

COMM 5323-110 – Social Media as Mass Media**Texas A&M University-Central Texas – Spring 2022****Instructor:** Charles R. Hamilton, Ph.D.**Office:** Online**Phone:** (903) 573-5124 (cell) Text first for appointment.**Email:** Please use TAMUCT email - c.hamilton@tamuct.edu - for all communications.**Office Hours:** Since this is an online course, in-person office hours are not possible. However, I will be available through the *Inbox or TAMUCT email*, located on the course menu, and will respond in 24 hours or less.**Mode of instruction and course access:** This course is a 100% online course and uses the TAMUCT Canvas system. You will use the Canvas username and password communicated to you separately to log on to this system.**Student-instructor interaction:** Messages sent through *Inbox or TAMUCT email* will be answered within 24 hours, seven days a week. I will also make myself available between the hours of 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, for a quick email response through Canvas when requested. I am also available by cellphone - please text first with your name and phone number so that I will answer the call.**Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas****SAFEZONE.** SafeZone provides a public safety application that gives you the ability to call for help with the push of a button. It also provides Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate emergency information quickly via push notifications, email, and text messages. All students automatically receive email and text messages via their myCT accounts.

Downloading SafeZone allows access to push notifications and enables you to connect directly for help through the app.

You can download SafeZone from the app store and use your myCT credentials to log in. If you would like more information, you can visit the [SafeZone](http://www.safezoneapp.com) website [www.safezoneapp.com].

To register SafeZone on your phone, please follow these 3 easy steps:

1. Download the SafeZone App from your phone store using the link below:
 - [iPhone/iPad](https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756): [https://apps.apple.com/app/safezone/id533054756]
 - [Android Phone / Tablet](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp) [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.criticalarc.safezoneapp]
2. Launch the app and enter your myCT email address (e.g. {name}@tamuct.edu)
3. Complete your profile and accept the terms of service

COURSE INFORMATION**COMM 5323. Social Media as Mass Media. 3 Credit Hours.**

This course offers a study of mass media and the creation of online social cultures, communication networks, and of the "other" - other groups formed from religions & denominations, or based on individualism, intellectualism, the Internet, races and cultures, political groups, foods, drugs, science, education, social interaction, urban areas, etc.

This course examines questions such as:

Do media sources manipulate political events, topics, and comments in order to lure higher numbers of "loyal followers"?

Are media sites fulfilling the needs of those concerned citizens who normally might not take the time to do the research necessary to find what they consider "the truth" about politicians and agendas?

Does a media site encourage conversation and expression of individual thought, or is it simply telling followers what they want to hear -- what they are comfortable with?

What role does marketing play in online sites with a political agenda (i.e. what products and ideologies are being sold as necessities)?

Students are expected to write brief reviews of chapters from the text, as well as from several germane journal articles and public media articles, in order to begin building a useful library of such sources. You will also participate **actively** in online discussions of the assigned readings and other exciting topics.

Finally, you will write a summation essay, discussing the chapters, articles, and research you have studied throughout the course, along with comparisons of policies you have chosen to highlight, and situations or genres in which they might apply. Since this is a graduate-level course the rigor is extensive, especially during the last weeks. Do not get behind, or you will not only lose points, but you may find that you must drop the course.

Course Objectives and Goals

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to differentiate between the common social media methods of communication and reporting currently in use.

Students will select and highlight communication & social media usage methods they choose as most harmful/useful, based on their personal experience, and research.

Students will select the social media devices they feel best fit ethical approaches to public communication.

Students will develop the ability to blend forms of social media communication to fit situations where one mode alone may not be sufficient to be effective.

Competency Goals

Students will read and respond, both in essay form and through written, online discussion, to a variety of communication and agenda-setting tactics, described in the text, and used for the creation of online social media cultures.

Students will read and respond, both in essay form and through written, online blog discussions, to a variety of media practices, described in journal articles they select and used in a variety of social media communication modes and situations.

Students will discover, and apply, their personal choices of the "correct" practices necessary for specific scenarios of social media communication situations.

Students will discover their personal philosophies for use in specific social media communication situations, through reading, research, written reviews, and written discussion responses, and record those in essay format.

Textbook and Required Reading: *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*, 3rd ed., Christian Fuchs, Sage ISBN: 9781529752748 and associated scholarly articles of your choice. Our text also has some very good review tools included at the beginning and end of each chapter as follows: Chapter Review, Chapter Summary, Key Terms, Linked Videos, and Review Questions. For strategic reading, you might want to look over the Review Questions before beginning to read. These questions feature points the author feels are important knowledge from each chapter, which also helps you focus on a specific topic for your writing and discussion assignments each week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements: (Use MLA guidelines on all the writing that you turn in. **All work must be in Microsoft Word format.** Also, as a rule, I do not accept late assignments, without prior approval.)

