

ENC 3250:  
**Rhetoric and  
Social Media**

Instructor: Dr. Laura Gonzales  
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Office: Turlington 2358  
Office Hours: Tues. 11:45-12:45, Thurs. 12:45-1:45  
Class meets: Tuesday 10:40-11:30am  
Thursday 10:40am-12:35pm

## **D**escription

This course will establish a space for analysis, discussion, and content development surrounding the intersections of rhetoric and social media. Social media has long been leveraged by organizers, activists, scholars, and community members to foster connections and create change across physical locations. At the same time, social media algorithms are consistently manipulated to perpetuate stereotypes and misinformation, particularly in current times. Our goal in this course will be to analyze how social media activists and researchers use social media platforms to communicate information. Importantly, we will also research the infrastructure of social media platforms to better understand the algorithms used to both build and collect information on social media. With attention to methodology and method, we will then develop our own social media projects to showcase the intersections of rhetoric and social media in relation to our own scholarly and activist interests.

## **M**odality

Our class will meet in person in MAT 0118 on Tuesdays from 10:40-11:30am and Thursdays from 10:40-12:35pm.

## **G**oals and **S**tructure

This course is designed with three primary learning goals in mind:

- 1) To acquaint you with different methods and approaches to conducting social media research.
- 2) To acquaint you with the infrastructure and use of social media platforms, considering issues of access, accessibility, diversity, advocacy, and justice.
- 3) To help you make decisions about if and how to incorporate social media research in your career.

You will meet these goals through our course readings and discussions, and by collaborating with both your peers and with our guest speakers.

**Note:** This course satisfies 6000 words of the University Writing Requirement, provided you earn a final grade of C or higher.

## **M**aterials

It is especially important that you check the Course Schedule before every class meeting, as our assignments and readings will definitely change throughout the course. All of our required materials will be available through Canvas. You are not required to purchase any additional materials.

# P rojects

Our work will be threaded through the following major projects, which accumulate to 425 possible points:

PROJECT	DESCRIPTION
<b>P1: Landscape Analysis</b> (100 points possible)	Throughout the semester, each student will keep a running spreadsheet of the readings, documenting how different social media researchers employ different methods and methodologies in their work. A template for this project will be provided for you through Google docs. The goal is for you to use this running spreadsheet as you develop your own rhetoric and social media project. We will also use this spreadsheet as a starting point for our class discussions each week. You will need to update your spreadsheet with information about the current week's readings by midnight each Monday before class.
<b>P2: Rhetoric and Social Media Literature Review</b> (100 points possible)	Using the landscape analysis project and your own notes, each student will write a literature review covering a specific area of rhetoric and social media research that they would like to pursue and build on in the future. This will be considered your midterm project.
<b>P3: Social Media Tracing Project</b> (100 points possible)	Your major project in this course will be to trace any event as it is represented in 2-3 social media platforms. You will use the methods and methodologies of your choice, being very clear as to why you chose those specific method/ologies for your project. The goal is to analyze how rhetoric shifts across social media platforms. This will be your final project and it will incorporate pieces from the landscape analysis and literature review. You will present this work to our class during our last class meeting.
<b>P4: Class Participation</b> (100 points possible)	We are all doing our best to "do school" in a pandemic. While I don't expect everyone to participate in the same ways, I do expect everyone to make contributions to our learning environment. This includes contributing to class discussions, *not* contributing in order to allow others with less privilege to share, engaging with our guest speakers, taking reading quizzes, and being prepared for our class meetings. We will all have bad days, and that's okay. This participation grade is cumulative and based on your overall efforts throughout the semester. This assessment is based on my own discretion as the course instructor.
<b>Social Media Knowledge Sharing</b> (25 points possible)	Because social media research is constantly evolving, it's hard for anyone to keep up with what's new. Each week, one person will sign up to briefly share a social media conversation, event, tool, or resource in a brief, low-stakes, 5-7-minute presentation.

# Class Policies

As a community working and learning together, our shared learning space is interdependent, which means that we all need to rely on each other in order to establish a community learning space that works for all of us. I expect every member of our class community to be present when and how you can, and to do your best to communicate with me and let me know how I can make the class more accessible for you given everything that will undoubtedly change throughout the semester. Please do your best to let me know if you cannot make it to our class meetings. If you are sick, get sick, or need to caretake, please prioritize your needs in the moment and speak with me when you can so that we can make a plan for completing your coursework.

In light of recent CDC recommendations, face coverings, though not required, are expected in all UF Facilities, even if you are vaccinated. Please wear your masks in class at all times to protect yourself and our classroom community.

In general, all work is due on the day indicated on the course calendar and on Canvas. Generally, I do not accept late work. Within the scope of these policies, I also understand that things happen outside of our own control. Please make an appointment to speak with me so that we can ensure you have everything you need to be successful in this course during this difficult time.

