

## COURSE SYLLABUS



# SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN THE AGE OF SELF

IFSA Barcelona

**US semester credit hours:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Course Code:** STR310-03 / MK310-03

**Course Length:** Semester

**Delivery Method:** Face to face

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Suggested Cross-listings:** Strategic Communication, Marketing

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will outfit students with the tools and expertise to develop strategic and comprehensive social media marketing plans that integrate with overall marketing and communications efforts to achieve business goals. Through case studies and hands-on exercises, students will develop a deep understanding of social media platforms and best practices to leveraging these channels to elevate one's reach and reputation. Topics include choosing appropriate platforms, creating effective and engaging social media content, and developing social media policies and content management strategies. The class emphasizes social listening, ethics and diversity, and, given the location, students will review case studies and consider practices specific to Spain.

Prerequisites: A previous course in journalism, advertising or communications is helpful but not required for motivated student

## COURSE DELIVERY

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA Barcelona Program whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Demonstrate a command of social media platforms and the various advertising and promotional options
- Understand how to research competitors, audience and goals to inform thoughtful social media planning

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- Identify best practices for social media marketing, including best practices for each platform
- Connect social media tactics and strategies to organizational missions and goals
- Create grammatically correct, meaningful content that engages target audiences with their marketing message
- Create editorial calendars to manage content distribution
- Use social listening tools to create timely, relevant content
- Create social media policies to guide consistent, on-brand messaging
- Become familiar with resources and communities to continue to learn as social media evolves
- Explore personal social media use and its impact on our lives
- Consider ethical obligations when creating and sharing content via social channels
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in IFSA Barcelona

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Week 1

#### **Course Introduction**

The making and evolution of social media.

**TED Talk:** How to make a splash in social media

[https://www.ted.com/talks/alexis\\_ohanian\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_a\\_splash\\_in\\_social\\_media](https://www.ted.com/talks/alexis_ohanian_how_to_make_a_splash_in_social_media)

Overview of various platforms (purpose and strengths): LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, etc.

**In-class case study:** Social media powerhouses: Why and how they do it!

Assign pairs to companies with effective social media strategies, and discuss findings with the class.

#### **Assignments:**

- Pick a brand to monitor throughout the semester (What does the company do well? How often does it post? What types of posts? How could it improve its reach and engagement?). *Due week 2.*
- Write a letter to yourself, draw a picture or however you want to capture goals you want to accomplish during this class. Feel free to expand beyond the class (maybe other goals for your semester or where you want to be in 5-10 years). *Due week 2.*

**Reading:** *Know your audience: Social media demographics*

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/#>. *Due week 2.*

### Week 2

#### **Research and planning**

The importance of the client intake process, strategic goal setting, understanding your audience, and setting clear goals, roles and communication channels among your team.

What is “integrated marketing” and how to achieve it?

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**In-class exercise:** Break into groups. Each group reviews a platform's advertising/promotion options, the cost of campaigns, best practices and tactics. Give examples of good ads and content on the assigned platform.  
<https://www.bigcommerce.com/blog/social-media-advertising/>.

*Presentations due week 3.*

Overview of diverse, engaging content: a mixture of advocacy, education/demonstrating expertise, sharing others' content (users or partners), engagement (i.e. respond to win), and storytelling.

**Reading:** *Why are content calendars important?*

<https://synecticsmedia.com/why-are-content-calendars-important-to-social-media-strategy>

**In class exercise:** Review various types of free and for-purchase content calendars (ex:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RURxxXqal2LWdIYxVGalhMOq3fWlf13JzkB8SGBBqo8/edit#gid=0>) Due week 3.

### Week 3

#### **Understanding Audience**

Platform presentations.

Identifying target audience and setting metrics (reach, clicks, engagement, sentiment, organic/paid likes and hashtag performance).

**In-class exercise:** For the company you picked, identify the target audience (demographics and psychographics), list its competitors and your company's distinction. Write a sample mission statement for the company's social media strategy.

Discussion about building a digital village and the importance of meaningful storytelling and social listening.

**Assignment:** Spend a day monitoring how much time you spend on social media and what platforms you use. Then, spend a day off social media and reflect on the experience (any anxiety? What you did with the extra time?)

