



SYLLABUS
SOCIAL MEDIA FOR JOURNALISTS

Instructor: Damian Radcliffe damianr@uoregon.edu Contact Hours: 40
Auckland, New Zealand

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Social Media has changed the way that both journalists - and audiences - find and share news and information. How are these changes affecting journalistic practice? And what are the social media skills that journalists and digital consumers need today?

This class will explore the social media strategies of major NZ-based news media outlets and journalists, exploring different social platforms and how you can use them effectively as a journalist.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Strong social media skills are highly sought after by employers. But the use of these platforms in your personal life doesn't necessarily translate into effective use in a professional, journalistic setting.

This course will redress that by improving your knowledge of how major social networks are used by audiences, journalists, and news publishers. Questions that we will explore include:

- What is the role of social media in the way that audiences find, consume, and share news?
- What are the implications of this for news organizations, brands, and journalists?
- What are the characteristics of different social platforms?
- What does this mean for journalism and storytelling?
- How are different social networks used by news organizations to tell + find stories?
- What does that mean for the role of journalists in 2025?
- What can journalists do to manage their digital footprint and mitigate potential harms?
- How are they responding to these challenges? What can you do about it?

At the end of this course, you will have a firm grasp of these key issues, as well as the ability to tell your own stories through social media. TI;DR: This course will address the question: What social media skills and knowledge do I need to have as a journalist and online storyteller in 2025?

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will blend lectures and discussions, conversations with guest speakers, practical exercises, and your own reading and research. Given how fast the social media landscape

changes- and the sheer breadth of this space – each student will play a key role in helping their peers develop their own knowledge of this rapidly evolving environment.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Given the diversity of the social media landscape, we will also use a wide range of different methods to assess your learning and contributions.

These will include:

- Discuss key market data and trends and their implication (in class and writing).
- Research and analyzing emerging issues and players.
- Present your own research and social media output to your class peers and instructor. This includes a mixture of individual and group projects/
- Produce high-quality journalistic work (written and visual using social media apps).
- Publish your work on a public-facing class website/blog.
- Engagement with guest speakers.
- Online learning modules from industry leaders like Reuters and Hootsuite.
- Regular reflections, using different means, to chart your learning.

COURSE OUTLINE

Social Media for Journalists will engage students through reading, analysis and assignments that will deepen their understanding of the subject matter and enhance their practical skills.

We will do this utilizing research, case studies, practical assignments, and interactive discussions.

More specifically, that means reading industry reports, practical hands-on social media content creation and analysis, social media audits of media outlets and platforms, discussion and reflection (e.g. weekly journaling assignments), using a wide range of apps and digital tools, engaging with guest speakers, as well as gaining accreditation through taking industry-level courses.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand and describe some of the major trends in social media usage.
2. Explain characteristics of major social platforms; including best practices for them e.g. established networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest.
3. Produce content using the Stories format on Instagram and other social platforms.
4. Demonstrate a working knowledge of live Video services such as YouTube Live, Twitch, and Facebook Live and messaging-based apps like WeChat, WhatsApp and Line.
5. Explain the rationale for platforms growing in influence and impact – among both audiences and journalists alike - such as TikTok and Reddit.

6. Identify relevant industry information/data/analysis about social media.
7. Create compelling journalistic social media content on different social networks.
8. Use tools such as Google Drive and Medium, for collaborative and individual work.
9. Critique your own ideas/output – and those of your peers – on social media topics.
10. Recognize the implications of your digital – and social – footprint. And how to manage it.
11. Display a killer LinkedIn profile to the outside world.
12. Show experience of getting hands-on with a variety of new tools and digital apps.
13. Demonstrate industry-accepted accreditation for the use of the Hootsuite Platform.

COURSE READINGS

This space changes rapidly, so your reading will be rooted in current trends and analysis. This will include the annual Digital News Report from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, as well as developments captured in news media outlets such as Social Media Today, The Information, and Harvard’s Nieman Lab.