No two people learn exactly the same way. If you find that the materials are difficult for you to absorb, don't assume right away that you don't understand the material. Perhaps you prefer to process information through speaking or listening, but all I am providing are written handouts, making it difficult for you to process. Please speak with me if you would like to think through other options for engaging with the material and activities in the course.

Disabilities are visible and invisible, documented and undocumented: I do not distinguish between these designations. If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, I encourage you to speak with me as soon as you can about your learning needs and how I can best accommodate them. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or experiences within this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement, please speak with me and register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) as soon as possible.

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest

instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392- 1575 so that a team member can reach out.

**The Student Health Care Center at Shands** is a satellite clinic of the main Student Health Care Center located on Fletcher Drive on campus. Student Health @Shands offers a variety of clinical services and is located on the second floor of the Dental Tower in the Health Science Center. For more information, contact the clinic at 352-392-0627 or visit the website at <https://shcc.ufl.edu>

**Crisis intervention** is available 24/7 at the Alachua County Crisis Center, 352-264-6789. Visit <http://www.alachuacounty.us/DEPTS/CSS/CRISISCENTER/pages/CrisisCenter.aspx>

Do not wait until you reach a crisis to schedule an appointment. Get the help needed to work through stressful situations that impact your personal life and academic performance. You are not alone.

**Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC)** 352-392-1575 offers a variety of FREE and low-cost services such as psychological assessment, intervention and assistance for math and test anxiety. Visit the website for more information. Online and personal assistance is available.

## **G** Grading

Grades will be assigned on each project and your final grade will be assigned cumulatively based on your scores on each assignment. If you are concerned with your grade at any point in the semester, please make an appointment to see me during office hours. I will not discuss grades via email at any point. The table below outlines grade percentages and their corresponding letter grades.

Percent	Grade
93.0 - 100.0	A
90.0 - 92.9	A-
87.0 - 89.9	B+
83.0 - 86.9	B
80.0 - 82.9	B-
77.0 - 79.9	C+
73.0 - 76.9	C
70.0 - 72.9	C-
67.0 - 69.9	D+
63.0 - 66.9	D
60.0 - 62.9	D-
0 - 59.9	E

More information on UF grading policy may be found at:

<http://gradcatalog.ufl.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=2020#grades>

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## Evaluation

Your feedback, both during at after our course, helps me improve my pedagogical practices and course accessibility. At UF, students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

## Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Date	Readings and Assignments Due Before Class
1	8/24	Research <a href="#">Black TikTok and the Black TikTok Strike</a>
	8/26	Chapter 1 of #HashtagActivism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice by Sarah J. Jackson, Moya Bailey, Brooke Foucault Welles, and Genie Lauren (available through the UF library website)
2	8/31	Laura March, Social Toolkit: <a href="https://lauramarch.com/portfolio-item/social-toolkit/">https://lauramarch.com/portfolio-item/social-toolkit/</a>
	9/2	Brock, <a href="#">“From the Blackhandside: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation”</a>
3	9/7	Guest speaker: Laura March
	9/9	Trice and Potts, <a href="#">Building Dark Patterns into Platforms</a> Guest speakers: Trice and Potts
4	9/14	Gallagher’s web scraping resources: <a href="http://publish.illinois.edu/johnrgallagher/scrape/">http://publish.illinois.edu/johnrgallagher/scrape/</a> Gallagher and Holmes NYT Comments Database: <a href="http://consider-comments.herokuapp.com">http://consider-comments.herokuapp.com</a> Massmine: <a href="https://www.massmine.org">https://www.massmine.org</a> <b>Optional guest speaker:</b> Dr. John Gallagher, 2-3pm
	9/16	Buck and Ralston, <a href="#">“I didn’t sign up for your research study: The Ethics of using ‘public’ Data”</a>
5	9/21	McKoy, <a href="#">IssaTrapDissertation</a> <b>Guest speaker:</b> Dr. Temptaous McKoy, 2-3pm.
	9/23	Reading quiz and introduce P2.
6	9/28	Reading TBD
	9/30	Reading TBD
7	10/5	Reading TBD
	10/7	Reading TBD
8	10/12	Reading TBD
	10/14	Kadlecek and Kawan-Hemler, <a href="#">“Twitter and Zapotec Language Activism”</a>
9	10/19	<b>Guest speaker:</b> Janet Chavez Santiago
	10/21	Reading TBD
10	10/26	Reading TBD
	10/28	Reading TBD
11	11/2	<b>Project 2 due</b>
	11/4	Reading TBD
12	11/9	Reading TBD
	11/11	Reading TBD
13	11/16	Final project Work
	11/18	Final project Work
14	11/23	Final project Work
	11/25	Final project Work
15	11/30	Presentations
	12/2	Presentations
16	12/7	Last Class-Final Projects Due

