or cultural perspective. We will also discuss legal issues because new media law is slightly different in the European Union and the United States. The course aims to increase awareness of social media's role, advantages, challenges, and threats as well as to improve digital and media literacy.

The course will be divided into the following modules:

- I. Social Media Revolution: History and Theory Introduction
- II. Social Media Communication & Politics
- III. Social Media & Self-mass Communication
- IV. Social Media Communication & Society

#### COURSE FORMAT

The material will be presented in a lecture, discussion, and workshop format. We will use different interactive forms of teaching during the classes, e.g. Kahoot quizzes, Mentimeter,

etc. Sometimes there will be group work, a Socratic Seminar, or an Oxford Debate. We will also watch short movies, TED lectures, or documentary movies and discuss the content.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- CO1: By the end of the course, participants will understand the role and importance of social media in the information society
- CO2: Participants will be able to use social media tools in a conscious and safe way
- CO3: Participants will be able to react properly to different threats in social media
- CO4: Participants will understand the dangers of fake news and disinformation
- CO5: Participants will be able to recognize disinformation and fake news

#### **ADDITIONAL POLICY:**

**Class Preparation:** Please, do the weekly reading before the class and be prepared to discuss the material. Your activity and commitment will be additionally rewarded and will give you extra credits for the final grade. You can bring your textbook to class.

**Attendance:** Attendance at in-person classes is mandatory (you can miss a class 4 times without any additional consequences). If you have a medical leave, your absence is not counted. You can make up missed classes during my office hours, Then you should come prepared as for the classes in the schedule (read the literature provided for a given class). If you miss more than half of the classes in a given month, you lose this opportunity. Students who have 100% attendance can count on an additional bonus (+5% to final grade).

**Electronic devices:** Please bring your electronic device (laptop, smartphone) to class as we will need it to participate in some class activities. Remember that the device must be muted during classes. Respect others and do not use your device during class for purposes other than those related to completing assignments. Please use it in a way that is not disturbing. Any noise emitting from your phone or laptop is considered a distraction.

**Academic Honesty:** Academic honesty is necessary for the free exchange of ideas. Academic dishonesty can include plagiarism or cheating. Plagiarism is the use of ideas and phrases in the writings of others as one's own without crediting the source. All materials used or paraphrased must be cited and credited. Cheating refers to both the giving and the receiving of unauthorized assistance in the taking of examinations or in the creation of assigned and/or graded class work. Students who assist other students in, or contribute to, acts of academic dishonesty are subject to the appropriate penalties. All violations of academic honesty (like plagiarizing or ghostwriting) will be passed along to the appropriate Board.

If you use AI for your work you must indicate it every time (e.g. as a footnote) and highlight or mark every part of your work that was made by the AI tool.

Please see <https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>

**Assignments:** All assignments are mandatory, regardless of whether you were present during the class or not. This course includes 4 assignments, an individual presentation of the topic you choose, and a final essay. All these things are necessary to pass the course. Remember that assignments give you additional points for your final grade, please treat it as an additional benefit and an opportunity to develop your skills, not only as an obligation that you have to do to pass the course.

There will be 4 assignments during this class:

**Assignment #1** Individual topic presentation - most classes will have a short (15-20 minutes) introduction to the topic, during which we will discuss the most important research results in a given field. I will give you scientific texts based on which you will need to prepare a short summary of research results. Everyone will have to present once.

**Assignment #2** The task will be to watch a film based on which you will describe in a short essay of 8,000 - 10,000 characters the topic of the Web 2.0 revolution, and how it influenced changes in mass communication.

**Assignment #3** Fact-checking - you will receive several pieces of news, some of them will be true, and some will be false, your task will be to verify two of them and identify whether they are true or false, you will use tools that we will discuss in class.

**Assignment #4** Group presentation - In groups of 3-4 people, you will be tasked with presenting selected case studies from American social media. You can choose any topic. It may be, for example, hate speech, cancel culture, oversharenting, disinformation, or any other topic that you consider important. You can decide what topic you would like to present and discuss; once you choose the topic, you need to set a presentation date with me.

**Final essay:** In-class open-book essay or the final essay prepared at home. There will be three topics to choose from.

