

DIGITAL LITERACIES & SOCIAL ACTIVISM

**RTVF 4450 /
5660**

FALL 2015

This course examines the intersection of media literacy, participatory cultures, network society, media advocacy, and social activism within the context of evolving technologies and social practices. The concept of literacy is undergoing a transformation as a result of changes in media, technology, education, and society. As such, new media provide avenues for students and citizens to collaborate, organize, and share ideas across different networks and can be powerful tools for social change and education.

In this course, students will critically consider how media can be used as a tool to advocate for social/political change and social justice. While engaging in scholarly and activist literature on media, social change, and advocacy, students will work together on an advocacy campaign of their choice. The class is designed to be collaborative, participatory, and project-based. Students will create media, curate an online presence, participate in online communities, and work together on creative multimedia projects that serve an awareness building and/or social activist purpose.

INSTRUCTOR
DR. JACQUELINE
VICKERY

OFFICE
HOURS

**T/Th. 12:30-1:50 & by
appointment**

OFFICE
LOCATION

RTFP 237

CLASS
MEETS

Tuesday & Thursday
2:00-3:20 in RTFP
180F

CONTACT

**jacqueline.vickery@
unt.edu**
@JacVick

UNT
DEPARTMENT OF
MEDIA ARTS

IF IT DOESN'T CHALLENGE YOU, IT DOESN'T CHANGE YOU.

Course objectives

By the end of the course students will:

- Learn media advocacy skills to advocate for social and political change and social justice through engaging with theories, case studies, application, and participation.
- Be able to think critically about how media can be harnessed to advocate for social and political change and social justice.
- Know how to leverage knowledge and skills for acquisition of social capital in a networked society
- Know how to collaborate and curate information in an online environment
- Understand the historical, contextual, local, and global implications of changing technological norms and practices
- Use a variety of online tools for collaboration, education, information seeking, and media production

Required Text:

Canning & Reinsborough (2010). *Re:imagining Change: How to use story-based strategy to win campaigns, build movements, and change the world*

All other readings available on Blackboard or online as indicated on the syllabus.

Evaluation & Assessment

8 reading quizzes – 5 points each = **40 points**

Breaching Social Norms Reflection = **15 points**

Fact-finding & Frame Analysis = **40 points**

Video = **35 points**

Infographic = **30 points**

Blog Posts – 20 points, 2 total = **40 points**

Final Campaign = **100 points** (broken down as follows:

[Overall Campaign Assessment = 40 points

Call to Action/Invitation to Participate = 15 points

Media Components = 25 points

Evaluation Analysis = 10 points

Presentation = 10 points]

Total points possible: 300

270-300 points = A

240-269 points = B

210-239 = C

180-209 = D

Fewer than 180

Social Activism / Media Advocacy Group Campaign

As a group, you will select a social activism and/or media advocacy campaign (must have instructor approval). The campaign must work towards social or political change and/or social justice. Your goal is to learn about the issue & create clickable, spreadable, and interactive digital content and information that supports the mission/cause. While much of the contributions will be online, you are encouraged to have offline components to the campaign as well. The campaign has specific requirements, but also allows you to create content and activities of your choice. Components include:

1. A website that will serve as your hub for information and all media created
2. Fact-finding & framing analysis
3. Video
4. Infographic
5. Factual information presented in a concise, clickable, informative, and engaging format
6. Curated content about the topic/issue in the form of blog posts
7. Presence on at least one social media platform of your choice
8. A call to action or invitation to participate (must have instructor approval): e.g. petition, fundraiser, rally, protest, screening, letter writing campaign, community event, flash mob, user-generated content submissions, storytelling, other ideas upon instructor approval
9. Additional media component of your choice (must have instructor approval): e.g. app, game, PSA, curriculum/lesson plan, badge, podcast, shareable video, remix, mashup, photo essays or storytelling, other ideas upon instructor approval
10. Evaluation of the campaign's success and strategies

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

September 10: Breaching social media norms reflection due (individual)

September 17: Campaign proposals due (group)

September 29: Website template & blog due (group – Web Administrator)

October 8: Fact-finding & framing analysis due (group – Communications Director)

October 27: Video due (group – Content Producer)

November 12: Infographic due (group – Social Media Manager)

December 1: In-class presentations (group)

December 3: In-class presentations (group)

December 8: Final projects & analysis due by 3:30 p.m. (group)

T.B.D.: Blog posts (individual sign-up)

Weekly Topics & Tentative Reading Schedule

Week 1

August 25: Introduction	
August 27: What is digital activism?	

