

Social Media Analytics • JMC 4064

Instructor: Megan A. Duncan, Ph.D.

Time: 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday

Place: 335 Lavery Hall

Contact: meganduncan@vt.edu

Office hours:

2:15-3:15 p.m. Tuesdays in 148 Shanks

9:30-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays online:

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/97386738025>

Welcome!

This is Social Media Analytics. I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to be in person. I'm excited to meet you. I'm also anxious that none of this is going to go to plan. A big part of that is just my personality. Another part of it is very little has gone according to plan the past few semesters. Below, you'll find what I've spent a big chunk of time planning for us to do in the next 16 weeks. But, let's keep in mind that the plan may change because of circumstances beyond the control of me, our guest speakers, or the university. Let's respect each other, do our best, learn, think deeply, talk openly and have fun.

This is also your fair warning there will be puns, cheesiness and a general attitude of excitement that we get to spend three hours each week talking about social media.

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#CourseInfo

Social Media Analytics is designed to provide students with an overview of the current industry practices related to the extraction, analysis, and reporting of social media data. The emphasis is on developing critical thinking skills and practical writing skills associated with the use of social media analytics in a professional setting.

The goals of this course are twofold: (1) students will learn how to use appropriate social media analytics to address a business problem and (2) students will learn how to clearly communicate results, insights, and recommendations related to social media analytics to clients.

This course meets in person, and course materials will be distributed and collected on Canvas. Each day you should check the “Modules” feature on Canvas for an overview of the day’s lesson and assignments. I am available via email if you have any questions during the course.

Course Catalog Description

Introduction to analytic techniques for social media platforms. Quantitative and qualitative analytic techniques. Design, implementation, and analysis of experimental and observational studies of how people use and engage with social media platforms and how platforms themselves can be used to drive engagement with content. History and trending topics in social media use. Ethical issues involving social media and big data. Pre: COMM 2124.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of social media analytics
2. Explain how social media analytics can be used strategically for businesses
3. Identify and communicate key business insights from social media analytics
4. Communicate key business insights and recommendations based on social media analytics
5. Analyze data from social media sources
6. Write clearly and effectively for reports that communicate findings and recommendations from social media analytics

Course Materials

This semester we'll be using two products from Stukent - a third-party educational technology company.

You'll need to register the course "Social Media Analytics - Duncan" on Stukent's website here: <https://home.stukent.com/join/8BE-443> (Links to an external site.)

You can either pay directly on the website or you can purchase the bundle from the bookstore. The bookstore will give you a code you can enter on that same link above.

When you register for the course, you'll get access to: (Links to an external site.)

- "Social Media Marketing: Principles and Strategies" <- our course textbook
- "Mimic Social - **Beta**" <- The social media simulation software we **will use**. One simulation is due each week.
- "Mimic Social" <- An older version of the simulation software we will **not** use.

Stukent tech support

If you run into technology issues on the platform, you'll need to contact Stukent for help. You can click either the "Virtual TA" button, or the "Help" button for support.

If you have difficulty with Stukent or a reoccurring issue, please tell me. I don't have any special access, but I'd like to know about the issue and any way I can advocate for you.

Textbook chapters

You'll read one chapter each week. You'll need to finish reading it before you take your quiz for that week and certainly before you come to class on Tuesdays.

*Note: The first two chapters are due in week 2.

Social Media Analytics Simulation

Each week a simulation is due. The simulation opens the Thursday before it is due. Complete the simulation by 9 p.m. Thursday. Simulations should take you about 30-45 minutes.

When you complete the simulation on time, there is nothing additional you need to do. Your grade will not appear in Canvas automatically. I will occasionally manually enter grades from Stukent into Canvas. (You can always see the grade you earned in Stukent.)

Out of town one week? Forgot to do one simulation? Your score didn't turn out as awesome as you hoped? No worries. I drop the **two lowest simulation grades**.

Course Structure

This course is delivered in-person, live during our scheduled class session in 335 Lavery Hall. Companion information for the live course is available in Canvas. Each week has a specific module. In that module, you'll find:

- **Weekly quiz.** Quizzes open Sunday and are due before class starts Tuesday. They cover the in-class material from the previous week and the readings (including the book chapter) that is assigned for that Tuesday.
- **Stukent simulation spot.** This spot merely serves a reminder for you to complete the weekly simulation before the due date.

- You'll need to log into Stukent each week and complete the week's simulation by 9 p.m. Thursday. The module opens the Thursday before it is due. You have a week to complete the module, and you should expect it to take about 30 to 45 minutes.
- I manually have to download the grades from Stukent and upload them to Canvas. Your grade will not automatically appear in Canvas. You do not have to do anything in Canvas to get your Stukent simulation grade. Simply complete the simulation on time. You can always see your grade in Stukent.
- Your two lowest Stukent simulation scores drop from your final grade calculation. If you miss one, forget one, or just have too much going on one week, these two dropped grades give you that grace.
- There are 12 simulations, and we will complete all of them over the course of the semester.
- **Individual social media analytics project.** You'll find each part of the assignment in two different modules: the week the assignment is introduced in class and the week it is due. See the assignment sheet for more information on the individual social media project.
- **Group social media takeover.** If there is a portion of the assignment due that week, it's included in the module.
- **Class meeting pages.** For each of our class meetings, you'll find a page that outlines what we'll be talking about, provides links to things we'll use in class, and a reminder list of assignments due. These pages will help give you context to the class.

