



EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

Communication Studies Program

Department of History and Liberal Studies

COMS 4353-01W
Social Media
Spring 2026

Instructor: Lydia Lum

Office: Ferguson 132B

Office Hours: 3 – 4 pm, Tuesdays, Thursdays, 3 – 5 pm, Wednesdays, and by appointment. I will announce a drop-in Zoom hour, based on student input, in addition to my in-person office hours.

University Email: Put “Social Media” as “subject” of your email – or it will take me longer to answer. Your CWID number not needed. My email is Lydia.Lum@etamu.edu

Class Meeting Time: Online Asynchronous

"Having knowledge but lacking the power to clearly express it is no better than never having any ideas at all." -- Pericles

Communication Studies B.A./B.S.

The Communication Studies program is designed as an area of study to apply scholarly communication research for a variety of careers and personal goals in an interconnected world.

Two program goals are:

- Each graduate will be communicatively informed in every communication situation they find themselves in, such as understanding others verbally and nonverbally in professional and personal situations.
- Each graduate will effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally in each communication situation they find themselves in, such as professional and personal contexts. Furthermore, an essential part of effective communication is the ability to communicate strategically verbally and nonverbally to accomplish one's goals.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook and Resources

1. *Social Media for Strategic Communication*. Freberg, Karen. Second edition. 2022 (Sage) Print or online version. ISBN--9781071826904

Assigned reading should be completed *before* participating in Discussion Boards and starting other homework. This also applies to readings assigned from other materials and resources.

2. Social media trends and posts: Instagram, TikTok, Reddit, X (formerly Twitter), and more

Required Technology: myLeo D2L Brightspace, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and PDF. Each East Texas A&M University course section has a corresponding course shell in the myLeo online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements.

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

- Use your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course.
- If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu

University Course Catalogue Description

This course will examine concepts of communication, social interaction, and community in a digital world. The course will include such interactive media applications as blog, wiki, avatar, comment, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, podcast, and similar internet sites and techniques of digital media communication. Students will engage in practical social media strategies to engage with the local audience and use software such as Hootsuite for social media marketing and engagement. This course has no prerequisite.

Instructor's note

You are ***not required*** to post nor publish any content online in order to earn points and grades in this course. Instead, your homework will include make-believe posts and content for real-world organizations. ***Pretend*** you will post and that it matters. You are not required to open a social media account for this course, but you may find it helpful for examining content assets.

Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Understand challenges, practices, and opportunities of strategic social media communication.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of how to develop and evaluate social media plans, guides, campaigns, and schedules for an organization.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of social media management tools used in public relations practice.
4. Evaluate audio content for social media marketing and create audio content that is compatible for a PR plan or strategic campaign.
5. Explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can help us brainstorm ideas and streamline processes – without letting it do *all* the research and other work for us.

Student Responsibilities and Tips to Succeed in the Course

- Check ETAMU email account at least three times a week.
- Check your grades in myLeo DL2 Brightspace.
- Submit assignments through myLeo DL2 Brightspace in Content, Assignments, correct envelopes
- If you're having difficulties, **contact me**. I enjoy helping students but need *you* to keep me informed.

GRADING AND ASSESSMENTS

Submit assignments electronically through D2L Brightspace no later than **11:59 pm CT**, on the due date unless otherwise specified.

- Label written homework assignments with your name, course name, and assignment number. Example: Lydia Lum, COMS 4353, Case Study #1.
- All written assignments must be double-spaced. Triple-space if you're unsure.

- Submit your homework papers in the correct envelope by accessing Course Shell, Content, Assignments, Correct Envelope.
- If you need a homework extension for a quiz or other homework assignment, ask for it. I issue extensions without penalties whenever possible but reserve the right to ask you for either a doctor's note, screenshot of a thermometer showing fever, or a funeral announcement.
- Missing work should be completed and submitted within 2 weeks of the original due date, except for work due in May and your points-earning work due after April 8. Manage your time. **Please talk to me** if problems arise.
- **Discussion posts and responses** to classmates cannot receive extensions. If this class met in person, discussions would not occur after class adjourns, so manage your time. Any exceptions to the "no homework extension" rule will be announced in D2L.
- If you participate in university-sponsored activities such as intercollegiate sports, please contact me with appropriate documentation *before* your absence. You're responsible for all missed work.
- Because some students may have 2 or even 3 classes with me in Spring '26, **I may stagger homework due dates** in D2L so that affected students do not have multiple high-stakes assignments due the same night.
- This does not apply, however, to reading assigned textbook pages or materials in D2L. Instead, assigned reading should occur *before* participating in Discussion Boards, taking open-book quizzes, or starting assignments. I'll specify exceptions in D2L to the previous sentence.
- During this semester, I may notify the class that if anyone hasn't submitted *any* homework (or a specific category of homework such as, but not limited to exams and quizzes), by a certain date, then I may deduct at least 10% of the points before grading it.

Grading: The Department of History and Liberal Studies supports university policies of academic excellence as noted in the student handbook.

- Interpretation of grades should be considered within the university framework:
A=excellent; B=good; C=average; D=below average; and F=failing.
- Final semester grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

Course Assignments/Assessments

A = 100%-90%

B = 89%-80%

C = 79%-70%

D = 69%-60%

F = 59% or Below

Note: My grading system has a 5% Quality Effort category. I award your score at semester's end. The more homework you submit, the more points you earn – usually. See below.

