

ENG1131 Writing through Media: Social Media Trends (sec. 1786), Spring 2017

Instructor: Aaron Beveridge
Time: M/W/F Period 6, M E1-E3
Location: Weil 408D
Office Location: Turlington 4412
Office Hours: M/W 10:30am – 11:30am
Course Website: Canvas
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Course Description

In this course students will write about and research social media trends. Trends are popular and sometimes viral topics that circulate among social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Vine, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. For this course, students will research one particular trend occurring within Twitter, and will write about and create visualizations of data on this trend as a method of studying contemporary writing within digital networks. Weekly writing assignments will create a collaborative trend archive to consider broader political and ethical issues of social media technologies. The mid-semester essay and infographic project combines traditional research with digital/visual design. For the final project, students will conduct a content analysis of a trend using Twitter data, and produce a slideware presentation that shares the results of their semester-long trend research. Weekly workshops teach students how to collect trend data, how to design visualizations relevant to their projects, and how to share and present this work through writing and public presentations.

Course Objectives

Writing through Media: Social Media Trends is a variation of the Writing through Media series of courses offered by UF's English Department. As the English Department website explains, the goal of ENG 1131 "is to introduce students to the transition underway between literacy and post-literacy (electracy) in contemporary culture." The students in these courses are intended to be "makers (and not just consumers) of new media." **Writing through Media: Social Media Trends** stays true to ENG 1131's core concepts. Students will accomplish three primary goals: (1) study contemporary writing as it occurs within social media, (2) work to understand data visualization as a form of digital rhetoric by collecting data and producing visualizations, (3) fulfill the expectations of the University of Florida's *Writing Requirement*. As UF's *Writing Requirement* explains, all the writing assignments for this course will "include such elements as well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, a persuasive organizational structure (e.g., introduction, body, conclusions), well supported claims, and appropriate and effective stylistic elements." Each of the assignments below adhere to these guidelines in addition to the individual requirements for each assignment.

Required Texts

- Darrell Huff's *How to Lie with Statistics*
- Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everyone: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*

Additional Texts

- The Purdue OWL Writing Resource as Style Guide
- Nathan Yau's "Understanding Data" from *Data Points*
- Elizabeth Losh's "Hacking Aristotle: What is Digital Rhetoric?" from *Virtualpolitik*
- Eunsong Kim's "The Politics of Trending"

Required Software/Technology

- Laptop (If you do not own a laptop, I will help you secure one for the semester)
- MassMine (provided for free through Research Computing at UF)

Course Assignments

Attendance--0 points/-5 points

This class is built around workshop and classroom participation, and therefore attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed to miss 2 of the regular 50 minute classes, and 1 of the 3-hour classes without negatively affecting the final course grade. Upon receiving a 3rd regular absence or a 2nd 3-hour class absence, the overall grade in the course will drop by 5 points, and it will continue to drop by an additional 5 points for each subsequent absence. For example, 5 additional absences beyond the 3 allowed absences (8 in total) will drop a student's total class grade by 25 points.

**Tardiness is not tolerated. If you are not present when I take attendance, then you will be counted absent.*

Workshop--20 points

The workshop grade is based on completion of activities and research during the 3-hour evening workshops. If students are absent for an evening night workshop, then activities must be completed and turned in by the Friday class meeting time in order to receive credit.

Workshop criteria:

- Finish projects, tutorial, or class work within the time provided
- Work consistently
- Prepared for class--having read assignments or completed tutorials ahead of time
- Provide peers with thoughtful feedback or assistance depending on assignment

Infographic Presentation--10 points

For the infographic presentation students share the infographic they have created that describes their trend with a one-page visual. For the presentation students provide an overview for their research project, explain their design choices for their infographic, and briefly explain the exigence of their trend to their classmates. Using slideware software (Prezi, PowerPoint) students present a 2-4 slides that introduce their research project.

Presentation criteria:

- No less than 5 minutes, no more than 6
- Presentation appears practiced
- Presenter does not read from slides, but has prepared notes to assist with presentation
- A well-developed research idea is presented

Trend Exigence Essay--20 points

Along with the Infographic project below, the work for the first part of the semester addresses the following question: *What is the exigence of your trend?* This question may be expanded to one or more of the following questions: *Why are people paying attention (or why should they pay attention)? Why does your trend matter (or why should it matter)? What may have caused the trend to gain such a following? Why does it appear to have such momentum?* This essay will produce arguments that answer these or other similar questions by referencing recent news articles and blog posts, by looking at several exemplary tweets and digital artifacts from your chosen trend, and by explaining the your own personal interests in this trend. Finally, successful essay will also consider recent events and broader historical issues that are relevant to the trend as well.

