

HDCC106-0101 Seminar in Design Cultures & Creativity: Social Media Analytics
Terp Young Scholars, Summer 2022

Monday — Friday
10:00am – 1:00pm ET, <i>online</i>
Zoom Meeting Room
TBD
Passcode
TBD

Dr. Jessica H. Lu
<i>she/her/hers</i>
Student Hours
Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00pm ET

Course Description

HDCC106 Social Media Analytics is a course for students who are simultaneously interested in social media, data, and robust analysis of digital media. While interacting online, we navigate a near-endless sea of data in a variety of forms—textual, audiovisual, demographic, biometric, and more. This data is a window into human life, but making sense of it is a task that requires both competence and creativity. In this course, we will imagine and explore different computational tools and methods for capturing, aggregating, organizing, and analyzing social media data to better understand phenomena such as consumer habits, interpersonal conflict, social movement(s), community formation and disruption, language evolution and adaptation, political argument, and societal change.

We will begin with critical concepts, frameworks, and theories that help us better grasp the roles social media play in our lives, focusing especially on its impacts on marginalized and vulnerable groups. These vocabularies will equip us to think creatively, ethically, and responsibly as we investigate computational tools and methods for handling social media material, including qualitative data analysis software, extensible markup language, and databasing. Students will pursue research questions of their design, driven by their own interests, to practice social media analytics and position themselves as digital makers, too, with the potential to make creative, significant interventions in the communities they care about. We will explore how personal, historical, and sociopolitical culture is inextricably entwined with what we do and see online.

Designed broadly for all majors and interests, this course aims to equip students with an analytical skillset that can be translated across multiple fields, including information science, computer science and engineering, marketing, political science, public policy, cultural studies, communication, and entrepreneurship.

Learning Objectives

It is my aim to support you with the resources, tools, and vocabularies to:

- Think critically about the processes of creating, circulating, capturing, and organizing digital material
- Synthesize interdisciplinary theories, concepts, and frameworks relevant to digitality and digital engagement
- Examine and analyze the historical, cultural, and political implications of social media technologies in the U.S.
- Establish proficiency with tools and methods for data analysis, including NVivo, scholarly text encoding, and AirTable
- Foster collaborative learning and community-building

- Develop autonomy in self-directed learning and task management

Statement of Instructor Values

As a human being, it is my joy to meet you where you are and to see, acknowledge, and celebrate your whole self. As an instructor, it is my responsibility to build and facilitate a learning environment that helps you discover a sustained investment in learning, curiosity, and intellectual growth—in whatever area or areas ignite your passion or make you feel most alive. It is my aim not to prepare you for the world as it currently exists, but to equip you—in some way, large or small—to change it for the better. To these ends, I will always prioritize your interests over mine; your health and wellbeing over your productivity; your joy and energy over your grade; and your goals and challenges over my expectations. I commit to being flexible, trusting you, and supporting you toward the future you envision for yourself. I hope we can do this together.

As the principal author of both the DCC [Statement of Values](#) and the DCC [Teaching Philosophy](#), I additionally affirm my support of both documents and the principles expressed therein.

Community Practices and Policies

Absences— No matter how well-intentioned, attendance policies punish students that encounter unforeseen challenges, manage personal clocks and working rhythms that deviate from the established norm, and navigate life and learning obstacles that are not immediately visible to those around them. It is therefore important to me to actively encourage your consistent participation in this course without *requiring* it as a condition of your success. I would like for you to attend as many synchronous class sessions as you can reasonably manage, without sacrificing your physical and mental wellbeing, and simply *come as you are*. You do not have to be perfect, always-prepared, or enthusiastic. I will assume responsibility as your instructor for providing content that is educational, useful, engaging, and worthy of your time and energy. In the event that you miss a synchronous class session, you do not need to notify me in advance *nor* do you need to provide an explanation afterward. You never need to disclose private or sensitive information, of any nature, to me. You will not be punished; your grade will not be immediately affected. I trust you that you will make the decisions that work best for your life and that *you* are most in tune with: what you want from the course, how attendance will affect your learning and performance, and the healthy work/life balance for your own unique circumstances. That being said, figuring out these dynamics can be difficult, and sometimes you may need to revisit your approach and make adjustments mid-semester. I am always here to help you explore what works best for you and discuss any obstacles that are impeding your participation, if you wish to entrust me with that information.