Assessments

- Assignments 45%
- Mini-campaign 20%
- Discussions 15%

- Quizzes 15% -- category may include short, one-time tasks like the “Help Professor Lum help me” questionnaire that can help boost your total Quizzes grade.
- Quality Effort 5% -- score is awarded at semester’s end, so it isn’t visible sooner.

Assignments (45%) SLOs 1-5

These may include, but aren’t limited to creating text-based or audio assets, learning social media tactics and strategy through mock exercises, and work that supports and/or augments your mini-campaign. I may provide finished content assets to work with and/or the raw materials for your assignments. Other potential assignments include:

- Case studies or short papers focused on specific social media channel(s).
- Reflections in which you write or audio-record your thoughts about this course and any “wish list.” Meaning, you can potentially influence course content.
- Expect minimum 5 assignments beginning in January in this course. More assignments mean more available points, and the less impact each score has on your total grade.

Mini-Campaign (20%) SLOs 1-5

The centerpiece of this course is your building a social media mini-campaign targeting a specific, segmented audience. It’s worth a total of 75 points or more, and may be the highest points-value homework for the course. Use a single, combined Word Document to list and explain the following:

- This campaign or plan should benefit a real organization or living person of your choice. I must approve your idea, however, to make sure it’s feasible for this course and can realistically be completed in a few weeks.
- You will create an assigned number of make-believe content assets and explain the strategic reasons for your choice of social media channel to post these assets.
- You will explain why one or more components of the P.E.S.O. media model described in our textbook is suitable for your campaign.
- Propose idea(s) for a micro-influencer to boost your campaign.
- Plan to use AI tools to potentially trim work time.
- These and other instructions will be in D2L.
- Label your Word Doc with your name, course name, and homework title. Example: Lydia Lum, COMS 4353, Mini-Campaign.
- Depending on class progress, some aspects of this mini-campaign may shift to the Assignments category (45%) or Discussion Boards (15%). Expect to start the foundation of your mini-campaign in January.

Discussion Boards (15%) SLOs 1-3

All discussions end at 11:59 pm CT, on the Due Date unless specified otherwise. COMS 4353 has a mix of discussion topics.

- Each discussion is available to earn points for minimum 7 days. Pay close attention to your D2L calendar and “to do” homework list.
- Two discussion boards’ availability may overlap to maximize points-earning opportunities and/or to enhance learning. For example, the “Introductions” discussion runs concurrently

with “Discussion 1.” In such instances, however, the Due Dates will differ, and the boards are separate.

- Some discussions require you to post before letting you view those of classmates.
- Some topics are best explored by requiring responses to 2 or more classmates after you upload a post. Try to respond to classmates whose posts have not yet received any.
- At times, responding to classmates won’t be required but merely encouraged, along with reviewing classmate posts to stimulate brainstorming and help devise ideas.
- The total points value for each discussion is listed, along with rubrics, in D2L.
- Expect minimum 5 discussions in this course.
- Because the work on, and my support for and feedback to your mini-campaigns may prove time-consuming, there may be weeks without new discussion boards.

Quizzes/Exams (15%) SLOs 1 - 4

Quizzes/Exams are untimed, open-book.

- You may leverage AI tools, but sometimes they lengthen rather than shorten processes.
- Expect minimum 3 quizzes starting in February. Questions may be multiple-choice and/or short answer.
- Quizzes/exams will cover textbook readings and other course material.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

For questions about, or difficulties with course material, email me by putting into “subject” line, “Social Media class” – or it will take me longer to answer. Some of you are taking more than 1 of my 5 classes in Spring 2025. Your CWID number is not necessary. My email address is

Lydia.Lum@etamu.edu

- I check email at least once daily and will reply to yours within 24 hours, weekdays.
- I check email at least once on weekends and if I don’t reply then, I will do so on the next weekday, unless it’s a university holiday.
- Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner.
- Plan B can be an ETAMU campus computer lab, a backup PC at home, work, or a friend’s home, your local library, local cafes, and FedEx and similar office service businesses.

Technical Support

- If you’re having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, contact Brightspace Technical Support at 877-325-7778.
- Other support options can be found here:
<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Student Support

- The [Academic Success Center](#) focuses on providing resources to help you achieve academic success.
- Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software used by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software. Copying and pasting,

along with attaching/uploading Word documents for assignment submission, are required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the ETAMU bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.

- If it's appropriate to say to, or in front Grandma, then it's okay to say it to your classmates and/or to me.
- Consult the Rules of Netiquette for details about how to interact with peers in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

The Code of Student Conduct is detailed in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Academic Integrity

- East Texas A&M University students are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work.
- Do not submit homework for COMS 4353 that you have submitted for another course unless you receive instructor's written permission to do so.
- For details and the definition of academic dishonesty, see the following procedures:

Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

East Texas A&M University acknowledges there are legitimate uses of **Artificial Intelligence**, ChatBots, or other software that can generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the course instructor.

- Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).
- Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided, the student should assume that **the use of such software is disallowed**.

- You are fully responsible for the content of any assignment you submit, regardless of whether you used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University, Velma K. Waters Library, Rm 162, phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835. Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill -11 (Government Code 411.2031, etal.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so.

- Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.0602R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.
- For a list of locations, refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.
- Web URL:
<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>
- Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses.
- Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students.

- Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145.
- For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, visit <http://www.etamu.edu/counsel>

This course syllabus is subject to change.

Details of assignments, course readings, discussion boards, plus homework due dates in D2L.