Week 2

September 1: What is digital literacy? Topics: norms, definitions, theories	<u>Reading:</u> What Do Young People Need to Know About Digital Media? – Buckingham (BB)
September 3: Why does content go viral? In-Class Activity: Deconstructing the “Ice Bucket Challenge”	<u>Reading:</u> Introduction to <i>Contagious</i> – Berger (BB) Familiarize yourself with the “Ice Bucket Challenge”

Week 3

September 8: Organizing campaign labor Topics: understanding the four positions	
September 10: Web design 101 Topics: web components, features, strategies In-Class Activity: Analyzing the “It Gets Better” website **DUE: BREACHING SOCIAL NORMS ANALYSIS**	<u>Reading:</u> “10 crucial elements for any website design” – Carrie Cousins http://designshack.net/articles/layouts/10-crucial-elements-for-any-website-design/ Familiarize yourself with the “It Gets Better” website

Week 4

September 15: Narrative Power Analysis Topics: storytelling, narratives, memes, culture jamming	<u>Reading:</u> Canning & Reinsborough, pp. 17-42
September 17: Battle of the Story Topics: frames, messages, strategy In-Class Activity: Analyzing a campaign frame T.B.D. **DUE: CAMPAIGN TOPIC PROPOSAL**	<u>Reading:</u> Canning & Reinsborough, pp. 43-52 Familiarize yourself with a T.B.D. campaign

Week 5

September 22: Mandatory group consultation with Dr. Vickery	Be prepared to discuss the goals, audience, and initial ideas for your campaign.
September 24: Framing your campaign In-Class Activity: Frame analysis worksheet	<u>Reading:</u> Canning & Reinsborough, pp. 53-66

Week 6

September 29: Points of Intervention Topics: proposed change, call to action, imagined future *DUE WEBSITE TEMPLATE & BLOG**	<u>Reading:</u> Canning & Reinsborough, pp. 67-82
October 1: Points of Intervention In-Class Activity: Intervention worksheet	

Week 7

October 6: Generating strategic content Topics: pop up videos, memes, animation, remix, mashups **DUE: GROUP A BLOG POST #1**	<u>Reading:</u> “A step-by-step guide to creating a media strategy” - http://www.socialbrite.org/2010/05/27/create-distribute-media-for-a-campaign/ “How Political Activists Are Making the Most of Social Media” – Dallas Lawrence http://www.forbes.com/2010/07/15/social-media-social-activism-facebook-twitter-leadership-citizenship-burson.html
October 8: Incorporating Social Media Topics: weak ties, network literacy, social literacy In-Class Activity: Analyzing social media campaign T.B.D. **DUE: FACT FINDING & FRAME ANALYSIS**	<u>Reading:</u> “Social Movements Need Strong & Weak Ties to Thrive” – Melinda Blau http://www.shareable.net/blog/social-movements-need-strong-weak-ties-to-thrive Familiarize yourself with a T.B.D. social media campaign

Week 8

October 13: Mandatory group consultation with Dr. Vickery **DUE: GROUP B BLOG POST #1**	Be prepared to discuss the strategies, framing, and message of your campaign.
October 15: Collective Brainstorming **DUE: GROUP C BLOG POST #1**	Come prepared to discuss your campaign, especially parts you want feedback or help with.

Week 9

October 20: Collective Brainstorming **DUE GROUP D BLOG POST #1**	Come prepared to discuss your campaign, especially parts you want feedback or help with.
October 22: Out-of-class work day (Dr. Vickery in Phoenix for a conference)	This is <u>mandatory group work time</u> – do NOT schedule a shift at work or leave town etc.

