(this syllabus was approved by COCI)

J111: Journalism and Social Media

Instructor: TBD
GSI: TBD
Location: TBD

3 units

COURSE OBJECTIVE

This course will help students better understand and use social media for journalistic purposes by focusing on how social networks, conversational media, and associated digital media tools and platforms can be used to develop new sources, establish beneficial conversations with end users, identify story ideas and trends, aggregate and curate the work of other journalists, and promote their own work.

Students will maintain lively social media accounts and learn how to use Facebook Connect and other social media tools, and be trained in social media search analytic tools to enable them to better understand and measure how news - and related journalistic values - have become part of the fabric of social media. Class sessions will be augmented by lectures from guest speakers and a field trip to at least one social media company based in the SF Bay Area.

Social media has entered a new age of relevance, making it of critical interest to journalists and communicators of all kinds. Ask any young person today to name his or her favorite sources of news and you may

be in for a surprise. Instead of citing familiar, traditional journalistic organizations such as the New York Times, the San Francisco Chronicle, or CNN, most now say their primary source for news is not a journalistic organization at all, but rather social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

In March it was reported that Facebook and the New York Times were in discussions about the Times providing FB-only content. This change in consumption patterns signifies an important shift in the news business, carrying implications not only for the way news is produced and distributed but also for the way journalism is taught. This course is designed to help students understand the impact the social media revolution is having on journalism; analyze the ways in which it is altering news consumption patterns; and learn methods to provide high quality journalism in this new environment.

The course will use lectures, class discussions, guest speakers and case analysis of various social media sites to explore these issues. Prerequisites for this course are: *Introduction to Multimedia* and *Principles of Journalistic Reporting & Writing.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
The objective of this course is to help students -- regardless of their area of specialization – know to use social media for curation, conversation, and audience-building. Recognizing that news consumers are decreasingly drawn to newspaper home pages and instead are flocking to social media for their news, by the conclusion of the course students will have developed knowledge of and familiarity with the key players in the fast-changing landscape of social media, and understand what kinds of form and content are most effective. Students and will know how to best use social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and others to transmit stories online and move viewers to action. Students will be alert and adaptable to new

forms of social media as they emerge. They will also develop skills in the interactive nature of news in socially-based media, where readers continually interact with authors and where reader reactions serve as an iterative element in the evolution of content.

Using case studies, instructors will teach students how to – and how not to -- create, organize and manage sophisticated content for social media that will help a student's work stand out in a competitive and densely cluttered news environment. And crucially, students will learn how to apply core journalistic values and the highest professional standards to this work. Student learning will be put to work in a final graded project that students will produce for social media.

READINGS:

Lee, E. "*That's Not the Way It Is: How User-Generated Comments on the News Affect Perceived Media Bias* - See more at: http://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/internet/user-generated-comments-news-media-bias#sthash.2ptUgK8d.dpuf
Stroud, N.J, Muddiman, A., & Sacco, J.M.; *Engaging audiences via online news sites.* In H. Gil de Zuniga (Ed*.), New Agendas in Communication; New Technologies and Civic Engagement.* New York, NY: Routledge
http://www.one-tab.com/page/u255t9O9RdOlEjPHAyl0lg

GRADING POLICY AND BREAKDOWN

All weekly readings should be completed before the class for which they are assigned, and all assignments are due 24 hours following the class they were assigned for. Late assignments will be docked one full letter grade per 24 hours up to three days late (A to D).

Assignments will not be accepted more than 72 hours late unless there is a legitimate excuse as noted under the absence policy. If you know

you will be late in turning an assignment in or absent on the day the assignment will take place, you are expected to turn that assignment in prior to your absence to receive full credit. Lack of access to or technical difficulties with computers (including failure to publish or include email attachments) are unacceptable excuses for late or missed assignments.

Final Project   **30%**
Homework Assignments (includes two papers)   **40%**
In-Class Participation (including attendance)   **30%**
*You will be docked a full grade for missing homework and final project deadlines.

MATERIALS, TEXT AND READINGS:

Readings will be assigned each week for individual class sessions. All readings will be available online via the course website. Readings and Videos are subject to change as Instructor will continually update them with the freshest and most relevant examples. Students will be expected to familiarize themselves with Reddit, Facebook, Twitter and others and be able to critically analyze their differences and unique attributes.

Week 1: *Introduction and overview of course and expectations.* The elements of social media; establishing your own social media footprint. Who are the big social media players, how has social media evolved, in what ways is its relationship to news changing and why? What these factors mean for you.

• **Week 2:** *Case Studies.* Examining best practices for audience-building among bloggers and online news sites. Methods of engaging audiences; how major news organizations like Al Jazeera, the NY Times and new ones like Reported.ly and Ozy respond to this new market. First paper due analyzing best practices.

- **Week 3:** *Metrics.* How to use and understand metrics as an audience-building tool. What does the data mean? Using Google Analytics and Facebook data. Second paper due analyzing strengths and limitations of metrics.

- **Week 4: *Iterative Journalism.*** When the audience joins the dialogue, how does a content producer nurture that to deepen and sustain reader engagement? Tips on methods, do's and don'ts. Exercises: cover a protest using social media, use tools like Storify to curate a planned live event. Tweet a sports game or other live event, covering it play-by-play.

- **Week 5: *Build your strategies*:** Exchange tactics and strategies to obtain 50 new Twitter followers by a deadline. Story project selection. Divide class into teams to develop to begun begin work on producing project for publication on Social Media.

- **Week 6: Deliver Final Project** and share with class.

Classroom Decorum Policy

Students must turn off the ringers on their cell phones before class begins.

Equipment:

Students are required to bring a laptop and smartphone to class as we will be analyzing and critiquing content for both formats. Editing of content we produce will be done on student laptops.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Students will abide by the Student Code of Conduct http://students.berkeley.edu/uga/conduct.asp. There is a zero-tolerance policy for work that is submitted without proper attribution

and that constitutes plagiarism. If students are unsure about the expectations regarding the Student Code of Conduct, please seek advice from the instructors.