LINGNAN UNIVERSITY
Department of Marketing and International Business
Course Description and Schedule
First Term, 2026-2027

Course Title:	The Digital Economy and Social Media
Course Code:	CLC9022
Number of credits/Term:	3
Instructor:	Sebastian Yuho Chung (SEK101, yuhochung@ln.edu.hk)
Class Meetings:	**L1:** Wednesday (14:30 - 17:30, MBG11)
	L2: Friday (14:30 - 17:30, LCH115)
Consultation Hours:	Wednesday 17:30 - 19:30 &
	Friday 17:30 - 19:30 (by appointment)

BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The new information communication technologies (ICT) have transformed the economy in fundamental ways. The Internet and social media have enabled instantaneous interactions and transactions among people through online platforms. The course adopts an interdisciplinary perspective, introduces the economics of information, explores how ICT and social media have transformed the modern economy, its structure and players, and examines the formation of social networks and public opinions, which in turn inform consumer attitudes and decisions and allow firms to engage consumer in a multitude of ways. It also addresses relevant critical issues including information asymmetry, participation inequality, privacy, information disclosure and manipulation, and explores how players can work together to create value, ensure consumer welfare, and promote the healthy development of the Internet and e-commerce.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course aims to enable:
1. acquisition of knowledge about ICT and social media and their impact on the economy, businesses and consumers
2. understanding the forces behind Internet and social media in shaping social networks, public opinions, and consumer attitudes
3. comprehension the roles of social networks in engaging and informing consumers and facilitating transactions
4. critical analysis of Internet technologies and social media in terms of protecting privacy and consumer welfare and enhancing organizational effectiveness

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. identify the ways in which ICT and social media have fundamentally transformed the economy and the market (LO1)
2. describe how Internet and social media contribute to the formation of social networks, public opinions and consumer attitudes (LO2)
3. articulate the benefits as well potential pitfalls of social media networks for informing consumers and their decisions (LO3)
4. generate implications for public and business policies based on analysis of social media networks and internet platforms (LO4).

INDICATIVE CONTENTS:

Digital Technologies:
ICT, Internet, email, WiFi and mobile technologies, e-commerce, social media, podcast, live streaming, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, block chains

The Digital Economy:
information exchange platforms, information products, e-commerce and online selling, B2C/C2C e-commerce, e-marketing, online purchase, modern logistics, mass customization, and social selling

Information Economics:
classic economic theory, new information economics, roles of information, transparency, asymmetry, bounded rationality, irrational exuberance, and a Marxist critique

Social Networks, Information Exchange and Online Communities:
networks, nodes, roles of players, Internet-enabled social networks, formation of networks and communities, strength of weak ties

Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and Public Opinion:
WOM or user-generated content (UGC), opinions and their formation and distribution, bandwagon and cascade effect, participation inequality

Consumer Behavior and Decisions:
information search, search engines, Internet advertising, online buying, e-marketplaces, recommendation agents, online product reviews, social selling

Digital Business and Social Media:
zones of social media marketing, industry practices, Internet advertising, digital agencies, customer engagement via social media, location-based marketing, customer relationship management

Social Media Research:
privacy, biased information, fake news and reviews, information disclosure, manipulation and deception, consumer education and protection

Digital Economic Policies:
rent, surplus value, ownership, taxation, and other policy issues

MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Classroom participation and leading discussion assess students' knowledge and understanding of the concepts and theories of ICT and social media, and their impact on society and economy (LO1, LO2).

2. Group project examines the ability of students to apply the concepts and theories to analyze the effects of ICT and social media and to draw implications for public policy and organizations (LO3, LO4).

3. Final examination will assess students' ability to critically analyze the e-commerce and social media activities (LO1, LO2, LO3, LO4).

ASSESSMENT:

Class Participation	10 %
Leading Discussion	15 %
Group Project and Presentation	25 %
Final exam	50 %
Total	**100 %**

Note: Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation (10%)

All students are expected to attend classes with all reading and assignments completed. Although the course is lecture-based, occasional class discussion requires your understanding of the assigned readings and assignments. Class attendance is required. Please notify me in advance of any anticipated absence (Email: yuhochung@ln.edu.hk).

Leading Discussion (15%)

Each group is required to present an assigned topic of social media analysis and lead the classroom discussion. The topic should focus on social media issues related to a lecture. The group shall engage in in-depth research, share their research findings with the class, and moderate classroom discussion. Applications of the concepts and/or theories you have learned to discuss the issues in depth are expected.

To ensure the participation by your audience, you may engage the class in any creative ways of choice, such as Q&A, group discussion and report, games, role-playing, debate and contest, as you see fit with respect to your topics. Thus, how well you encourage the class to engage in the discussion, exchange ideas, and present diverse views and opinions, is just as important as your own presentation. The two aspects will be weighted equally – the discussion should be two-sided and interactive.

Group Project & Presentation (25%)

The group project requires students to apply knowledge and concepts to apply knowledge and concepts to analyze a company product/event and develop a social media campaign. Your team should identify a target location/market/segment (i.e., location and people), develop objectives and goals (social benefits and impact), suggest a policy implementation (planning and strategies).