Week 10

<p>October 27: Hashtag Activism Topics: social networks, framing, inviting participation, losing control **DUE: VIDEO**</p>	
<p>October 29: Hashtag Activism In-Class Activity: Analyzing activist hashtag T.B.D. **DUE: GROUP A BLOG POST #2**</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement” – Alicia Garza http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/</p> <p>Familiarize yourself with a T.B.D. hashtag</p>

Week 11

<p>November 3: Media Advocacy Topics: infographics, consumer culture, neoliberalism</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> “Power of Social Media: New Wave of Consumer Activism Rising Out of Rana Plaza Tragedy” – Sally Greenberg http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sally-greenberg/power-of-social-media-con_b_3378737.html</p>
<p>November 5: Commodity Activism In-Class Activity: Analyzing a consumer activism campaign, T.B.D. **DUE GROUP B BLOG POST #2**</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> “Free Self-Esteem Tools?": Brand Culture, Gender, and the Dove Real Beauty Campaign –Banet-Weiser (BB)</p> <p>Familiarize yourself with a T.B.D. consumer campaign</p>

Week 12

<p>November 10: T.B.D.</p>	
<p>November 12: Evaluating campaign success Topics: metrics and measurements **DUE: INFOGRAPHIC**</p>	

Week 13

<p>November 17: Mandatory group consultation with Dr. Vickery **DUE: GROUP C BLOG POST #2**</p>	<p>Come prepared to discuss the final goals and strategies of your campaign.</p>
<p>November 19: Activism or Slacktivism? In-class Activity: Screen & analyze <i>Kony 2012</i> **DUE GROUP D BLOG POST #2**</p>	<p><u>Reading:</u> “The Difference between Slacktivism & Activism: How <i>Kony 2012</i> is Narrowing the Gap” – Bailyn - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/evan-bailyn/kony-2012-activism_b_1361791.html</p>

Week 14

<p>November 24: In-class work day</p>	
<p>November 26: Happy Thanksgiving!</p>	<p>Gobble gobble!</p>

Week 15

December 1: Presentations In-Class Activity: Peer analysis	
December 3: Presentations In-Class Activity: Peer analysis	

Week 16: FINALS WEEK

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10: FINAL PROJECTS & ANALYSIS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL BY 3:30 P.M. – NO LATE WORK ACCEPTED!

POLICIES

Peer Evaluations

Because much of the course is based on group work, you have the opportunity to assess your peers with each group assignment. This means that every member of the group may not receive the same grade on every assignment. If your group struggles to work together come talk to Dr. Vickery ASAP so we can work towards a solution.

Attendance: Quizzes, In-Class Activities, & Consultations

I do not take attendance every day. However, there will be 9 pop quizzes based on readings: 8 count toward your grade; I drop the lowest quiz grade including a zero. These will be administered the first 5 minutes of class and you must be present to take the quiz. There are no make-up opportunities for missed quizzes.

There are 10 in-class assignments in the course. You can miss one without penalty, but after that you will lose 5 points from your overall final grade for every additional in-class assignment you miss. Work for the in-class assignments is due at the end of the class period (unless otherwise noted in class that day). Much of the work is group-based so it is crucial you make every effort to be present on those days.

You will lose 5 points from your final grade for missing any mandatory group consultations with Dr. Vickery unless you have a signed doctor's note (see schedule for dates). So while I do not technically take attendance every day, missing more than 1 or 2 class periods will negatively affect your final grade in the course. To reiterate: you must be present for the quizzes, in-class activities, and consultations – there are no make-up opportunities for any of these.

Late Assignments

You will lose a full letter grade on the assignment for every day your assignment is late. Assignments more than 3 days late will NOT be accepted; this means you will receive an automatic "0" for the assignment (e.g. if an assignment is due Thursday, you have until 3:30 on Sunday to still turn it in before it becomes a "0").

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, don't do it. If I catch you plagiarizing or cheating on any part of any assignment – this includes websites, videos, music, papers, blogs, images, etc. – I will report you to the Office of Academic Integrity and you will receive an automatic 0 on the assignment with no opportunity to make it up. A zero on an assignment could mean you fail the course, just don't do it, it's really not worth it. For a full definition of academic dishonesty and the repercussions, read the UNT policy here: https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Extra Credit

I may occasionally offer an extra credit opportunity to the entire class; if so it is completely optional. No extra credit opportunities will be offered on an individual basis, so do not ask. If you are struggling with the course materials, then come see me for additional guidance and resources. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to salvage your grade.

Bring Your Own Device

We will use laptops (or mobile devices) frequently in the class, so please bring one if you have access. If you do not have access to a laptop or tablet, please come see me. I do not mind the use of technology during lectures and discussions so long as you use it responsibly and do not distract me, your peers, or yourself. Technology can and should enhance the learning environment, thus I trust that you will only use it responsibly in my class.

Grad Students Only

See instructor for additional requirements so as to earn grad credit for the course.
