

J360 DIGITAL MEDIA STRATEGY FALL 2020

INSTRUCTOR — Nic Aguirre — naguirre@indiana.edu

(VIRTUAL) OFFICE HOURS — Monday 3:00pm - 4:00pm

Zoom Link: <https://iu.zoom.us/my/naguirre> Passcode: 444808

SECTIONS

38886 — Web-based, second 8-weeks class.

Premise

The game has changed.

The digital media landscape is brutally COMPETITIVE.

Traffic on social media has become harder to obtain, and your audience's attention span is shorter than ever. There has never been a greater demand for high-quality, engaging content.

You will not survive by being average. Your brand and your content needs to be EXTRAORDINARY and UNFORGETTABLE.

Many brands, businesses, and creators FAIL. Why?

- Inability to hold the attention of their audience, or even get traffic in the first place.
- Irrelevant or low-quality content
- No sense of identity or values

Fortunately, we now have a solid understanding of why people engage with certain content, why they attach to certain brands, and what makes them buy.

In **Digital Media Strategy**, you will learn how to navigate the digital landscape and make yourself known with an unforgettable identity and extraordinary content.

Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you will have the following abilities:

Brand Identity Design:

- Start With WHY: Seed your brand in a bold and compelling mission statement.
- Visual Identity: Create a memorable and consistent appearance.
- Positioning: Stand out from the herd with an unforgettable digital presence.
- Community Building: Engage your audience and create a cult-like following.

Content:

- Social Media Strategy: Understand today's social media platforms and how to most effectively navigate them.
- Content Strategy: Discover trends and assess audience demand to create content that consumers actually want.
- Optimization: Make sure the algorithm promotes your content rather than hiding it.

Marketing:

- Create Offers: Serve your audience with a killer product catalog.
- Monetize Content: Turn your best creative ideas into products.
- Targeting: Defining your ideal client avatar.
- Cold Outreach: Create authentic connections with your ideal client.

ACEJMC Professional values and competencies

The ACEJMC, the accrediting council that periodically reviews our undergraduate degree program, has created a set of professional values and competencies that the faculty here subscribes to. We think all journalism graduates should be aware of certain core concepts. Below are the ones we will focus most on in this class.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;

Work

In this course, you will create a brand and develop its presence on social media.

This is done with commercial intent; the goal is for you to have a following of engaged, potential buyers for your product/service by the end of the semester.

Your assignments consist of: 1. Projects 2. Content 3. Participation 4. Professionalism

Core Assignments (35 pts.)

This course has projects, which are structured yet flexible to help you build something useful and relevant to your goals.

- **A1: Niche Overview**— Defining the audience you will serve, and the problem you will solve
- **A2: Stylescape**— Define your brand's attributes and visual identity
- **A3: Content Strategy**— Determine what kind of content you will make, how often, and WHY
- **A4: Product Catalog**— Build an array of products to offer: free, low-ticket, high-ticket, in-person events, group coaching, etc.
- **A5: E-mail**— Use copywriting principles to engage your list
- **A6: Objection Handling Video**— In this role-playing video, you'll produce a response to an objection you're likely to receive during a sales call

Content (45 pts.)

You will create content for your brand on one or more social media platforms.

I am flexible about how you want to do this, but “short form” content lends itself better to this course format.

Some examples of different formats:

1. YouTube— Videos, Stories, Lives
2. Instagram— Feed, Stories, IGTV, IG Live, IG Reels
3. LinkedIn— Posts and Videos
4. Facebook— Posts, Groups, Videos, Lives
5. Podcasting
6. Blog Posts

Your content needs to be INTENTIONAL. If you are posting something just to post something, I will call you out on your bullshit.

Your classmates and I will help to steer you in the right direction. Instead of posting aimlessly, the goal is to develop a **strategic approach** to your content.

Participation (15 pts.)

Participation is an important element of this class. You must actively practice and hone your skills to succeed.

Many of our classes will focus on the completion of certain exercises, tutorials, and discussions. Most class days will feature a small participation exercise. Some participation exercises will be completed during class. Some will require submission BEFORE class.

Professionalism (5 pts.)

Students are expected to behave like adults. Unprofessional behavior will be met with a grade deduction in this category.

Unprofessional behavior includes (but is not limited to):

- Arriving to class late
- Leaving class early
- Failure to observe course policies
- Disrespect towards classmates or instructor
- Lack of consideration for classmates or instructor
- Behavior that distracts classmates or instructor
- Communication that is hostile, belligerent, antagonistic, condescending, sarcastic, or designed to harass/belittle ANYONE
- Communication that serves to promote hate, prejudice, ignorance
- Failure to practice academic integrity
- Excessive use of cell phone during class

Online Class Conduct

For our Zoom lectures, please behave the same way you would in a physical class setting.

Do:

- Have your camera on
- Be mentally present
- Dedicate 100% of your attention to the task at hand

Don't:

- Smoke or vape on camera
- Have 'pet show-and-tell'. Your pets are cute but very distracting.
- Multitask (*e.g. watching Netflix in another window*)
- Have conversations with people who are there in the room with you.
- Fall asleep or sit there with your eyes closed
- Sit there idle like a useless turd
- Do anything that's distracting to me or your classmates

Failure to meet these professionalism expectations can result in:

- Being removed from the Zoom call
- A deduction in participation/professionalism grades

- A report of academic misconduct
- A failing grade
- Removal from the course

Grading

Points

There are a total of **100** points in this class. The grade is divided as follows:

Assignment	Points
Core Assignments	35
Content	45
Participation	15
Professionalism	5
Total	100

Course Grade

Your grade will be assigned as follows:

Grade	Range
A+	100% to 97.0%
A	< 97.0% to 93.0%
A-	< 93.0% to 90.0%
B+	< 90.0% to 87.0%
B	< 87.0% to 83.0%
B-	< 83.0% to 80.0%
C+	< 80.0% to 77.0%
C	< 77.0% to 73.0%
C-	< 73.0% to 70.0%
D+	< 70.0% to 67.0%
D	< 67.0% to 63.0%
D-	< 63.0% to 60.0%
F	< 60.0% to 0.0%

Grading criteria will be given for each individual assignment.