Access and Accommodation— Instructional environments should respect all students' learning behaviors, needs, and strategies, *whether you have a "documented" disability or not*. If you have paperwork that documents your needs and accommodations, it will certainly be honored. However, financial barriers, cultural expectations, family dynamics, and social pressures can all stand in the way of getting support, so I do not require "official" documentation from any student who asks for accommodations. Most students also have needs that do not fall under the umbrella of what schools and universities consider "disabilities." Night owls and early birds, English learners, introverts, chronically anxious humans, assault and trauma survivors, friends-and-family caregivers, needy-pet parents, habitual snackers, rush-hour-traffic commuters, grieving students, sucky-WiFi-connection sufferers, working-two-part-time-jobs-and-just-trying-to-get-through-it warriors—I *see you*. If you are comfortable speaking with me about your needs, please know that I genuinely welcome your input and requests regarding our shared learning environment as well as your individual working patterns. You can come to me at any time, and I will do everything in my power to earn and uphold the trust you place in me in doing so.

Communication— Especially in the context of online learning, communication will remain vitally important. I will rely on emails and the Canvas messaging platform to send community announcements, including calendar and assignment changes, so please make a regular habit of checking your email. You can reach me most reliably via jlu04@umd.edu, and I commit to responding to your message *within 48 hours*. (Please note that I typically do not respond to emails between the hours of 7pm and 8am Eastern and am less quick to respond during weekends, holidays, and university breaks/closures.)

Engagement— I encourage and aim to foster your curiosity, critical thinking, and thoughtful engagement with your peers, your worlds, and your communities. Accordingly, this course will invite you to consider new questions, possibilities, and experiences in ways that may reveal discomforts, irritations, or conflict. I hope that we can approach these together as opportunities to better understand our own biases, positions, and contributions in a much broader, diverse, and ever-changing world. I ask that we presume each other to be genuine and well-intentioned as we learn together, and practice zero-tolerance for the weaponization of debate to compel others to explain, justify, or relive their trauma—whether historical, cultural, systemic, and/or personal.

Virtual Engagement Policies— Working and learning together in a virtual environment presents different challenges for engagement. For some, remote instruction provides comfort and greater access; for others, it stifles participation, saps energy, and promotes distraction. I encourage you to come to me if you find that virtual engagement is a serious hindrance to your learning, so that we may work together to discover potential solutions or support mechanisms. For all students, there is no requirement whatsoever to: (1) un-mute your microphone during synchronous class sessions or one-on-one meetings; (2) activate your camera during synchronous class sessions or one-on-one meetings; or (3) use the web- or desktop-based Zoom platform instead of a mobile phone connection for synchronous class sessions or one-on-one meetings. Please choose the technologies that work best for you.

Mentorship and Support— You deserve continual access to mentorship and support, not just instruction, throughout this course. For the next few weeks, I hope we will get to know each other well enough for me to be able to speak to your strengths, your passions, your values, and your potential for growth, especially as you may apply for scholarships, professional positions, graduate school, and other opportunities in the coming years. I also hope to simply know you better as a human being and to support you toward the future you want and the type of life you envision for yourself. The time I spend with you is the best part of my job as an educator, so please do not ever hesitate to reach out.

Revision— Learning is an ongoing process, yet educators typically assess it as a product, e.g. exams and assignments. To provide some sort of mitigation to this flawed system, I am committed to an open revision policy. If you are dissatisfied with your work on any graded offering, you are welcome to revise and re-submit it as long as you do so *within 10 calendar days of receiving your grade* and *at least 3 days prior to the official end of the semester*.