**Contacting the Professor:** E-mail is the best way to contact me. My e-mail address is [m.popiolek@uj.edu.pl](mailto:m.popiolek@uj.edu.pl). Please feel free to contact me if you have a question.

## EVALUATION

Your work will be assessed as follows:

A	94% -100%
A-	90% – 93.99%
B+	87% – 89.99%
B	84% – 86.99%
B-	80% – 83.99%
C+	77% - 79.99%
C	74% – 76.99%

C-	70% – 73.99%
D+	67% – 69.99%
D	60 %- 66.99%
F	0 - 59.99%

Course components are evaluated as follows:

Assignment #1: Individual topic presentation	15 points
Assignment #2: Web 2.0 revolution essay	15 points
Assignment #3: Fact-checking assignment	10 points
Assignment #4: Group presentation	10 points
<b>Final essay:</b> in-class open-book essay or the essay prepared at home	30 points
<b>Total:</b>	<b>80 points</b>

## LITERATURE:

### REQUIRED READINGS

Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of economic perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 241-251

Lipschultz J. (2020). *Social Media Communication: Concepts, Practices, Data, Law and Ethics*, 3rd edition, Routledge. ISBN 9780367195007.

Lipschultz, J. *Social Media and Political Communication*. Taylor & Francis, 2022.

Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., & Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. *Science*, 359(6380), 1146 –1151.[<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6380/1146>]

### SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Allan S. (2006). *Online News: Journalism and the Internet*, Open University Press. ISBN: 9780335221219.

Pennycook, G., & Rand, D. G. (2021). The psychology of fake news. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 25(5), 388-402.

Popiołek, M., Hapek, M., & Barańska, M. (2021). Infodemia—an analysis of fake news in Polish news portals and traditional media during the coronavirus pandemic. *Communication & Society*, 34(4), 81-98.

Tucher, A. (2022). *Not Exactly Lying: Fake News and Fake Journalism in American History*. Columbia University Press.

## Schedule:

Labor Day (No Classes): 9/2/2024

Fall Break: 10/14–10/15/2024

Thanksgiving Recess Begins: 11/27/2024

Classes Resume Post-Thanksgiving: 12/2/2024

Reading Period: 12/10–12/12/2024

Week of the Semester & Subject Module	Date	Topics and activities	Readings or watching (before the class):
1 Social Media and Web 2.0: History and Theory Introduction	Aug. 26 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Introduction to the syllabus  New media, Internet, and Social Media history overview - Kahoot quiz and discussion	No reading required.
2 Social Media and Web 2.0: History and Theory Introduction	Sept. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Web 2.0 transformation - causes and consequences Most popular social media in the USA and Poland since 2003 by now - discussion	Read: Lipschultz, J. H. (2023). <i>Social media and Political Communication</i> :. Routledge:Chapter 2  Watch the movie „PressPausePlay” <a href="https://vimeo.com/34608191">https://vimeo.com/34608191</a>
3 Social Media and Web 2.0: History	Sept. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Web 2.0 – own experience discussion Web 2.0 and new media audience – group discussion	Read: Allan, S. (2006). <i>Online news: journalism and the Internet: journalism and the Internet</i> . McGraw-Hill Education (UK): Chapter II – The Rise of Online News

and Theory Introduction	Sept. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Web 2.0 and citizen journalism - discussion	No reading required.
4 Social Media and Web 2.0: History and Theory Introduction	Sept. 16 <sup>th</sup>  Sept. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Web 2.0 pros and cons Web 2.0: An enthusiastic and skeptical perspectives comparison  Social media role and functional blocks	Read: Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. <i>Business Horizons</i> , 54(3), 241-251.  Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCjCbqYsj0&amp;https://www.ted.com/talks/don_tapscott_four_principles_for_the_open_world">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCjCbqYsj0&amp;https://www.ted.com/talks/don_tapscott_four_principles_for_the_open_world</a>
5 Social Media Communication & Politics	Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup>  Sept. 25 <sup>th</sup>	Social media as tools for social change - discussion Social mediatization of politics  Social media and the information warfare – watching and discussing movies	Read: Lipschultz, J. <i>Social Media and Political Communication</i> . Taylor & Francis, 2022. Chapter 8  Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxSRXBf1OOM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxSRXBf1OOM</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heXp2tyDI6k">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=heXp2tyDI6k</a>