Contribution by each member will be assessed via meeting reports (appendix 2), peer evaluation form (appendix 3), and by instructor's observation. In some cases, the main contributor(s) may get extra credits, while member(s) with low or no contribution should expect some level of penalty for the marks in the project.

You will be marked on the following:

Project Presentation

A group needs to make a professional **25-minute presentation** outlining the problem(s), objective and goals, policy implementation. **Overlong** presentations will be **penalized**. Each group member should speak. Please be on time for your presentation and make sure equipment is working well before your presentation begins. You should not read out the whole project report, concentrate on a few areas or examples which the class may find interesting and maybe can discuss. You **will not be penalized** for not covering all the areas of the report in your presentation, rather you will be **rewarded** for making an interesting and professional presentation complete with appropriate examples.

Report

Reports should have **sections on introduction, objective, implementation details, discussion, etc.** It must be double-spaced in 12-point font, with 2.5cm margins on four sides, and should be within 12 pages (excluding cover page, content page, references, and appendices).

Final Exam (50%)

Final Exam is a closed-book exam. It covers the materials discussed in the course. The exam assesses the students' grasp of key knowledge and concepts about ICT, e-commerce and social media. It will be a two-hour written exam at the end of the term. Detailed exam formats will be announced at least one week prior to the exam.

Required/Essential Readings:

Zahay, Debra, Mary Lou Roberts, Janna Parker, Donald I. Barker, and Melissa Barker (2023), *Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach*, *3rd edition*, Cengage Learning.

Overby, Harald and Jan A. Audestad (2021), *Introduction to Digital Economics Foundations, Business Models, and Case Studies*, *2nd edition*, Springer.

This is an accessible text of around the right depth, which gives you a thorough comprehension of the principles of digital economy. However, knowledge seeking cannot be restricted to only one textbook. Students are advised to explore and study other related reading materials in an adequate manner.

Supplementary Readings:

Jordon, Tim. The Digital Economy, 2020, Wiley.

Chaffey, Dave and Fiona Ellis-Chadwick (2026), *Digital Marketing*, *9th edition*, Pearson.

Moe, Wendy W. and David A. Schweidel (2014), *Social Media Intelligence*, Cambridge University Press.

COURSE POLICIES

1. Students are expected to read the assigned chapters and cases prior to class and thus be fully prepared to participate in class discussions.
2. 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.
3. Students are responsible for completing assignments, obtaining notes and any handouts, and keeping themselves informed of any announcements made in class, irrespective of attendance. I typically do not take attendance; however, participation and pop quizzes take 10% of your final grade in the class. Students will be excused for any legitimate reasons for their absence from class (e.g., illness, religious holidays, family emergency, and other personal or business matters). Nonetheless, I will expect a notice of your absence before or after the event.
4. Unacceptable class conduct includes late arrivals, early departures, sleeping in class, reading extraneous material in class and initiating and participating in irrelevant discussions.
5. All mobile phones & other electronic devices must be switched to silent mode during class hours. Tablets and laptops are permitted ***only if*** they are used for note taking. If you are expecting an important phone call/ message and need to use the device during the class meeting, you **NEED** to inform me prior to the class.
6. All assignments are due in class at the beginning of class or via email on the dates indicated on the syllabus. Late submission *could result in penalty or 0 marks (unless you receive prior approval from me).*
7. Special needs, religious observances, should bring them to my attention in the "first two weeks of class."
8. Students must adhere to the University's guidelines and practices when using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. The official documents "Guidelines for Using GAI Tools at Lingnan University" and "Best Practices for Ethical and Responsible Use of GAI Tools in Course Assessments" can be found here: https://www.ln.edu.hk/tlc/generative-artificial-intelligence/gai-guidelines-best-practices.

Appendix 1. Team Formation

Group Name: ______________________

Student Names with university ID (5 to 6 in a group)

1) _________________________

2) _________________________

3) _________________________

4) _________________________

5) _________________________

6) _________________________

Appendix 2. Meeting Report

(Please develop your own form and include the following items/ this report should be completed ***before*** developing the data collection plan and questionnaire)

Date:
Time (start/ end):
Participants:

Discussion topics and discussion content (template)

Topic	**Discussion content**	**Conclusion/ Decision**
1.	Member A: Member B: …..	
2.	Member C: Member A: …..	
3.		
…		

Work assignment (e.g., who will do what):

Appendix 3: Team Evaluation Form

Student's Name: _________________________ Group Number: _______

Assume that you have $100 to divide among the members of your team (including yourself) based on each member's overall contribution to the case study. The team member whose contribution was the greatest should receive the largest share of the $100. The member whose overall contribution was smallest would receive the smallest amount. In the space below, please write the names of your team members - *including yourself* - and the dollars you feel they deserve:

Name	Team Research Project
___________________________	__________________
___________________________	__________________
___________________________	__________________
___________________________	__________________
___________________________	__________________
___________________________	__________________
	TOTAL: $100

Overall, use the following space to write a few sentences explaining why a member is allocated the most in your team. What are the major contributions (s)he has done to the team? Next, briefly explain your role in this project. Specifically, what aspects of the projects did you get involved. In addition, you are encouraged to offer any other observation or comments regarding your team work.

Your primary role and involvement:

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____

Strongest member's name: ___________________

Comments: ____

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Dissatisfying member's name: ___________________

Comments: ____

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