Combined Chapter & Article Reviews: You will compose fourteen (14) combined reviews of chapters from *Social Media: A Critical Introduction*, and fourteen (14) journal/media articles of your choice. Each combined review will address the specific media tactic or practice you chose to investigate from each chapter in the text, along with a journal article that correlates with that topic from the text. Review that chapter and article in 400-600 words. (Example: Chapter Review + Article Review = 1 Review) For each review, begin with an MLA heading, the bibliographic information for text and article (MLA style), and a concise summary 200-300 words) about a specific topic in each chapter you single out that is of great importance within the study of Social Media Culture. Address its usefulness to you and its general strengths and weaknesses. **You are not required to address the entire chapter, only a specific point, or points, you cite as most important.** Please supply short scenarios, if necessary, to illustrate your application of the practice. **Use Microsoft Word format Only.** Each Article Review is worth fifty (50) points. (Examples are in the "Pages" tab.)

Discussion Participation: In addition, you are expected to contribute to the course discussions each week. Count on providing at least one substantive original comment each of the fourteen (14) weeks about your readings or in response to my questions. Also included are comments you post as responses to others' posts. Each week you are required to post responses to at least two of your classmates' comments. Grades are not assigned to specific posts, but your contributions each week are worth twenty-five (25) points. In addition to the discussion of readings, the discussion provides a forum for other course questions and comments. Please check the Discussion Board often to see what your classmates are asking or commenting on. You might be able to help. Grades for this section will be collected and posted each week. Discussion is important to any course, and an online course is no different. Each participant's comments and points of view are essential to gaining knowledge about any subject or topic, and I put quite a bit of weight on an active discussion. Comments should be substantive and should be made early in the week so that active discussion can take place. Students making comments in the final minutes or hours of the discussion window will not get full credit for participation/discussion.

Final Essay: This will be an essay that gives you yet another opportunity to ponder the ideas of how media addresses cultural needs, changes, and values. You will write a summation essay, discussing the media practices you have studied throughout the course, comparisons of practices you have chosen to highlight, and communication situations, scenarios, or genres, in which they might apply. This is a very substantive assignment and should reflect your critical insight into agenda-setting, and other methods that can be manipulated by media to fit specific situations. The average length of these papers has been 2000-2500 words, but feel free to go longer if necessary. (I really do not like limits, but some students feel they are necessary.) This final assignment is worth 500 points.

Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion

Chapter/Article Reviews	14@50 pts. each	700
Discussion Participation	14@25 pts. each	350
Final Essay		500
Total Points Available		1250

Posting of Grades

Grades for Weekly Article Reviews, and Chapter Reviews, and Discussion Participation will be posted no later than one (1) week from the due date. *All student grades will be posted in the Canvas Grade book. Students should monitor their grading status through this tool.*

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR

Week 1 -1/18-23

1. Purchase and receive Text. Read the Syllabus in-depth.
2. Interactive Weekly Assignments 1:
 - Read Welcome from the instructor
 - Post to Introductory Discussion.
4. Read Introduction - Chapter 1 and post comments to Discussion 1.
5. Read Journal Article associated with a topic from Chapter 1.
6. Post reviews of Chapter 1 & journal article to assignment folder.

Week 2 -1/24-30

1. Read Chapter 2 and research 1 associated journal article.
 - Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.
2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:
 - Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 2.

Week 3 -1/31-2/6

1. Read Chapter 3 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 3.

Week 4 -2/7-13

1. Read Chapter 4 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 4.

Week 5 -2/14-20

1. Read Chapter 5 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 5.

Week 6 -2/21-27

1. Read Chapter 6 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 6.

Week 7 -2/28-3/6

1. Read Chapter 7 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 7.

Week 8 -3/7-13

1. Read Chapter 8 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 8.

March 14-18 Spring Break – No Classes

Week 9 -3/21-27

1. Read Chapter 9 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 9.

Week 10 -3/28-4/3

1. Read Chapter 10 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 10.

Week 11 -4/4-10

1. Read Chapter 11 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 11.

Week 12 -4/11-17

1. Read Chapter 12 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 12.

Week 13 -4/18-24

1. Read Chapter 13 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 13.

Week 14 - 4/25-5/1

1. Read Chapters 14 & 15 and research 1 associated journal article.

Write a combined review of each and post it to the assignment folder.

2. Interactive Weekly Assignments:

Post comments on article and Chapter to Discussion - Week 14.