COURSEWORK

For each assignment, you’ll be given a detailed brief on Canvas and in class. Assignments will be a mixture of graded work (A-F) and Complete/Incomplete. Graded work is indicated below via *

Activity	Tasks	% of Grade	Points
Writing	1. Social Media Storytelling (BuzzFeed style piece)*	15%	150
	2. Interview a Journalist / How I Work feature*	10%	100
	3. Lessons learned from guest speakers (group article)*	5%	50
		30%	300
Reflection	4. Weekly reflection x 5 (<i>Story/TikTok, YouTube, IG Carousel, X, Headliner</i>)	15%	150
		15%	150
Portfolio, Tools and Apps	5. About.Me page*	5%	30
	6. Professional LinkedIn site*	7.5%	75
	7. HootSuite Platform Certification	7.5%	75
	8. Reuters Digital Journalism certification	5%	50
		25%	250
Other	9. Class participation and engagement (<i>incl. Scavenger Hunt, Reels, Briefing Docs for Guests, .</i>)	30%	300
		30%	300
TOTAL		100%	1,000

Many of the smaller assignments fall into the latter category but be sure to complete them all. It's a quick (and relatively easy) way to rack up a baseline of points for the class. By the same token, failing to do them will make it very hard to pass this class...

SAMPLE COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is a draft and is subject to amendment.

Week	Activities
1	<p data-bbox="440 516 867 552"><u>Tuesday (9.30am – 12.00pm)</u></p> <ul data-bbox="488 594 906 779" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="488 594 878 625">• Introduction to the class. <li data-bbox="488 632 894 663">• Digital Footprint exercise. <li data-bbox="488 669 906 701">• How you use social media <li data-bbox="488 743 748 774">• Guest Speaker <p data-bbox="440 821 1500 894">Homework: practice creating memes and communicating ideas in a visual, social media-friendly format.</p> <p data-bbox="440 936 919 972"><u>Wednesday (9.30am – 12.00pm)</u></p> <ul data-bbox="488 1014 1435 1199" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="488 1014 927 1045">• Show and Tell: Your Memes <li data-bbox="488 1052 1435 1125">• State of Social Media (Presentation and Discussion) / History of Social? <li data-bbox="488 1131 1159 1163">• Introduce <i>Interview A Journalist</i> assignment. <li data-bbox="488 1169 1328 1199">• Assign Guest Speaker and Newsroom Visit groups/pairs <p data-bbox="440 1241 971 1276"><u>HOMEWORK: DUE SUNDAY NIGHT</u></p> <ul data-bbox="488 1318 1523 1696" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="488 1318 1523 1465">• Briefing Documents for Guest Speakers and Class Visits: in groups (x3) you will provide a briefing + presentation for the whole class on each guest speaker and each visit that we are undertaking. These will be presented to the class on Monday. <li data-bbox="488 1507 1252 1581">• Instagram Reel – New Zealand Week One <li data-bbox="488 1545 1252 1577">• Complete your Reflection for Week One (YouTube) <li data-bbox="488 1619 1406 1696">• Produce your slide for our Monday morning "What's Trending" discussion. (<i>Students TBD</i>)

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Monday (1.00pm – 6.00pm)

- What's trending? (*Students TBD*)
- Presentations and Discussion on your Briefing Documents homework - looking at our guests and the visits we have lined up, providing the key context, areas we want to explore and looking at their social footprint.
- Guest Speaker
- Check in on progress with the *Interview a Journalist* assignment.

If time: Discussion about the History of Social Media. / How has social changed journalism

Leave at 3/3.30pm. (Session 3.30/4pm+)

- **VISIT** to Media Company.

Wednesday (9.30am - 12.00pm)

- Social Media Scavenger Hunt. You'll be going out and about with a peer, or two, getting hands-on with a variety of social media apps across Auckland.

Homework:

- Complete any outstanding materials from your Scavenger Hunt. That means: 1) submit the link to your content here; 2) add up how many points you got and peer review another group's effort too

HOMEWORK: DUE SUNDAY NIGHT

- Due: Interview A Journalist
- Due: Scavenger Hunt
- Guest Speaker reflections.
- Produce your slide for our Monday morning "What's Trending" discussion. (*Students TBD*)
- Complete your Reflection for Week 2 - This week using Headliner.

Monday (1pm-6pm)

- What's trending? (*Students TBD*)
- How has social media changed journalism? Preso + Discussion (*Possibly completed in Week 2*)
- Intro to About.Me
- Intro to LinkedIn: walkthrough assignment.

Leave at 2pm.

- **VISIT**

4pm+ travel back to Office + reflection from meeting

- 5-6pm Guest Speaker.

Tuesday (9.30am – 12.00pm)

- Review Scavenger Hunt
- Intro to Social Media Storytelling feature. Set up of assignment.
- Intro Hootsuite assignment (Due Sunday)
- How news orgs and brands use Instagram: in-class exercise

If time: Create a Story – in-class exercise using materials in the public domain.

