

ESM 445 - Social Media and the Environment
Bren School of Environmental Science and Management
University of California, Santa Barbara
Winter 2013: January 7th – February 6th

Time: Tuesdays/Thursday 4:00-5:15pm
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Course Description

Official Catalog Listing: Students will learn about and use different social media tools to engage and activate social networks to generate environmental awareness and action.

Welcome to ESM 445! This class is designed as a survey of contemporary social media communications tools and practices utilized by those communicating about the environment and sustainability. Together we'll 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 research and play with the tools that interest you, seek out relevant case studies to share with the cohort, and you'll design a social media plan for a project, organization or individual of your choice (including building your own visionary public identity as a thought leader, should you desire).

Know this knowledge seekers: this is a 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 rapidly over time.

Essential to our inquiry is an ongoing familiarity with the context in which we are communicating, and we'll develop healthy habits of systems thinking and cultural competency to inform our 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 course begins.

For this class to be successful, your participation is essential. You will be asked to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of various social media tools and activities, and to practice wielding a variety of these tools yourself. You will be presented with opportunities to apply these to environmental issues and projects of interest to you. Out of respect for the workload you are carrying, a majority of these opportunities will take place in class. We will simulate the processes used by professionals in the field, and work collaboratively as well as individually. This means that:

- a) It is essential that you attend all the class sessions; and

- b) It is essential that you complete ALL the course readings and online activities prior to class sessions

Obviously emergencies, illness and other life challenges occur, and makeup opportunities for missed work or class sessions can be arranged, but this is the exception and not the rule. In non-profit communications departments, PR firms, science labs, courtrooms, businesses and newsrooms around the world, professional communicators show up, do their work and change the world. Our goal is to model our group work on a similar standard of excellence and integrity.

Intended Learning Outcomes

- **Strategic Communications Fundamentals**

In this class you will come to understand how to analyze and construct elements of a strategic communications plan, including determining goals, frames, messages, target audiences, and choosing appropriate messengers, social media tools and social media engagement activities to best reach your audience and achieve your overall vision. You'll also investigate the impact and power of the context in which you are communicating on your choices and your outcomes.

- **Social Media Tools, Trends and Case Studies**

During the course 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 notable case studies of social media in the field of environment and sustainability. You'll review social media in action by policy makers, NGOs and civil society change agents, businesses and entrepreneurs.

- **Developing a Strategic Social Media Plan**

For your final project you will have the opportunity to develop a strategic plan for using social media to advance your communications goals for the project, organization or individual of your choice

- **Honing Your Skills as a Communicator**

In this course you will strengthen your written communications skills through the written exercises, and be afforded multiple opportunities to build your verbal communications skills during our class sessions, and as you share your final project details via a five to seven minute briefing the last week of the course.

Required Readings/Videos

I'll post a variety of reports, essays, articles, videos and infographics in GauchoSpace for your review and analysis. Because of the phenomenal 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.

Course Assignments:

Assignment #1 (10%): Twitter immersion (all session, must begin no later than January 14th
Assignment details in GauchoSpace)

Assignment #2 (20%): Surveying the Field #1: Reflections on Relevant Case Studies and Tools (due
January 24th by 5pm. Assignment details in GauchoSpace)

Assignment #3 (20%): Surveying the Field #2: Reflections on Relevant Case Studies and Tools (due
January 30th by 5pm. Assignment details in GauchoSpace)

Assignment #4 (35%): Social Media Planning (in-class briefing sessions February 4th and 6th (10%);
written plan memo due by February 7th by 5pm (25%). Assignment details and template available
in GauchoSpace)

Evaluation & Grading

In-class (and Online) Participation	15
Micro-blogging (Twitter) Assignment	10
Surveying the Field #1	20
Surveying the Field #2	20
Final Project (Social Media Plan)	
(In class briefing 10/Written Memo 25)	<u>35</u>
Total:	100 points

Course Themes and Topics:

Week 1:

January 7th:

- Introductions
 - Course Overview
 - Review of Assignments
 - Meet your ESM social network

January 9th:

- Twitter Deep Dive
- Trust: Always Consider the Source (See GauchoSpace VIDEO)

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Eli Pariser’s Filter Bubble TED talk:
- ✓ Edelman’s 2013 ‘Trust Barometer’ Deck
- ✓ Nielsen’s Cross Platform Report December 2013

Week 2:

January 14th:

- Laying a Strategic Communications Foundation
- The G.A.M.E (Goals, Audience, Message/Messenger, Engagement)
- The Power of Context (Political, Socio-cultural, Personal)

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ The Twitter Manual
- ✓ Associated Press piece on fake followers
- ✓ *Made to Stick*, The Basics
- ✓ *Social Media for Social Good*, Getting Started

Assignment due: Launch Twitter Assignment (information is in GauchoSpace!)

January 16th:

- Media Sharing/Content Creation Tools
- Social Networks and Social News
- Hangout with Jamiah Adams, Director of Digital Media for the NAACP

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Common Craft [Videos](#) on Social Media
- ✓ PR Newswire's Amplifying Your Echo
- ✓ Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2013
- ✓ Check GauchoSpace for documents and links

Week 3:

January 21st:

- Sifting, Listening, Combining, Amplifying
- Business Intelligence tools
- Bookmarking Tools (and why we should care)

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Sparks & Honey decks
- ✓ Check GauchoSpace for documents and links

January 23rd:

- Platforms for Change and Analytics-based Activism: Virtual conversation with David Karpf, George Washington University, Author of [The MoveOn Effect: The Unexpected Transformation of American Political Advocacy](#)

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Check out www.shoutingloudly.com
- ✓ Check GauchoSpace for documents and links

Assignment due: Surveying the Field #1: Reflections on Relevant Case Studies and Tools

Week 4:

January 28th:

- Analytics, Analytics, Analytics

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Are We There Yet Evaluation Guide
- ✓ Check GauchoSpace for documents and links

January 30th:

- Engagement Platforms
- Social Media Considerations for Today's Websites: A virtual visit with Stanley Jones, Creative Director, Diligent Creative

Materials to review *before* this class:

- ✓ Upworthy.com, change.org, avaaaz.org,
- ✓ Check GauchoSpace for documents and links

Assignment due: Surveying the Field #2: Reflections on Relevant Case Studies and Tools

Week 5:

February 4th:

- First half of our in-class presentations, briefings on your social media plan

February 6th:

- Second half of our in-class presentations, briefings on your social media plan

Assignment due: Final Project: Your Social Media Plan