<p>6 Social Media Communication &amp; Politics</p>	<p>Sept. 30<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup></p>	<p>Fake news, real consequences – social media disinformation, misinformation, and conspiracy theories – selected examples discussion</p> <p>Why do we fall for fake news? – Discussion</p>	<p>Read: Allcott, H., &amp; Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. <i>Journal of economic perspectives</i>, 31(2), 211-236.</p> <p>Read: Ellis, G. (2018). So, what are cognitive biases?. <i>Cognitive biases in visualizations</i>, 1-10.</p>
<p>7 Social Media Communication &amp; Politics</p>	<p>Oct. 7<sup>th</sup></p> <p>Oct. 9<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>How to measure your bias? – individual tasks and discussion</p> <p>How not to fall for fake news – fact-checking introduction</p>	<p>No reading required.</p> <p>Watch: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxwgFFel_xw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cxwgFFel_xw</a></p>
<p>8 Social Media Communication &amp; Politics</p>	<p>Oct. 16<sup>th</sup></p>	<p>Fake news, recognition, and protection Fact-Checking workshop</p>	<p>Read: Vosoughi, S., Roy, D., &amp; Aral, S. (2018). The spread of true and false news online. <i>Science</i>, 359(6380), 1146 – 1151. [<a href="https://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6380/1146">https://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6380/1146</a>]</p>
<p>9 Social Media &amp; Self-mass Communication</p>	<p>Oct. 21<sup>st</sup></p>	<p>Filter bubbles, echo chambers and algorithms</p>	<p>Watch the video: <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/joan_blades_and_john_gable_free_yourself_from_your_filter_bubbles">https://www.ted.com/talks/joan_blades_and_john_gable_free_yourself_from_your_filter_bubbles</a></p>

	Oct. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	How to burst your filter bubble? – workshop, discussion, and group tasks	Read: Lipschultz, J. H. (2023). <i>Social media and Political Communication</i> :. Routledge: Chapter 8
10 Social Media & Self-mass Communication	Oct. 28 <sup>th</sup>  Oct. 30 <sup>th</sup>	Social media and privacy concerns  How to control your digital footprint? - workshop	Read the privacy policies of the SNSs where you have an account.  No reading required.
11 Social Media Communication & Society	Nov. 4 <sup>th</sup>  Nov. 6 <sup>th</sup>	The hidden influence of social network sites  Nicholas Carr and “The shallows” concept	Watch the video: <a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_the_hidden_influence_of_social_networks">https://www.ted.com/talks/nicholas_christakis_the_hidden_influence_of_social_networks</a>  Watch the video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF1JglWbSIQ&amp;t=2s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PF1JglWbSIQ&amp;t=2s</a>
12 Social Media Communication & Society	Nov. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Social media selected effects discussion: social polarization, online shaming, etc.	Read: Lazard, L., Capdevila, R., Dann, C., Locke, A., & Roper, S. (2019). Sharenting: Pride, affect and the day-to-day politics of digital mothering. <i>Social and Personality Psychology Compass</i> , 13(4), e12443.



	Nov. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Social media selected effects discussion: cancel culture, sharenting, etc.	Read: Blum-Ross, A., & Livingstone, S. (2020). "Sharenting," parent blogging, and the boundaries of the digital self. In <i>Self-(re) presentation now</i> (pp. 70-85). Routledge.
13 Social Media Communication & Society	Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Different models of how to regulate the social media environment to limit misinformation – case study analysis	Read: Lipschultz, J. H. (2023). <i>Social media communication: Concepts, practices, data, law and ethics</i> . Routledge: Chapter 9
	Nov. 20 <sup>th</sup>	GDPR and the European Union's perspective on how to regulate the new media – lecture, and discussion Private data protection and new media law regulation - differences between USA and EU - discussion	No reading required.
14 Social Media Communication & Society	Nov. 25 <sup>th</sup>	Digital media and online communication: challenges and threats: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc. – students presentations	No reading required.
15 Social Media Communication & Society	Dec. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Digital media and online communication: challenges and threats: Facebook, Instagram,	No reading required.

	Dec. 4 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Twitter, TikTok, etc. – students presentations</p> <p>Digital media and online communication: challenges and threats: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc. – students presentations</p>	No reading required.
FINAL ESSAY		In-class open-book essay or the final essay prepared at home.	