Assessment

I have purposefully designed this course's assessment measures to foster your academic and intellectual growth; support self-directed learning; and protect your time, energy, and wellbeing. The majority of your grade in this course is dependent on work that you will complete asynchronously, at your own pace. While the instruction, group discussion, and social support facilitated during synchronous class sessions will certainly help you complete your asynchronous work, you will still be able to complete and submit

your offerings if you are unable to attend class. These decisions have been made with the principles of flexibility, trust, and compassion at the forefront of my mind.

Social Media Keywords <i>Due on July 15, by 1:00pm ET</i>	30 total points possible	30% of overall grade
<p>After we conclude our first-week discussions and examinations of critical frameworks, theories, and concepts for understanding social media and digital culture, particularly in the U.S. context, I invite you to identify three keywords that must guide and/or structure social media analytics. This assignment asks you to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ideas—intellectual, ethical, cultural, political, social, and/or economic—impact or shape how social media data is collected, analyzed, and understood? • How can those ideas be captured by recognizable, rich <i>keywords</i>? • What thinkers, scholars, and digital makers help you better understand these vocabularies and keywords for thinking about social media and social media data? <p>Package your thoughts in any format you choose—a written essay, a blog post, a vlog or audio recording, a an artistic or visual creation, etc. You will also be asked to offer your Social Media Keywords for discussion and response among your peers during class.</p>		
Social Media Artifact Analysis <i>Due on July 22, by 11:59pm ET</i>	30 total points possible	35% of overall grade
<p>After we conclude our second-week discussions and practice methods of social media analytics for small datasets, I invite you to produce a rich analysis of one social media artifact, or a small social media dataset, of your own choosing. You can use any method we’ve covered for small-dataset analytics, including but not limited to: text encoding, close reading, databasing, or computational data visualization.</p>		
NVivo Data Analysis <i>Due on July 28, by 11:59pm ET</i>	30 total points possible	35% of overall grade
<p>After we conclude our third-week discussions and practice methods of social media analytics for large datasets, I invite you to produce a rich analysis of a large social media dataset of your own choosing. You will use methods of “batch” data capture as well as NVivo qualitative analysis software to draw conclusions about a large dataset, as well as present and situate your analysis within relevant social, political, cultural, and/or historical contexts using any creative means you choose—such as a public website, social media feed/account, StoryMap, print or digital essay, zine, or short film/video. To celebrate the end of our Terp Young Scholars experience, you will have the opportunity to offer your NVivo Data Analysis for discussion and response among your peers during our final class.</p>		

Calendar

WEEK	DAY	MATERIALS	ASSIGNMENTS
1	Course + Community Introduction		
	7/11	Excerpt from <i>Emergent Strategy</i> , adrienne maree brown	
	Social Media and Digital Literacies		
	7/12	Excerpt from <i>Twitter: A Biography</i> , Jean Burgess and Nancy Baym	
	7/13	Excerpt from <i>The Social Dilemma</i> (Netflix)	
	7/14	Excerpt from <i>Digital Labor: The Internet as Playground and Factory</i> , ed. Trebor Scholz	
7/15	Excerpt from <i>Black Futures</i> , ed. Kimberly Drew and Jenna Wortham	Social Media Keywords	
2	Social Media Analytics: Small Datasets		
	7/18	Excerpt from <i>Black Digital Feminism</i> , Catherine Knight Steele	
	7/19		
	7/20	Lu & Steele, "Joy is Resistance" (2019); Excerpt from <i>Beyond Hashtags: Racial Politics and Black Digital Networks</i> , Sarah Florini	
	7/21		
	7/22		Social Media Artifact Analysis
3	Social Media Analytics: Large Datasets		
	7/25	Excerpt from <i>Algorithms of Oppression</i> , Safiya Umoja Noble	
	7/26		
	7/27	Excerpt from <i>#HashtagActivism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice</i> , eds. Sarah J. Jackson, Moya Bailey and Brooke Foucault Welles	
	7/28		NVivo Data Analysis
	Conclusions		
	7/29		