Each module is designed to run Monday to Friday.

For the most part, I try to keep in-class time focused on applications, discussions and assignments. I will generally start with a 20- to 30-minute lecture, then we will launch into activities. This means you can't skip readings and module activities expecting me to summarize it for you.

Class Participation

I have absolutely no idea how our first semester back in person will work out. I hope it goes swimmingly. My expectation is for you to attend each class. I hope that's possible. I'm planning for a lot of class discussion and activity.

But, I won't be grading on in-class participation because my crystal ball isn't working. Instead, I'll assess your class participation through weekly quizzes due before class starts each Tuesday. These quizzes check that you were paying attention during class (or got notes from someone if you missed class), and that you have done the work to prepare for the coming week.

Technology Requirements

This is a social media class, and I intend to make it interactive.

Students must be comfortable with:

- Uploading and downloading files from Canvas
- Using Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Using Tableau and other types of analytics/data visualization programs
- Using Adobe CC and/or design programs such as Canva
- Using email for communication
- Sending an email attachment
- Navigating the internet
- Using online search engines

Student technical support for this course is available through the Virginia Tech Customer Support Center **4Help**. Help is available 24/7 to reset passwords, monitor system outages, and answer questions on a variety of computer issues.

For Canvas help or just to ask a quick question: Click **Help** at the upper right corner of any screen within the Canvas.vt.edu domain and select one of the help options from the pop-up window. Canvas helpdesk consultants are available 24/7 via chat, phone, or through online ticket.

Students should bring their laptops with the required department software (Microsoft Office and Adobe Creative Cloud) to class each meeting. Students should use their laptops to stay engaged with course material and avoid getting distracted by non-classwork.

For several activities, we may examine our own social media activities or networks. If you don't feel comfortable disclosing this information to me or if it's of a not-classroom-appropriate nature, you may keep it private. The only personal social media account you'll be required to maintain for this course is a LinkedIn account.

Additionally, we will as a class takeover a Virginia Tech official social media account. You will be required to personally read, sign, and comply with the social media guidelines on the takeover agreement.

Social media can be a tricky thing. We'll talk in class about some guidelines, complicated case-studies, and ethical principles of being a person online.

#Academicsuccess

Assignments

Category	Assignment	% of final grade
Weekly quizzes	12 opportunities. Top 10 count toward final grade.	30
Stukent simulation	12 opportunities. Top 10 count toward final grade.	30
Individual social media analytics project	8 parts. Lowest grade of parts 1-6 drops from final grade. Product pitch Competition	30

Plan and strategy
 Budget and calendar
 Growing
 Crisis
 Client pitch (does not drop)
 Peer reviews (does not drop)

Group social media takeover	5 parts	10
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Takeover group idea
 Takeover group calendar & plan
 Takeover individual contribution
 Takeover group contribution
 Takeover post-analysis

Grade calculation

	A 92.5-100	A- 90.0-92.49
B+ 87.0-89.99	B 83.0-86.99	B- 80.0-82.99
C+ 77.0-79.99	C 73.0-76.99	C- 70.0-82.99
D+ 67.0-69.99	D 63.0-63.99	D- 60.0-62.99
F lower than 60.0		

Course schedule

Fall 2021						
Week	Quiz	Tuesday	Thursday	Student simulation	Individual analytics project	Group takeover
1		<u>1.1 Intro to social media</u>	<u>1.2 Careers</u>			
2	<u>Quiz 0</u>	<u>2.1 Influencer culture</u>	<u>2.2 Social Network Visualization</u>			
3	<u>Quiz 1</u>	<u>3.1 Assessing needs</u>	<u>3.2 Social media in higher education</u>	1	<u>Product Pitch</u>	
4	<u>Quiz 2</u>	<u>4.1 What are numbers?</u>	<u>4.2 Building a dashboard</u>	2		
5	<u>Quiz 3</u>	<u>5.1 Analytics and platforms</u>	<u>5.2 Social media and athletes</u>	3	<u>Competition</u>	
6	<u>Quiz 4</u>	<u>6.1 Turning analytics into a plan</u>	<u>6.2 Calendaring</u>	4		
7	<u>Quiz 5</u>	<u>7.1 Targeting audiences</u>	<u>7.2 Takeover planning</u>	5	<u>Plan and strategy</u>	
8	<u>Quiz 6</u>	<u>8.1 Budgeting</u>	<u>8.2 Takeover planning - Redux</u>	6		<u>Takeover group idea</u>
9	<u>Quiz 7</u>	<u>9.1 Going viral</u>	<u>9.2 Takeover guest speaker</u>	7	<u>Budget and calendar</u>	<u>Takeover calendar and plan</u>
10	<u>Quiz 8</u>	<u>10.1 Implementing research</u>	<u>10.2 Contests and engagement</u>	8		
11	<u>Quiz 9</u>	<u>11.1 Product launch</u>	<u>11.2 Algorithms and bias</u>	9	<u>Growing</u>	
12	<u>Quiz 10</u>	<u>12.1 Online harassment</u>	<u>12.2 Social media law</u>	10		<u>Takeover group contribution</u> <u>Takeover individual contribution</u>
13	<u>Quiz 11</u>	<u>13.1 Social media advocacy</u>	<u>13.2 Conspiracies, propaganda, scams and awful things</u>	11	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Takeover post analysis (individual)</u>
14	<u>Quiz 12</u>	<u>14.1 Privacy</u>	<u>14.2 Hackers</u>	12		
15		<u>15.1 Final class meeting</u>			<u>Client pitch</u>	

