Course Syllabus

COM 496-SIS
Comparing Social Media Usage in Europe and the U.S.

Course Description

In our ever-changing world, means of communication, marketing, news, and media continue to evolve. Social media plays a significant role in the everyday lives of citizens in countries across the world, impacting society, culture, politics, and international affairs. In this course, students will explore the uses and impact of social media, and discover how social media is used differently in countries in Europe versus the United States. Through this analysis, students may draw their own conclusions about the most effective way to write for and use social media around the globe.

This Supervised Independent Study (SIS) course will guide students through the basics of social media usage in Europe and the U.S., while providing the opportunity for an independent exploration of the subject.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of social media as a marketing and communication tool
2. Explain different social media platforms/sites
3. Articulate the impact of social media on society and culture
4. Describe how social media is used in the U.S.
5. Describe how social media is used in several countries in Europe
6. Compare the ways that individuals and businesses use social media in European countries compared to in the U.S.
7. Identify challenges and issues associated with social media usage
8. Consider how to effectively communicate using social media in the U.S. versus Europe

Course Requirements

This course requires independent research, organization, and academic discipline. Students are expected to complete the required and additional readings in pace with their assignments and the course outline. Students will meet with their SIS Supervising Professor(s) regularly throughout the course for consultation and assistance. There will be an oral presentation, a midterm exam, a final exam, and five essay assignments.
Students are also required to participate in a minimum of three Forum-Nexus professional visits and three cultural visits. Students may also pursue individual visits to companies and organizations as part of their independent study.

**Essay #1 (minimum length: 1,500 words)**
- Define social media
- What are some of the main social media platforms, and how are they different from one another?
- How is social media used in the United States by individuals?
- How is social media used in the United States by companies and organizations?
- What is the most surprising statistic you have found about social media usage in the U.S.? Why is it surprising?

**Essay #2 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- How is social media used in France by individuals? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- How is social media used in France by companies and organizations? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- Explain a significant event that occurred within the past 2 years in France and how social media played a role.

**Essay #3 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- How is social media used in Italy by individuals? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- How is social media used in Italy by companies and organizations? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- Explain a significant event that occurred within the past 2 years in Italy and how social media played a role.

**Essay #4 (minimum length: 500 words)**
- How is social media used in Greece by individuals? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- How is social media used in Greece by companies and organizations? How is this different than in the U.S.?
- Explain a significant event that occurred within the past 2 years in Greece and how social media played a role.

**Essay #5 (minimum length: 1,500 words)**
- Describe recent trends in social media usage in the U.S. versus in European countries
- Identify a political, social, and cultural impact of social media usage and explain.
- If you were hired to produce social media content at a company with offices in the U.S. and Europe, how would you effectively write for social media? Choose a European country and explain what would be different about your approaches for creating social content for that country versus the U.S.

**Presentation**
Deliver a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation summarizing the main findings of your independent study. Required components include:
- Summary of your goals and objectives
- Overview of social media usage in the U.S.
- Overview of social media usage in European countries
- Comparison and analysis
- Reflection on what you’ve learned through the SIS course
**Required Reading**

*Online Around the World: A Geographic Encyclopedia of the Internet, Social Media, and Mobile Apps*
by Laura M. Steckman, Marilyn J. Andrews
ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2017

**Recommended Readings**

*Not everyone in advanced economies is using social media.* Jacob Poushter, Pew Research Center, April 20, 2017

*Digital in 2018: Essential Insights into Internet, Social media, Mobile, and Ecommerce Use Around the World.* We Are Social and Hootsuite, January 30, 2018

*Social media – statistics on the use by enterprises.* Eurostat Statistics Explained, December 2017

*Social Media Use in 2018.* Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson, Pew Research Center, March 1, 2018

**Components of Final Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Essay #2</td>
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<td>Essay #3</td>
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<td>Essay #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
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**Grading Scale**

- 93-100 % = A
- 90-92.9 % = A-
- 87-89.9 % = B+
- 83-86.9 % = B
- 80-82.9 % = B-
- 77-79.9 % = C+
- 73-76.9 % = C
- 70-72.9 % = C-
- 67-69.9 % = D+
- 63-66.9 % = D
- 60-62.9 % = D-
- Below 60 % = F
Course Outline

Module 1: Introduction to Social Media
• Introduction
• Overview of Popular International Social Media Sites
• Chronology of Significant Events in Cyber History

Module 2: Social Media Usage in the United States
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 3: Social Media Usage in the United Kingdom
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 4: Social Media Usage in France
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 5: Social Media Usage in Germany
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 6: Social Media Usage in Italy
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 7: Social Media Usage in Spain
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 8: Social Media Usage in Greece
• Popular Platforms
• Usage and Significance

Module 9: The Future of Social Media Usage
• Trends and Insights
• Political, Social, and Cultural Impacts

Schedule of Classes and Visits

The detailed schedule of classes, professional visits, and suggested cultural visits for each session is available online at www.forum-nexus.com/schedules.

Academic Integrity

Ramon Llull University, Franklin University Switzerland, and the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart place a high value on the integrity, good conduct, and academic honesty of all students. Students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity at all times. Any instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a grade of F for the course.
## Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Module</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/15 – 6/30</td>
<td>Pre-Program Preparation: Become familiar with the syllabus, identify additional readings, begin readings and research</td>
<td>1 - 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Essay #1 Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/2 -7/3</td>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)</td>
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<td>Complete Readings and Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/5</td>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>Essay #2 Due</td>
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<td>Chamonix</td>
<td>Meeting with SIS Supervising Professor(s)</td>
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<td>Complete Readings and Research</td>
<td>5 - 6</td>
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<td>Essay #3 Due</td>
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<td>7/12</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Complete Readings and Research</td>
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<td>Complete Readings and Research</td>
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<td>7/27</td>
<td>Rhodes</td>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
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