COM 301 – Applied Social Media
T R 9:20 – 10:50
Section 01
MSC 275

Instructor:
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Program Coordinator for Communication Studies and Speech – If you’re interested in picking up a Communications Studies major or minor or a social media minor, just ask...we’d love to have you.

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B.A. Westminster College, M.A. The University of Akron, PhD Capella University
Work Experience: Account and Project Manager, Marcus Thomas Advertising, Cleveland, OH; Director of Marketing and Promotions, Connoisseur Communications, Youngstown, OH; Continuity Director, WBBG/WBBW, Youngstown, OH; Music Director and Staff Announcer, WYFM, Youngstown, OH; Program Director, WPIC, Sharon, PA.

Research Interests:
Media Literacy, Social Media education, the scholarship of Star Trek, Hero archetype on communication.
Outside Interests:
Baseball fan, television, technology, Star Trek.

Section 1.0 Course Information

1.1 About the Course
Applied Social Media is a class about “doing” social media. As individuals we mostly know social media to a degree. We post on Facebook, tweet on Twitter, share images on Instagram, and work desperately to keep our streaks alive on Snapchat. This class isn’t about individual usage of social media platforms but on how business and organizations use social media to forge and maintain relationships with customers, advocates and fans.

This class proceeds from the prospect that effective social media stems from content. Without content social media would not exist. Content can be informative, useful, entertaining and/or motivational. Brands need to determine who their audience is and craft content that is any of the above for that audience.
This semester this class will take on two projects.

The first is developing and implementing content for the Westminster Tiny House project. We will spend the first few weeks figuring out what content we will create and then we will create and post that content on relevant social media channels.

The second is doing some foundational research for a proposed project that will provide incoming college Freshman information they might need to make the transition to on campus living. It is anticipated that this project will provide opportunities for future Applied Social Media classes in semesters to come.

1.2 Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Review social media proposals actionable ideas and social media content.
2. Determine what created content is appropriate for specific social media channels based on audience needs
3. Determine what curated content can be used to supplement an existing social media channel.
4. Create social media content for a variety of channels.
5. Conduct an interview and participate in focus group research to determine social media and content needs for a project.
6. Deliver concise reports of content marketing articles.

1.3 Course Assessment
Once we know what a student should be able to do after a course is over (or while it is in motion), we have to figure out if in fact they can actually do it. That’s where assessment comes in. You know assessment better as the assignments that are part of a course (tests, papers, speeches, etc.)

Below are the course assignments, the percentage toward your final grade, and a very brief description (don’t worry a more detailed description will follow in class).

A significant portion of the work in this class will be done in groups, but there are some individual components as well. You will also need to learn how to juggle. What I mean by this is that there are two projects in the class that you and your group will work on and you’ll need to work on those simultaneously as well.

Group Work

Social Media Audit – 10%
Each group will conduct a social media audit of the current state of the Tiny House online web and social media presence. This is a document that needs to be submitted with descriptive and evaluative content.

Content Recommendations – 10%
After the audit and the review of the existing documents, each groups will present what they feel can be done on the web and social media channels of the Tiny House Project. Examples of content should be included.
Status Presentations – 20%
At two points during the semester, after the creation and posting of content has begun there will be two opportunities for the groups to update the rest of the class on what they’ve done and why as well as results from any of their efforts.

Peer Review Scores – 5%
Working in groups is essential for this class and holding up your end of the bargain is essential too. Your team will have to generate a specific set of expectations for each week of work you are going to accomplish. This sets the standard for each member of the group. Three times per semester, your group will conduct a peer review of your team and the average of these three scores will make up this grade.

Freshman Project Group Report – 15%
Delivered during the final period, this will summarize findings and recommendations for the Freshman Project. A peer evaluation will be assessed and will figure into each persons grade.

Individual Work

Contract Assignments – 20%
There are certain activities and assignments that are basically U/S assignments with small point totals attached. For example, turn in a written report on time and get passing points. If the assignment is done exceptionally well, then you get additional points. These all add up during the course of the semester, a grade calculated and it contributes to your final grade.

Content Strategy Article Reports – 10%
It is essential to stay on top of what’s happening in the world of social media especially the world of content strategy. Beginning with Week three, a select group of students will be required to read and give a brief report to the class on something they learned from one of these articles. The reports are two to three minutes and focus on the highlight and application. Students not presenting that week will be required to submit a short document highlighting three key things they learned from each report and two to three things from all of the reports that might be applicable to what we are doing in class.