Week 15 -5/2-8

Work on Final Essay – No Discussions Required

Week 16 - 5/9-13 5/13

Continue to Work on Final Essay – Due 5/13 - No Discussions Required

Semester Ends

Important University Dates

*Important university dates from the current Academic Calendar can be found on the following link:
<https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/academic-calendar.html>*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. **We strongly recommend the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.**

Log on to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in MyCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Online Proctored Testing

A&M-Central Texas uses Proctorio for online identity verification and proctored testing. This service is provided at no direct cost to students. If the course requires identity verification or proctored testing, the technology requirements are: Any computer meeting the minimum computing requirements, plus web camera, speaker, and microphone (or headset). Proctorio also requires the Chrome web browser with their custom plug-in.

Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [<http://hdc.tamu.edu>]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete the [Drop Request](#) Dynamic Form through Warrior Web.

[<https://dynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com/casAuthentication.ashx?InstID=eaed95b9-f2be-45f3-a37d-46928168bc10&targetUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fdynamicforms.ngwebsolutions.com%2FSubmit%2FForm%2FStart%2F53b8369e-0502-4f36-be43-f02a4202f612>].

Faculty cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar’s Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed. Once you submit the completed form to the Registrar’s Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar’s Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid a penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. All academic misconduct concerns will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

For more [information regarding the Student Conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html>].

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a report](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0].

Academic Accommodations

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations, please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information, please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) Canvas page (log-in required) [https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717]

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/pregnant-and-parenting-students.html]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) online, please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both virtually and in person. Student success coaching is available online upon request.

If you have a question, are interested in becoming a tutor, or in need of success coaching contact the Warrior Center for Student Success, Equity and Inclusion at (254) 501-5836, visit the Warrior Center at 212 Warrior Hall, or by emailing WarriorCenter@tamuct.edu.

To schedule tutoring sessions and view tutor availability, please visit [Tutor Matching Services](https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT) [https://tutormatchingservice.com/TAMUCT] or visit the Tutoring Center in 111 Warrior Hall.

Chat live with a remote tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas except writing support. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Writing Center

University Writing Center: Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University—Central Texas (A&M—Central Texas) is a free service open to all A&M—Central Texas students. For the Spring 2022 semester, the hours of operation are from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday in Warrior Hall 416 (with online tutoring available every hour as well) with satellite hours available online only Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. and Saturday 12:00-3:00 p.m.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-to-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your

favorite tutor by making an appointment via [WOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC, need any assistance with scheduling, or would like to schedule a recurring appointment with your favorite tutor.

University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 400,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 96,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place virtually through WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or in-person at the library. [Schedule an appointment here](https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956) [https://tamuct.libcal.com/appointments/?g=6956]. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group workspaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index)

[http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].

OPTIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Wellness and Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/compliance/titleix.html) [https://www.tamuct.edu/compliance/titleix.html].

Behavioral Intervention

Texas A&M University-Central Texas cares about the safety, health, and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and community. If you are aware of individuals for whom you have a concern, please make a referral to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Referring your concern shows you care. You can complete the [referral](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2) online [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2].

Anonymous referrals are accepted. Please see the [Behavioral Intervention Team](https://www.tamuct.edu/bit) website for more information [https://www.tamuct.edu/bit]. If a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911 or A&M-Central Texas University Police at 254-501-5805.

Late Assignment Submissions Policy

Discussion Board Posts

Students must submit **initial discussion board postings** by Thursday at midnight during the week indicated in the assignment schedule. A minimum of two response posts are required each week and must be posted by Sunday at midnight. Discussion board submissions will not be accepted for credit after the deadline.

Written Assignments

Students needing extra time may submit assignments, excluding discussion board postings, up to one week after the assignment due date. Students who submit work up to one week late will receive a penalty of 10 percent applied to the grade achieved on the late assignment regardless of the day of the week on which the work is submitted. Students who submit assignments more than one week late will receive a grade of zero on the assignment unless they have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

Exceptions

I will accept assignments more than one week late only if students have made prior arrangements with me and I agree to an extension. Students must meet the deadline agreed upon in advance with the instructor. Students who do not meet the agreed-upon deadline will receive a grade of zero on the assignment.

I will accept late work without prior arrangement only in the case of extenuating circumstances (such as hospitalization, childbirth, major accident, injury or bereavement). Students who suffer such a circumstance must notify me as soon as possible of the extenuating circumstance that prevented them from submitting work on time and determine a deadline for submitting the work. In these instances, I will waive the late penalty. Students who do not meet the arranged deadline will receive a grade of zero on the assignment.

Final Assignment

Students must submit the final assignment no later than the last regular class day of the term. No assignments are accepted after the last class day of the term.

Copyright Notice

Students should assume that all course material is copyrighted by the respective author(s). Reproduction of course material is prohibited without consent by the author and/or course instructor. Violation of copyright is against the law and Texas A&M University-Central Texas' Code of Academic Honesty. All alleged violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

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