Essay criteria:

- Paper submitted electronically as a DOC, DOCX, or RTF format.
- MLA style. Double spaced.
- 1500 word minimum
- The writing pays attention to basic grammar and style issues: spelling, standard use of punctuation, complete sentences, word choice variety, and sentence structure variety.
- The writing shows organization and cohesion--providing an introduction and conclusion, and using appropriate transitions.
- The writing appears to be revised—paying attention to the "Paramedic Method."
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/635/01/>

Weekly Digital Writing--20 points

Students will produce 10 discussion posts of 300 words, and will additionally respond to one of their peer's writings for every posted assignment. The 300 word initial post counts as 50% of the credit given to blog posts, and substantive responses to your classmates' posts count as 50% of the credit. There is no minimum word count for peer responses, but responses must be substantive. Simple affirmation like "good job" or "nice post" or "interesting" will not count as a response. A substantive blog response should encourage further conversation, raise a question, clarify an idea, or add to the conversation. The weekly discussion is a core component of this course and will be graded on a weekly basis. The responses and conversations that follow initial posts ought to remain respectful and courteous.

Blog post criteria:

- Blog posts are due by class time and will be posted weekly in Canvas
- 300 words minimum
- Relevant to course trend research

Response criteria:

- Substantive
- Timely

**If blog posts do not meet the basic criteria, students will receive an email directing them on how to improve the quality of their posts. If quality does not improve, no credit will be given for subsequent posts following the email.*

***Writing tip: Do not draft your blog posts within the browser window provided by the blog software. Draft your post within your favorite word processor or text editor and then copy/paste your text into the browser. Google docs is also acceptable for drafting posts since it saves frequently and will keep you from losing work.*

Final presentation--30 points

The final presentation motivates the work for the entire semester. The tutorials, course readings, workshops, and blog posts are all designed to move students toward the completion of research for the final presentation. The research that students present will investigate a particular trend occurring within Twitter. By collecting a large sample of tweets associated with a trend, students will analyze tweets according to the most frequent words, #hashtags, and @usernames appearing in their dataset. In addition to word frequency, students will look at correlations among key terms in their dataset, and produce data visualizations such as wordclouds, tables, linecharts, and network graphs. Once completed, this content analysis will allow students to compare twitter data to their own arguments about a trend's exigence (urgency, importance, relevance). The trend exigence constructed earlier in the semester provides something to reflect upon, reconsider, "test," or question when analyzing data for the final project.

Final presentation components:

- Project introduction
- Description of trend exigence
- Overview of data analyses
- Reflection

Final presentation criteria:

- No less than 10 minutes, no more than 12
- Presentation appears practiced
- Presenter does not read from slides, but has prepared notes to assist with presentation

Total Points for Semester: 100

Letter grade equivalence based on final point total for semester:

A 95 (95-100 points)	A- 92 (90-94 points)	B+ 88 (87-89 points)
B 85 (83-86 points)	B- 82 (80-82 points)	C+ 78 (77-79 points)
C 75 (73-76 points)	C- 72 (70-72 points)	D+ 68 (66-69 points)
D 65 (64-67 points)	D- 62 (61-64 points)	E (0 points)

Grading, Feedback, and Revision

For the four primary assignments, students will be provided with an individualized grading rubric for each specific assignment. For weekly writing students will receive a prompt each Monday, along with a rubric for how that assignment will be graded. For all other assignments, prompts and rubrics will be provided when the assignment is introduced and discussed in class during the semester.

Written feedback will be provided for the Trend Exigence Essay, the Infographic Presentation, and for the Final Presentation. Students are allowed to revise ALL major assignments prior to the revision deadline listed on the course calendar below.

Revisions are allowed if students have turned in a complete assignment on its initial due date. However, before a revision may be completed, students are REQUIRED to schedule an individualized conference prior to revising any assignment. Fridays are set aside for student conferences and individualized attention, and twice a semester class is replaced with mandatory

student conferences to ensure that students are progressing with their individual research projects.

Course Calendar

January

S8 – Weekly Writing #1 Due

M9 – No Class

W11 – No Class

F13 – No Class

S15 – Weekly Writing #2 Due, **READ: *How to Lie with Statistics***

M16 – No Class (Holiday)

W18 – No Evening Class

F20 – No Class

S22 – Weekly Writing #3 Due, **READ: “Understanding Data” and “Hacking Aristotle”**

February

S4 – Weekly Writing #4 Due, **READ: *Here Comes Everyone***

S12 – Trend Exigence Essay Due

S19 – Weekly Writing #5 Due, **READ: “The Politics of Trending”**

S26 – Weekly Writing #6 Due

March

M6 – No Class (Spring Break)

W8 – No Class (Spring Break)

W10 – No Class (Spring Break)

S19 – Weekly Writing #7 Due

M20 – Infographic Presentations

M22 – Infographic Presentations

S26 – Weekly Writing #8 Due

April

S2 – Weekly Writing #9 Due

S9 – Weekly Writing #10 Due

M17 – Final Presentations

W19 – Final Presentations

S23 – Revision Deadline

General Education Objectives

* This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).

* Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.

* Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.

* The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

* Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.

* Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.

* Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Course Policies

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. Electronic submission for all assignments through Canvas.
3. Late assignments are not accepted. If assignments are not turned in by the deadline listed on Canvas, then they will not be accepted or graded.

4. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned and graded work until the semester is over.

6. Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism: Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

7. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

8. UF Grading policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

9. Grade Appeals. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

10. Course Evaluations: At the end of the semester you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

12. UF's policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>