*Due week 4.*

**Watch and reflect:** *Why social media is reimagining our future*

[https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan\\_kramer\\_why\\_social\\_media\\_is\\_reimagining\\_our\\_future](https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_kramer_why_social_media_is_reimagining_our_future) Due week 4.

### Week 4

#### **Words matter: Effective writing strategies across platforms**

Review of basic grammar and best practices for headlines, ad copy, calls to action and posts.

How to achieve strategic storytelling and examples of brands that embrace story to expand their reach and reputation.

**In-class exercise:** In today's time-challenged, crowded media landscape, headlines, calls to action/strategic communication, and grammar still matter (concise doesn't mean lazy). Let's practice writing various content elements.

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**Assignment:** You're on the marketing team for the Institute for Study Abroad. Go out and take at least five pictures and create five marketing posts (for a platform of your choice) to align with those pictures. *Due week 5.*

**Reading:** *20 creative ways to use social media for storytelling*  
<https://blog.bufferapp.com/social-media-storytelling> and consider Spain's unique approach to social media <https://www.the-gma.com/social-network-marketing> *Due week 5.*

### Week 5

**Opening creative exercise:** Based on the reading about social media storytelling, create an ad or post/a series of posts to tell story for the company you picked at the start of the semester.

#### **Facebook: History and overview**

Evolution of the platform and how to use them as marketing tools.

Revisit Facebook consumer demographics.

How often should you post and when?

**In-class exercise:** Conduct a SWOT analysis of Facebook as a marketing and advertising tool.

**Assignment:** For the company you picked, develop a social media calendar. *Swap with partner during week 6 for feedback, revision due week 7.*

**Readings:** *Marketing on Facebook*

<https://www.facebook.com/business/overview>

*A comprehensive guide for Beginners*

<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/facebook-marketing/> *Due week 6.*

### Week 6

#### **Trends and Ethics**

Overview about the trends in social media marketing and the ethical considerations of acquiring data, sharing content others created, etc.

What should be included in a social media policy (and why)?

**In-class discussion:** Facebook's Cambridge Analytica controversy was a wake-up call for marketers. It's time start building marketing cultures that treat data with respect. Discuss this and other case studies, including some from Spain (<http://www.internationalhispanicmedia.org/social-networks-in-spain-twitter-and-facebook-during-la-crisis/>).

**Reading:** *7 Fundamentals of social media marketing ethics*

<https://www.business2community.com/social-media/7-fundamental-ethics-social-media-marketing-01571504> *Due week 7.*

**Assignment:** Develop a social media policy for the company you picked at the beginning of the semester. Be prepared to discuss in class. *Due week 7.*

### Week 7

**Take home midterm assessment**

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**Opening conversation:** Discuss social media policy creation and wrap up final reflections about the ethics discussion. Review case study of Spain's Spanish 15-M movement,

<https://mappingignorance.org/2013/06/18/social-networks-and-the-spanish-15-m-movement/>)

**LinkedIn: History and overview**

Evolution of the platform and how to use them as marketing tools.

Revisit LinkedIn consumer demographics.

How often should you post and when?

**In-class exercise:** Conduct a SWOT analysis of LinkedIn as a marketing tool.

**Assignment:** For the company you picked, write a sample LinkedIn blog post, sharing expertise or highlighting a service. *Due week 8.*

**Readings:** *Marketing on LinkedIn* <https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/how-to-market-on-linkedin>. *Due week 8.*

### Week 8

**LinkedIn Best Practices**

Review LinkedIn marketing strategies and conduct in-class review of companies doing a great job leveraging LinkedIn.

**In-class assignment:** Work in groups to walk through the steps outlined in the previous week's readings to offer suggestions to improve a company's LinkedIn presence.

**Assignment:** Write a reflection about the week's in-class assignments and group work. What are some challenges of keeping up LinkedIn and managing it along with other social media outreach and engagement? How would LinkedIn rank in your priorities? *Due week 9.*

### Week 9

**Instagram: History and overview**

Evolution of the platform and how to use them as marketing tools.

Revisit Instagram consumer demographics.