#Yourresponsibilities

Academic integrity

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

Honor Code Pledge for Assignments: The Virginia Tech honor code pledge for assignments is as follows:

“I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

The pledge is to be written out on all graded assignments at the university and signed by the student. The honor pledge represents both an expression of the student’s support of the honor code and a commitment to uphold the academic standards at Virginia Tech.

1. All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.
2. The Academic Integrity expectations for Hokies are the same in an online class as they are in an in-person class. Hokies are expected to meet the academic integrity standards at Virginia Tech at all times.
3. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification is provided for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual located at <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>
 - **CHEATING:** Cheating includes the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.
 - **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work, or attempts thereof.

- **FALSIFICATION:** Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any element of one's academic work, or attempts thereof.
- **FABRICATION:** Fabrication includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.
- **MULTIPLE SUBMISSION:** Multiple submission involves the submission for credit – without authorization from the instructor receiving the work – of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution of attempts thereof.
- **COMPLICITY:** Complicity includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.
- **VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL, PROGRAM, COURSE, OR FACULTY RULES:** The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, Course, or Faculty Rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).
- *“If you have questions or are unclear about what constitutes academic misconduct on an assignment, please speak with me. I take the honor code very seriously in the course. The normal sanction I will recommend for a violation of the Honor Code is an F* sanction as your final course grade. The F represents failure in the course. The “*” is intended to identify a student who has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Virginia Tech. A student who receives a sanction of F* as their final course grade shall have it documented on their transcript with the notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION.” You would be required to complete an education program administered by the Honor System in order to have the “*” and notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION” removed from your transcript. The “F” however would be permanently on your transcript.”*

Masking policy and the pandemic

As I'm preparing this syllabus, the current Virginia Tech policy requires masks to be worn in the classroom at all times by all humans. I will wear a mask. You will wear a mask. Any guests will wear a mask. Masks will cover our mouths and noses. We will respect each other by keeping our masks on for the duration of class and leaving the classroom if we need to remove the mask.

- If you are not wearing a mask when you arrive to class, I will:
- Ask you to don a mask or go get a mask privately.
- Prohibit you from working with group members.
- Ask you to leave the classroom for the day if you refuse to wear a mask.
- I may end the class if the problem persists.

The masking policy may change during the course of the semester. Follow ready.vt.edu for updates. I will update my classroom policy as university requirements change.

#Support

Accommodations:

Accommodation recommendations from the Dean's office for ANY documented learning need (the Dean's office supplies such paperwork) will be honored. Please notify me in person by the second week of class to discuss how I can ensure that you have a comfortable and reasonable learning environment.

Any student who has been confirmed by the University as having accommodations for learning must notify me in person by the second week of class so that we can work together to ensure your learning needs are met. For more information about accommodations, please go to the **Services for Students with Disabilities** office website: <http://www.ssd.vt.edu/>

Academic Support Services:

Any student needing academic support should investigate the University's services at <http://www.studentsuccess.vt.edu/index.html>

For complete information on student services at Virginia Tech, please see: <http://www.dsa.vt.edu>.

Inclusion and support

I will honor your request to address you by your chosen name and pronouns. Please advise me of this early in the semester.

I respect and honor your cultural and religious holidays. If you have a religious or cultural observance that will coincide with this class, please let me know in an email or office hour meeting by the start of the third week of classes.

We're having a semester during a pandemic. Things are not normal, and I recognize that.

I want you to feel able to share your life experiences in classroom discussions and written work. I want you to trust that I will keep any information you share private. Please be aware that I do have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. This means I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus with the university Title IX Coordinator.

Wellness

Supporting the mental health and well-being of students in my class is of high priority to me and Virginia Tech. If you are feeling overwhelmed academically, having trouble functioning, or are worried about a friend, please reach out to any of the following offices:

- Cook Counseling:

- o 540-231-6557 to schedule an appointment and/or 24/7 crisis support

- o ucc.vt.edu for more information
- Dean of Students Office:
 - o 540 231-3787 for general advice
 - o 540-231-6411 for after-hours crisis
 - o dos.vt.edu for more information
- Hokie Wellness:
 - o hokiewellness.vt.edu for more information about health and wellness workshops and consultations
- Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)
 - o 540-231-3788 or ssd.vt.edu for more information about accommodations and other disability-related supports

For a full listing of campus resources check out well-being.vt.edu .