Policies

Criteria for Grading

I will do my absolute best to ensure that everybody has a fair experience. However, understand that you will be assessed on measures that are both **objective** and **subjective**.

Attendance

Students should make a serious effort to attend every lecture. While attendance is not taken, I believe **attendance is the strongest guarantor of success** in this course.

Course material is cumulative in nature and class periods are used to develop programming skills and work on projects. You will also miss out on participation activities if you miss class.

Students are expected to come on time and stay for the duration of the class period. **A repeated pattern of tardiness is not tolerated.**

Deadlines

Deadlines are strict and non-negotiable. Late assignments will be accepted for the first three calendar days after a deadline. I will remove 15% for each day past the deadline (*Example— If you got 85 on an assignment but submitted it two days late, you're getting a 55*).

Assignments may not be submitted after three calendar days have elapsed (Example— Deadline is September 8th, you cannot submit after September 11th)

The only **exception to this rule** is the final project, which cannot be submitted late.

Absences

Whether or not an absence is excused is **entirely at the discretion of the instructor**.

If you miss a quiz or participation exercise and have an **excused absence**, you have **one week** to make up that assignment at office hours. If you cannot attend scheduled office hours, it is your responsibility to reach out and schedule another meeting time.

If you know you are going to be absent or late on a certain day, please tell me ahead of time.

Lost Data

You are responsible for keeping backups/duplicates of your files.

I **highly recommend** getting an [IU Google Drive](#) account. It is free, helps you to stay organized, and most importantly provides **backups** for your files.

Losing your files is not an excuse for late or incomplete work.

Contacting the Instructor

You should use Canvas inbox or e-mail to contact me.

Make sure you tell me:

- Who you are
- What class you're in

Communication and Creative Expression

See section '*Professionalism*' above.

Be mindful and intentional in your production of content, and the way you communicate with me and others.

You are interacting with real human beings who have feelings.

You are encouraged to be creative in your expression— written, verbal, and through content. Some people may take exception to things said/done by classmates or the instructor.

There is a massive difference between that which is **found offensive** and that which is **designed to offend**.

Let's clarify what is allowed and what's not.

You allowed to communicate in a way that is:

- Creative, open-minded, 'outside of the box'
- Polarizing or 'edgy'
- Challenging to popular opinions

You are NOT allowed to communicate in a way that:

- Is deliberately hostile, belligerent, antagonistic, or designed to harass/belittle ANYONE
- Serves to promote hatred, prejudice, ignorance, or deliberate misinformation

If you are creating content of a sexual/provocative nature, **you must get express permission from me ahead of time**. Pornographic content is not allowed.

If you are creating content that centers around a political/social agenda or cause, **please discuss it with me first** so I can help you to have a smooth experience.

All of your content must adhere to the rules of the platform you're posting it on (*e.g. YouTube's Terms and Conditions*)

If you are uncertain about anything, ask me.

How to respond if you are offended by something:

1. Give the other party the benefit of the doubt.

2. Bring up the issue with a matter-of-fact, respectful tone.
3. LISTEN first. Always seek to UNDERSTAND then BE UNDERSTOOD.
4. Criticize ideas, not people.
5. Remove your emotions from the equation and be objective.

Failure to meet these professionalism expectations can result in:

- A grade deduction
- A failing grade
- A report of academic misconduct
- Removal from the course

Self-care

Make an effort to take care of yourself. I value you deeply as a student and you should make an effort to take care of your mental well-being.

Meditation is an efficient and effective way to manage stress, improve cognitive performance, and overall health. You can get the [Headspace Student Plan](#) for \$9.99/yr.

IU provides [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#). This center is staffed with specialists who work tirelessly to help struggling students with a variety of student life problems.

Students with Disabilities

If any student requires assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me by after class, by e-mail, or during office hours. The student must have established eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students.

For more information— <https://studentaffairs.indiana.edu/disability-services-students/>

Academic Integrity

As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (Code). When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. All suspected violations of the Code will be reported to the Dean of Students and handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, and a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand.

Sexual Misconduct

As your instructor, one of my responsibilities is to create a positive learning environment for all students. Title IX and IU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibit sexual misconduct in any form, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking, and dating and domestic violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with:

- The Sexual Assault Crisis Services (SACS) at (812) 855-8900 (counseling services)
- Confidential Victim Advocates (CVA) at (812) 856-2469 (advocacy and advice services)
- IU Health Center at (812) 855-4011 (health and medical services)

It is also important that you know that Title IX and University policy require me to share any information brought to my attention about potential sexual misconduct, with the campus Deputy Title IX Coordinator or IU's Title IX Coordinator. In that event, those individuals will work to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. Protecting student privacy is of utmost concern, and information will only be shared with those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. I encourage you to visit stopsexualviolence.iu.edu to learn more.

Religious Holidays

It is the policy of Indiana University that instructors must reasonably accommodate students who want to observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances. This policy is intended to ensure that both faculty and students are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities in the accommodation of students' religious observances.

Source: <http://enrollmentbulletin.indiana.edu/pages/relo.php>

Syllabus

This course is rich in content and skill levels vary widely among students. The instructor reserves the right to amend this syllabus to better match the needs of a given class.

Final Grade

The instructor reserves the right to adjust your final grade based on effort, participation, or conduct. This is uncommon.