Hi everyone, and welcome to Week 7. Week 7 begins Tuesday, March 3 and it will end on Monday, March 16. I'm presenting this week's overview in the form of a podcast again, and I hope you are excited about the podcast that you will be creating, and hopefully have already started, for the Podcast Pontifications Assignment.

Please note in the Course Schedule that Week 7 is an extended week due to Spring Break. So the University's Spring Break is Monday, March 9 through Friday, March 13. No coursework will be expected or required during this time. We will ALL enjoy a much needed, well deserved break! I hope that maybe you have something fun planned for Spring Break week, or maybe you'll just spend that time resting from your classes!

So we will now begin Week 7, we will pause for Spring Break, and then we will resume Week 7 once we return from Break. Again, take a look at the Course Schedule at the end of the syllabus to see how this is laid out or I have also noted this in the Calendar on Canvas.

Now before we move into this week's content, as always, I'd like to take a look back at last week in Week 6. Last week we explored the concept of *digital literacy*. Or the social skills and cultural competencies that are necessary when we are communicating, connecting, collaborating, and creating in online environments and through various online platforms and networks. I want to be sure to emphasize that digital literacy does not only refer to the technical skills that are necessary, it also refers to the social skills for communicating and collaborating through online apps and networks... as well as a cognitive understanding of the way that technology and media shape cultural knowledge and practices. It also refers to the cognitive ability to find, seek, and evaluate information as you read about last week. I think it's important to learn about the cultural implications of online technologies and social media today, and we will be exploring those cultural implications later in the course when we talk about participatory culture as a component of or extension of digital literacy. But that will come later in the course. I just want to thank you for all of your good work and the ideas that you shared in the discussion activity last week. It's interesting to hear or read your informed perspectives on these issues through your Flipgrid videos or in your writing in the forum. I'm very interested in the ways that you are making sense of and finding relevance in digital literacy, especially if this concept is new to you or if it is something you may have not thought of before. These issues are important in the world today because of our increased use of digital media, social media, and online technologies. And this will only continue to increase, so I hope that you feel this is important or relevant to your future as well.

So here's the great news: Week 7 will be an independent work week now to give you ample time to prepare for the Social Media Debate that will happen during our live, online class meeting next week in Week 8. So you will use your time this week in Week 7—this long week—to review content from Weeks 1 - 6, up to this point in the course. Because then in Week 8 we will hold the live online class meetings. This meeting will serve as a cumulative, midterm assessment activity. You will also spend Week 7 working on your big Podcast Pontifications project, which is due at the end of Week 7 on Monday, March 16.

So as you scroll down the Week 7 Agenda, you will see that I frame this week's plan and what I would like you to focus your time on. Then take a look at the date and time of the meeting that you signed up for, this is listed on the Week 7 Agenda. You'll see that this list includes your names and

place holders for students in section 1 or 2. These meetings will include students from both sections. If you see any problems or issues with where your name is listed, please contact me as soon as possible. And be sure to mark this on your calendar if you haven't already. If you are unable to attend one of these meetings, which will again serve as a midterm assessment activity, you will need to complete an alternative midterm assessment, which will be a longer written paper. I think it will be more fun to participate authentically in a meeting like this and talk about the things that we've explored thus far in the course. But if you would prefer to write a paper, please let me know because that can be arranged.

The next thing that you will need to do to prepare for next week's live meeting is to set up your technology. So we will be using a video conferencing tool called Zoom to meet together online in small groups. Zoom is similar to Facetime, Skype, Google Hangout or WebX. But it is commonly used for educational and professional purposes. It is supported for all students and faculty at the University of Minnesota, so you will not need to create a new account to use Zoom, you will just sign in using your University account and password. I prefer Zoom because I find it super easy to use, the audio and video quality is higher, and it is more reliable. It doesn't crash or glitch out as often as other web conferencing platforms can do. So Zoom is the tool we'll be using but you need to do just a few things to get set up with it first.

Again this meeting not only gives you an opportunity to share what you've learned so far in this course, it also gives you an opportunity to learn a little bit more about what it's like to participate in a web conference or web meeting like this for education or professional purposes. A lot of businesses, organizations, and companies are using web tools to hold professional meetings. You may have also been asked to participate in an online interview for a job-- for example a lot of companies may use video conferencing tools like Zoom to hold first round interviews. And that can be a little awkward if that is new to you. So this will give you some experience in doing this for your future career as well.

To join the Zoom meeting you will just click on the link that I've provided on the Week 7 Agenda page. As a reminder, I will also email this link to you as well the day before the class meeting that you signed up for. But I want you to get set up with a Zoom now. So please do not wait until the day of your meeting to do this because you will need to download something in order to get set up with Zoom. And we are going to be starting those meetings right on time. So you will need to be checking your access to the Zoom meeting space in advance. When you click on the link to join the meeting you will be prompted to download what's called the Zoom launcher.

This is a file package that you'll need to download to your computer or mobile device and it will then allow you to run the Zoom program on your computer or app on your device. So just follow the instructions after you click on that link. Or you can watch the demo video that I've included on the Week 7 agenda page. It's relatively easy. There are just a few steps. But again it will need to be done well in advance prior to the meeting. You will also need to test your Zoom setup in advance to make sure that your audio and video configurations are working properly so that you can talk through your microphone and so that we can see you through your webcam.

I would also like you to do some things to prepare for your participation in the Social Media Debate that will transpire during the live online class meeting. Now this debate is actually going to be more of a conversation and a discussion. I have a discussion question and a debate question that I will be asking everyone to respond to. So everyone in the meeting will be expected to speak and actively participate. Again this is an assessment activity. So you will also need to show your knowledge and

understanding about the class topics we've learned about so far during that meeting. So I would like you to go back and review the course content from Weeks 1 - 6. Review the theories we've covered, the frameworks and models, as well as the readings and your responses to the discussion questions and reflection activities. Be able to define digital culture, connected learning, and digital literacy. All those things will help you prepare to answer the questions that I will be asking of you. I've posed those questions and listed them on the Week 7 Agenda page. I'll also be asking you for some feedback on your experience in the course so far.

You can (and should!) prepare some notes for yourself in order to thoughtfully respond to the discussion and debate questions. So in addition to reviewing the content from Weeks 1-6 of class, I'd also like you to do an online search for supporting materials as well that will help you develop your responses and your arguments or your positions on those questions that I've posed. Please take some notes that **you can use during this meeting.** You will be able to refer to the notes you've prepared with key points or examples to articulate your positions and support your arguments.

I'd like you to have these notes ready by the end of Week 7-- Monday, March 16-- so that you're all set to go. And remember, also use your time this week to finish and submit your Podcast Pontifications Assignment. This major class project is due at the end of Week 7, on Monday, March 16. Click on the link that I've provided for you on the Week 7 Agenda page to review an overview of that assignment, the instructions, and tools that you can use to record and host your podcast. That overview also explains how you will submit that assignment. So again be using your time this week to be working on that as well.

If you have any questions or need any help as you're preparing for our live class meeting or working on your podcast, please don't hesitate to contact me. Post your questions to the discussion forum on Canvas or you can send me a private email. So that's what I have for you this week. Have a great week everyone, and have a wonderful Spring Break!