How often should you post and when?

**In-class exercise:** Conduct a SWOT analysis of Instagram as a marketing tool.

**Assignment:** For the company you picked, provide an assessment of its current Instagram presence and offer feedback for improvements.

**Readings:** *7 Marketing tips to grow your brand on Instagram* <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/280964>. *Due week 10.*

### Week 10

**Pinterest: History and overview**

Evolution of the platform and how to use it as a marketing tool.

Explore Pinterest consumer demographics, popular Pinterest categories, and recommended post frequency.

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How to create pinnable content (making it easy to pin from your site, developing instructographics, optimal pin size, and images that work, for instance).

**Case studies:** Anthropologie board “Your Anthropologie Favorites,” Whole Foods’ #WhyAustin board. Spanish examples include, the Anti-Eviction Platform, Let’s save Exalibur, the eviction of Juana Vacas Pancorbo, and the tragedy in the Madrid Arena.

(<http://www.internationalhispanicmedia.org/social-networks-in-spain-twitter-and-facebook-during-la-crisis/>).

**Assignment:** For the company you picked, provide an assessment of its Pinterest strategy. Offer feedback for improvements.

**Readings:** *The Ultimate Pinterest Marketing Guide*

<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/ultimate-pinterest-marketing-guide/>. Due week 11.

### Week 11

#### **Twitter: History and overview**

Evolution of the platform and how to use marketing tools.

Revisit Twitter consumer demographics.

How often should you post and when?

Why Twitter doubled its character count and how to adjust.

**In-class exercise:** Search for a recipe and condense it down to 280 characters (or 140, if you can).

**Assignment:** Create a live video Tweet about what you’ve learned in this class. Due week 12.

**Readings:** *15 best Twitter Marketing Tools*

<https://www.digitalvidya.com/blog/twitter-marketing-tools/>. Due week 12.

### Week 12

#### **Strategic storytelling**

Elements of good storytelling.

Best practices for integrated storytelling across platforms.

**In-class exercise:** Referencing the company you selected, develop three sample “stories” to share on a platform of your choice, explain the frequency and strategy. Write them and present/discuss.

**Discussion board post:** Reflect on the in-class exercise. What was challenging for you? Why is strategic storytelling powerful, but how/why is it difficult to relate on these platforms? Due week 13.

### Week 13

#### **Data**

**In-class exercise:** Explore Google Analytics, Social Sprout, Snaplytics, Iconosquare, Buzzsumo, etc.

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Intake process: Tools to navigate a successful client intake process to gather information, set goals and establish key performance indicators.

Ethics specific to data.

**Discussion post:** What social media analytics tools do you prefer and why? Are certain tools better for certain industries (why)? *Due week 14.*

**Assignment:** Read about Spain's unique approach to social media <https://www.the-gma.com/social-network-marketing> *Due week 15.*

### Week 14

#### **Integration: Bringing it all together**

What is 'integrated marketing' and how do you achieve it.

Final presentations: After spending a semester with your company, present a comprehensive social media plan. Explain why you used various platforms and provide some sample posts. *Plan example:*

<https://www.ducttapemarketing.com/social-media-marketing-plan/>. *Due during finals week.*

### Week 15

#### **Final Discussions and Review**

### RESOURCES

- *Building a StoryBrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen* by Donald Miller.
- *Socialized! How the Most Successful Businesses Harness the Power of Social* by Mark Fidelman.
- *Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach* by Melissa Barker, Donald Barker, Nicholas Bormann, and Krista Neher.
- *The Digital Handshake: Seven Proven Strategies to Grow Your Business Using Social Media* by Paul Chaney.
- *Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions* by Guy Kawasaki.
- *Secrets of Social Media Marketing: How to Use Online Conversations and Customer Communities to Turbo-Charge Your Business!* by Paul Gillin.
- *The Zen of Social Media Marketing: An Easier Way to Build Credibility, Generate Buzz, and Increase Revenue* by Shama Kabani and Chris Brogan.

### EVALUATION METHODS

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

Attendance and participation – 10%

Mid-term exam – 20%

Assignments - 30%

Final project – 40%

### **Timely Submissions**

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Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.

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