- Guest Speaker:

Friday (1.00pm – 3.30pm)

- No class. Use this time instead to complete your Hootsuite Platform certification. This takes c. 2.5 hours to complete, the same length of time as class. A copy of your certification is due on Sunday night.

HOMEWORK: DUE SUNDAY NIGHT

- Complete your Week 3 Reflection. This week you'll be using Instagram.
- Complete your Hootsuite Platform certificate (takes 2.5 hours)
- Submit your draft About.Me page.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin work on your LinkedIn profile. • Guest Speaker reflections. (<i>All</i>) • Produce your slide for our Monday morning "What's Trending" discussion. (<i>Students TBD</i>)
4	<p><u>Tuesday (9.30am-12.00pm)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's trending? (<i>Students TBD</i>) • About.Me drafts – peer review. • Pitches: Social Media Storytelling feature. <p><u>HOMEWORK: DUE SUNDAY NIGHT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit your final About.Me page. • Submit your LinkedIn profile. • Complete your Reflection for Week 4. This week, it's a Twitter thread. • Produce your slide for our Monday morning "What's Trending" discussion. (<i>Students TBD</i>)
5	<p><u>Monday (1.00pm-3.30pm)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's trending? (<i>Students TBD</i>) • News Brands on TikTok – exercise • Visit to media company. <p><u>Wednesday (9.30am – 12.00pm)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter workshop incl. Live Tweeting Practice, Moment, Thread. • Guest Speaker: TBD • End of term evaluation + recap. • Next Steps. <p><u>HOMEWORK: DUE SUNDAY NIGHT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker reflection. • Complete your Reflection for Week 5 / End of term career reflection. (TikTok) • IG Reel – Auckland • Reuters Assignment • Social Media Storytelling

KEY COURSE POLICIES

Accessible Education Statement: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Misconduct Statement: The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct.

By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism .

Reporting Obligations: I am a designated reporter. For information about my reporting obligations as an employee, please see Employee Reporting Obligations on the Office of Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance (OICRC) website.

Students experiencing any form of prohibited discrimination or harassment, including sex or gender-based violence, may seek information and resources at safe.uoregon.edu, respect.uoregon.edu, or investigations.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential Title IX office/Office of Civil Rights Compliance (541-346-3123), or Dean of Students offices (541-346-3216), or call the 24-7 hotline 541-346-SAFE for help. I am also a mandatory reporter of child abuse.

Please find more information online at [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

Damian Radcliffe, Professor of Practice, Carolyn Chambers Professor of Journalism

[Damian Radcliffe](#) is a journalist, researcher, and professor [based at the University of Oregon](#). Alongside holding the Chambers Chair at the School of Journalism and Communication (SOJC), he is also a Professor of Practice, an affiliate faculty member of the Department for Middle East and North Africa Studies (MENA) and the [Agora Journalism Center](#), a Research Associate of the

Center for Science Communication Research (SCR) and a member of the Provost's Teaching Academy.

Damian is a three-time [Knight News Innovation Fellow](#) at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia University, an [Honorary Research Fellow](#) at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture Studies (JOMEC), and a Life Fellow of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA).

In Spring and Summer 2023, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University, his alma mater.

With over 25 years of experience in the media industry, Damian has worked in editorial, strategic, research, policy and teaching roles in the USA, Middle East and UK. He has worked across all platforms (audio, TV, digital and print) and all media sectors (commercial, public, community and non-profit, regulatory and academia).

He continues to be an [active journalist](#), writing regular features for [Digital Content Next](#), the [International Journalists' Network](#) (IJNet), [What's New in Publishing](#), [journalism.co.uk](#) and [other outlets](#). His work focuses on digital trends, social media, technology, the business of media, and the evolution - and practice - of journalism.

As an analyst, researcher and trainer, he has worked with a wide range of additional industry and academic organizations including the BBC World Service, Facebook, FIPP, INMA, Thomson Reuters Foundation, World Association of News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the United Nations.

He has been quoted on issues relating to digital media and journalism by major outlets such as AFP, BBC News, Business Insider, Editor & Publisher, NPR, The New York Times, Snapchat, Wired and Voice of America. As a freelance journalist, his work has been published by leading publications and trade outlets such as the BBC, Columbia Journalism Review (CJR), Harvard's Nieman Lab, HuffPost, PBS MediaShift, Poynter, TheMediaBriefing and ZDNet.

Originally from the UK, Damian lives in Eugene, OR, with his wife and three young children. He holds a BA in Modern History and MA (Oxon) from the University of Oxford.

Find out more: <http://journalism.uoregon.edu/member/radcliffe-damian/>