You can find these articles anyplace but one way to stay on top is to occasionally visit the Twitter list I’ve set up at the following address:
https://twitter.com/keithcorso_phd/lists/social-media-content
Right now all presentations are set to be delivered on Thursday of each week. The Thursday BEFORE you will present to me your possible choices for reports and an article will be assigned for you to report on.

Hootsuite Certification – 10%
There are quite a few tools that can be used to manage, listen to and publish to social media. One of the most prominent is Hootsuite. Hootsuite manages and maintains its own Academy where people can learn about and become certified in their software. We will try to use it wherever possible this semester but for this class you will register for the Hootsuite Certification training and complete it. It takes a 65% to pass the exam. Once you take it and pass it you will receive 100 points. If after the due date you don’t pass the exam, you can take the Hootsuite exam grade you did achieve and I will add 20 points to it for this grade. However, you must have some grade on the exam. For example, you can’t NOT take the exam and get 20 added to the zero.
### Final Grade Calculation

At the end of the semester when all of the points are totaled an average number of points is calculated. That average number, or percentage, is converted into a letter grade as detailed below.

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Final grades are not necessarily rounded up. Final determination is made by the course instructor.

### Section 2.0 Materials

There are required readings for this class but these will be provided as needed by your instructor. While you are not required to purchase these resources, you might find them useful especially if you are going to do social media in the future.

- **Likeable Social Media**
  - David Kerpen
  - ISBN: 978-0071836326

- **YouTility**
  - Jay Baer
  - ISBN: 978-1591846666

### Section 3.0 Policies

3.1 **Attendance**

Attendance and polices regarding it are often sticking pints for college classes. Being in class is important for a number of reasons.

- Not all material is covered in course readings and the time in class provides this additional material
- Assignments are discussed in detail in class and this information is essential to succeeding on assignments and in the class.
- This is an opportunity to have questions answered and get some help on understanding content and often another student’s questions can help you.
Developing attendance at your college level classes develops the habits of attendance that your eventual job will require.

The policy in this class is simple. You are required to be here. I do understand that at times you can’t make it due to an illness or something similar. Just like an actual job allows a few days for sickness or other personal reasons, I build in some of these to this class. Here is the way it works.

You are allowed two (2) unexcused absences for this class the entire semester. The following are examples of UNEXCUSED ABSENCES.

- You are sick and can’t make it to your class (just remember that even if you go to the health center and they give a slip, it’s NOT EXCUSED).
- You don’t feel like going to class.
- You made arrangements for a doctor’s appointment at home for the class time (please schedule Dr. appointments around classes)
- You make arrangements to go home for a break and need to leave early.
- You are in a friend’s wedding and need to get home for the rehearsal.
- Your family schedules a vacation during classes (yes this has happened).

These are just a few that have come up in the past. If you aren’t sure if something is excused or not, ask.

After the two (2) excuses absences, the final grade in the class is reduced one step for EACH unexcused absence. For example, you have six unexcused absences for the semester. Three are freebies which leaves 4 unexcused. Your final grade in the class was a B+ but you lose one step in grade for each of the four, the final grade becomes a C.

The EXCEPTION to the policy would be what I call college RELEASE TIME. This means you are missing class because of a scheduled college activity such as travel for a college athletic event or a field trip for another class. In these cases, you are excused.

If you miss class? Remember the following:

- Whatever assignments (big or small) that were assigned, you are responsible for.
- Check with someone you know you can count on who attended the class. Get any notes, information or assignments from them.
- Never ask if you missed anything important.
- Please don’t expect me to go over material covered in class with you on an individual basis. Time is at a premium and I won’t be able to teach a class twice for an absence.

3.2 Grade Appeals
I’m more than happy to help you understand grades and grade sheets in this class. If you can’t read my writing or I added things up incorrectly or even entered a grade wrong into the online system, just let me know and I’ll take care of it.

However, if you wish to dispute a grade (think you should have had more points on one section of a speech or assignment), you will need to submit a written appeal within 48 hours from receiving you grade. Please know that this ISN’T required because I want to discourage appeals, I just want THOUGHTFUL AND INFORMED appeals. The written appeal forces learners to formulate a reasoned argument.
All appeals should include the following:

- A paragraph detailing what you are appealing;
- Why it should be changed;
- To what it should be changed;
- Evidence to support the request

For the why section above never include something like, “I worked really hard” or “I really need a B- in this class for my scholarships.” These just aren’t good “why” statements.

