Course Description

Welcome to ESM 430! This workshop is designed as an initial survey of contemporary social media tools and practices utilized by those communicating about the environment and sustainability. Together we’ll briefly explore a host of social media, including social networks, social news, micro-blogging, media sharing and content creation, sifting, amplifying and listening tools, analytics and engagement platforms, to name a few. You’ll have the opportunity to play with the tools that interest you during and after the workshop, and you’ll get to choose between two assignments designed to help you understand and further build your skills.

Know this, all you knowledge seekers: this is a rapidly changing and evolving realm of few absolutes, much more art than science. I heartily encourage you cultivate an attitude of playful inquisitiveness as we proceed, recognizing that we will be forever questioning and exploring what success looks like, and that even the questions we ask will change as this field evolves over time.

Essential to our inquiry is an ongoing familiarity with the context in which we are communicating, so this is a reminder to develop healthy habits of systems thinking, media consumption, issue analysis and cultural competency to inform your use of the mediums. Also essential is a big helping of perspective, recognizing that social media is but one genre of communications tools available to us, and as such should be considered in combination with other mediums. And of course, exploration of social media must build upon a firm foundation of strategic communications basics, which we’ll review as the day begins.

Intended Learning Outcomes

✓ **Explore Social Media Tools, Trends and Case Studies**
During the course of the workshop and subsequent assignment, you will have the opportunity to explore a range of social media tools and trends. You’ll also have the opportunity to research, share and analyze specific social media efforts being conducted by a project, organization or individual of your choice, (within the field of environment and sustainability of course.) We’ll review social media in action by policy makers, NGOs and civil society change agents, businesses and entrepreneurs.

✓ **Hone Your Skills As A Communication Strategist, While Exploring Particular Tactics**
In this workshop you will have the opportunity to explore the process by which a communication strategist approaches their craft, and explore specific social media tactics and tools used to engage their audiences.

✓ **Understand The Critical Role Social Media Will Play In Your Future, Regardless Of Job Choice**
Whether it is social listening, or building your identity as a thought leader, these tools will be essential for your future success! The sooner you dive in the better off you will be!
Readings & Videos

In addition to the video and two readings provided in advance of the workshop session, I’ll post a variety of reports, essays, articles, videos and infographics in GauchoSpace for you. Because of the pace at which this field is evolving, most long form essays and published books on the topics are only relevant for a short time, but we will explore chapters of a few works on social media and on strategic communications in general.

Workshop Themes and Topics for Saturday:

• Introduction To Basic Strategic Communication Concepts
  ○ Strategic Communication Planning Tools
  ○ What Good Communicators Do
  ○ The Big Why & The Power Of Context

• Media Sharing & Content Creation Tools
  ○ Social Networks, Social Bookmarking, Social News
  ○ Blogs, Microblogs, Photo Sharing
  ○ Infographics: A Picture Worth 10,000 Words!

• Tools For Managing (And Making Meaning From) The Flow
  ○ The Power Of The Tag And The #Hashtag
  ○ Sifting, Combining, Amplifying
  ○ Business Intelligence Tools
  ○ Harnessing the API to Shape Culture

• Analytics, Analytics, Analytics
  ○ What Counts And Who Counts When It Really Counts!
  ○ Metrics And More

Workshop Assignment—Choose One of the Following Two Options:

1) Become a Bren Social Media Ambassador: You’ll work closely with the Bren Staff, in particular Kaia Joye Moyer, to create and amplify social media content and online presence of our beloved Bren School. After meeting with her to discuss goals and audiences, you’ll engage via blogging, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, in an effort to help the Bren School reach its target audiences and meet its communication goals. These activities can be conducted in fits and spurts, a few minutes here and there, and over the course of the quarter you’ll log at least five to seven hours in this effort. You’ll keep a journal log of your efforts, submitting your reflections no later than March Tuesday, March 15th at 5pm via email.

2) Conduct a Social Media Audit and Offer Recommendations to the Organization of your Choice: For this option you will choose a company, organization or institution and conduct an audit of their social media efforts to date. (This could be your Group Project client if it makes sense and is helpful to your efforts!) Provide both an analysis of what they are doing so far, and also share any recommendations for improvement based on what you learn in the workshop and additional optional readings, in a submission of at least five pages, also due no later than March Tuesday, March 15th at 5pm via email.