MCG – 237 Social Media Research" (BSMC)

Course outline

Course description

1.   This undergraduate-level proposed course will focus on the intersections of social media and society. Over the course of the semester, students will be introduced to pressing theories, concepts, and methodologies that have motivated the field in recent years. The majority of the readings will be in the social science tradition.

2.   The course will cover the intersection of social media with major subfields of communication: journalism studies, political communication, media and information, science and technology studies, and computer-mediated communication, to name a few. Across the readings, students will review various theoretical paradigms. One overarching goal of this course is to understand the wider implications of using social media and what research opportunities can be further developed by utilising the user-generate social media data.

3.   **Course objectives**

   a.   Provide students with an overview and comparison of theories of information, communication, and media

   b.   Provide students with the means to compare social theories

   c.   Provide students with the tools to map this wing of the field and to identify areas of interest to their own research identity

   d.   Provide students with professionalisation and socialisation to the academy broadly and to the communication field specifically

4.   **Course outcome**

   a.   Identify strengths and weaknesses of different social media research approaches

   b.   Understand theoretical concepts, design explication, models, assumptions, designs, and hypothesis/research question construction

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c.   Compare two or more theories related to social media and evaluate their explanatory power for a particular phenomenon

d.   Produce a final course paper that advances towards publication

5.   **Contents**

a.   **Introduction:** Understanding social media usage (Week 1-2)

b.   **Data Scoping:** Comprehending the data structures of one or two social media platforms (Week 3-4)

c.   **Insights incorporation in research:** Envisioning the research design based on available social media data (Week 5-9)

d.   **Focused literature review:** Discussing the advance terms i.e., (mis)information, fake news (Week 11-13)

e.   **Adaptation:** Learning and adopting the right tool for appropriate analyses (Week 14-16)

6.   **Reference material**

a.   Papacharissi, Z. (2015). We have always been social. *Social Media + Society* https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2056305115581185

b.   Bruns, A. (2015). Making sense of society through social media. *Social Media+ Society*, *1*(1). https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2056305115578679

c.   Neuman, W. R. (2016). *The digital difference*. Harvard University Press. (read the Prologue)

d.   boyd, d. m., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of computer-mediated Communication*, *13*(1), 210-230. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x?scrollTo=references

e.   Stieglitz, S., Mirbabaie, M., Ross, B., & Neuberger, C. (2018). Social media analytics– Challenges in topic discovery, data collection, and data preparation. International journal of information management, 39, 156-168.