You should email the document to me attached to an email with your last name, class code, and Assignment Appeal in the subject line (Corso, SPE 111, Assignment Appeal).

3.3 Electronic Device Usage

To tell you the truth, I’ve struggled with this policy and whether to include it. However, I’ve decided on a fairly rigid policy which I will explain in a bit. First, the policy.

I DO NOT permit the use of cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices during class unless you need these pre-approved learning reasons. When taking notes for this class, use a pen and paper. It’s actually more efficient and promotes better retention of information. Plus, an electronic device presents a distraction that is difficult to overcome. If you need to use a tablet or computer because of a disability, then see the Disability Office on campus to secure the proper authorization.

Now the why. Why do I have this policy?

- People using devices are splitting their attention and often miss important information such as class content and assignment updates.
- I don’t really want to repeat myself and that happens a lot with people who are distracted my phones and other electronics.
- It’s just plain rude to me and others in the class.

The following article spells out the benefit of using your handwriting:
http://mentalfloss.com/article/33508/4-benefits-writing-hand

3.4 Misinformation

Misinformation (other than plagiarism--see below) will result in a penalty. When a student provides information that is false, inaccurate, or incomplete in such a way that it misleads or tends to mislead the audience, he or she violates the ethical duty of the speaker. At the very least, any student who significantly misinforms the class will be required to give a speech of apology and retract the misinforming statements. Grade penalties, up to failing the assignment in question, may also be assessed. The severity of misinformation depends on the extent to which it is avoidable, the extent to which it varies from accepted knowledge, failure to cite qualified sources of the information, and other factors. Any student concerned that her or his speech might violate this policy should contact me ahead of time and we can resolve the issue.
Section 4.0 Course Communication

4.1 Email
I try to let you know everything you need to know while we are in class. However, sometimes people need reminders and I like to have some things in writing. Any more long-form information I want to transmit outside of class will come in the form of an email. I only use the Westminster email address on file so don’t ask me to send to another email address. Get in the habit of checking your Westminster email on a daily basis at a minimum. This is important.

4.2 Remind.com
If I have a shorter, text-length piece of information for you I use a service called Remind.com. This allows me to send information to the entire class using an app and it saves my phone from having to store all your phone numbers. It’s a great and reliable service which I have used for a few years now with great results. You will be given the information that you need to sign up on the first day of class.

5.0 College Policies

5.1 Academic Integrity
Page 21 of your student handbook states:

*Central to the purpose and pursuit of any academic community is academic integrity. All members of the Westminster Community, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators, are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity, in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the College.*

The most flagrant violation of academic integrity is cheating on an exam or a quiz. Students caught participating in such an activity (either for their own or for another’s benefit) will receive a course grade of "F," with no opportunity for the student to receive a "W" or "WF."

**Other forms of scholastic dishonesty** will be dealt with in a like manner. These may include (but are not limited to):

A. Copying/turning in another's work (e.g., a fellow student's, a past student’s, or work from the internet) as one's own.

B. Lending of one's work to another so that he/she may turn it in as his/her own.

C. Stealing class materials from students, the professor, or from the library.

D. Inhibiting another student from using library materials or other resources necessary for the class.

See the complete Student Handbook (beginning on page 21) for more details and specifics about academic integrity.

[https://www.westminster.edu/campus/services/handbook.cfm](https://www.westminster.edu/campus/services/handbook.cfm)
5.2 Disability Statement
Westminster College is committed to providing services and support for students with physical, psychological, visual, hearing or learning disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All students who seek accommodations for diagnosed disabilities should contact the director of the Office of Disability Resources for further information. Signed comprehensive medical documentation and/or test evaluations that indicate the nature of the disability and appropriate professional recommendations is required. Guidelines for the documentation can be obtained from the Office of Disability Resources. The disability resources director will review the documentation, determine if the student is eligible for services, and then coordinate the accommodations, auxiliary aids, academic support, and/or referrals as deemed appropriate, necessary, and within the current resources of the College. You can contact the Office of Disability Resources by calling 724-946-7192.

For information regarding civil rights or grievance procedures, contact the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students at 724-946-7110

The brochure for disability services can be accessed by using the link below.

http://www.westminster.edu/campus/services/pdf/disabilities.pdf

Section 6.0 Class Schedule

Below is the plan for the semester class by class. It is tentative and subject to change due to a number of circumstances that might arise. It is not a contract and should not be perceived that way.

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Final Exam Schedule is available at the following link:
https://my.westminster.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=4139468e-19d5-4a6b-a145-ad0846901649