

**Course Title** : Social Media Literacy  
**Course Code** : CUS3007  
**Recommended Study Year** : Year 2 to Year 4  
**No. of Credits/ Term** : 3  
**Mode of Tuition** : Lecture and Tutorial  
**Class Contact Hours** : 3 hours per week  
**Category** : Elective  
Area of Concentration: Education and Liberal Studies,  
and Creativity and Media Studies (2018-19 intake or  
before); Digital Culture and Media Practices (from 2019-20 intake)

**Prerequisite(s)** : Nil  
**Co-requisite(s)** : Nil  
**Exclusion(s)** : Nil  
**Exemption Requirements** : Nil

**Brief Course Description:**

Although social media have been widely available for just about a decade, it is difficult to imagine everyday life in the contemporary world without them. Internet usage in many countries worldwide has long passed the 50% mark. Especially after the smartphone became cheaper, the internet has been readily accessed through mobile devices, and powered by greater access to wifi. Users are no longer just consumers, but producers and curators of online content, both textual and visual.

This course focusses on different aspects of social media, namely microblogging, file sharing and services (e.g. dating apps), as well as communicative media (e.g. WeChat, WhatsApp). Popular platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat are also considered for their specific forms of appeal to younger users. The course is intended to improve students' capacity to understand the social significance of each platform and its role in the formation of new kinds of communities.

They will assess the impact of social media on everyday life and culture. They will learn to critically appraise digital content, and judge its function and quality. They will also learn about the ethics of online interaction. The practice component of this course will foster students' textual and visual creativity on social media platforms. In light of the critical understanding acquired through the course, students will be helped to strengthen their ability to work with others by using digital technology.

**Aims:**

1. To introduce students to the intellectual debates and sociocultural contexts of the rise of new social media;
2. To enable students to develop their analytical capacity in understanding how social media works.

3. To equip students to work creatively with social media on a topic related to the course readings.

**Learning Outcomes (LO):**

By the end of the course, students shall be able:

1. To analyze the format and representational structure of different social media platforms.
2. To critically appraise the key issues relating to the emergence of new media.
3. To develop a social media resource based on course readings.

**Indicative Contents:**

1. Culture industry and new media
2. Ethics of online interaction
3. Privacy and surveillance in big data
4. Self-representation in social media
5. Techno-sociality

**Teaching Method:**

1. Lecture by instructor to guide students through the key conceptual frameworks and facilitate their reading of the essential texts;
2. Oral presentation by students to demonstrate their understanding of the acquired knowledge and critical approaches.
3. Seminar discussion and/or fieldwork or visit by instructor and students to cultivate dynamic teaching and learning in related areas of practice studied.

**Measurement of Learning Outcomes (LO):**

1. Written assignment and tutorial work to measure students' knowledge and ability to explicate the critical debates around social media; (LO 1, 2)
2. Oral presentation to test students' knowledge of and ability to analyze diverse social media genres; (LO 1, 2)
3. Term project to evaluate students' capacity to build an online resource for understanding social media. (LO 2, 3)
4. Final exam (LO 1, 2)

**Assessment:**

Examination: 30%

Continuous Assessment: 70% (Tutorial presentations and assignments 40%, term project 30%)

**Essential Readings:**

Kathleen Tyner (ed), *Media Literacy: New Agendas in Communication*, London: Routledge, 2009.

Renee Hobbs, *Digital and Media Literacy: Connecting Culture and Classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2011.

**Supplementary Readings and Viewings** (to be selected from):

*Social Media + Society*, <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/smsa/1/1>

Luciana Pangrazio, “Reconceptualising Digital Media Literacy”, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 2016, Vol. 37, No. 2, 163–174, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2014.942836>

Ola Erstad and Synnov Amdam, “From Protection to Public Participation: A Review of Research Literature on Media Literacy”, *Lavnost-The Public*, Vol. 20 (2013), No. 2, 83-98.

Abidin, Crystal, and Joel Gn. 2018. “**Special Issue on Emoji Epistemology: Between Art and Application.**” *First Monday* 23(9). DOI: 10.5210/fm.v23i9.9410.

<https://livestream.com/internetsociety/ttw18/videos/174157251> (20 mins approx) - Crystal Abidin

Important Notes:

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.