

Curriculum for Integrating Digital Citizenship into a First-Year Seminar Course

Student Learning Objectives

1. Describe principles and specific examples of ways the Internet and social media can be used to both help and harm others
2. Demonstrate effective ways to responsibly use social media to positively engage with others and portray oneself with authenticity

Pilot Curriculum¹

The pilot curriculum for this component of the FYS encompasses two sets of activities. First, students and faculty will discuss social media using (a) properties of social media identified by researchers and (b) case studies. Students will then write their own case study. Second, students and faculty will use Twitter throughout the class to share information with one another and connect with specific resources. Toward the end of the class, students will write a one-page reflection paper.

First day of social media activities:

1. Overview of social media properties (with handout)
2. Social media case studies (using the social media properties handout)
3. Discussion of Twitter use, including development of class hashtag

Homework for students after initial social media activities:

1. Create professional-use Twitter account (or ensure that they are comfortable using their personal account)
2. Write social media case study (with the faculty template as a potential handout); the simple grading rubric is described below

Subsequent classes:

1. Quickly review Twitter posts with specific emphasis on (a) useful information shared or learned and (b) observations of social media properties
2. Briefly discuss local, national, and international events that have been shared or impacted by social media

Homework for students after many classes:

1. Twitter paper as described below; the simple grading rubric is described there, too
2. Continued use of the class hashtag on Twitter to foster in-class and outside-class discussion

Case Studies

The first student learning objective for the social media component of FYS is that students will be able to "describe principles and specific examples of ways the Internet and social media can be used to both help and harm others." This will be accomplished by discussing case studies

¹ The guiding philosophy and scholarly references undergirding this curriculum are described in a separate document titled "Curriculum Framework for Integrating Digital Citizenship into a First-Year Seminar Course." The scholarly documents most central to this curriculum are also available online.

with a specific focus on relating them to properties of social media (as described on a separate handout and in specific resource).

Properties of social media

The properties of social media that are emphasized in this course are described in a separate handout. They include persistence, visibility, spreadability, searchability, and context collapse. Faculty and students who want to learn more about them are encouraged to read the references cited in the handout; they are all freely available. These are more fully described on a 1-page handout that students will find useful as they discuss case studies.

Case studies

Multiple case studies have been developed to give faculty freedom to select the number and type of cases that will work best for their class(es). There are two versions of each case study. The student version has just the case, questions, and source(s). The faculty version has all of that plus background notes and additional information that may be useful in guiding the discussion. Additionally, each of the student versions of the case studies have been separated into individual documents so they can more easily be used as handouts.

Assessment

After discussing the cases in class, students should be required to write their own case based on material (newspaper article(s), news report, etc.) published in the past 3-4 months. Faculty should share one of the faculty versions of a case study used in class to provide a complete example of a case study with the relevant social media properties explicitly identified. We recommend using the following criteria to evaluate each case study; for simplicity, each criterion should be worth only one point.

The case...

- Is reasonably well-written and follows the format of some of the assigned case studies.
- Describes a relevant use of social media.
- Directly relates to one or more of the properties of social media. The student's case should explicitly mention which principle(s) the case demonstrates.

Twitter Exercises

The second student learning objective for the social media component of FYS is that students will be able to "demonstrate effective ways to responsibly use social media to positively engage with others and portray oneself with authenticity." Twitter is a free, widely accessible, and familiar social media tool that gives us many potential options that allow students to engage in or observe social media use. The following options are ordered from least engaging and simplest to most engaging and most complex.

Throughout the class, students should utilize an existing Twitter or create a new, professional-use Twitter profile that is public with a biography and professional image (which they can also utilize for LinkedIn and other professional profiles). Students can even link their Twitter accounts to external social media sites if they wish. You should ask students to follow their classmates. If you wish, you can also share your own Twitter handle with your students as well.

You and your students should create a class-specific hashtag². You should routinely share information with the class using that hashtag and require students to post 2-3 original, substantive messages using that hashtag e.g., discovery of important/new/interesting campus event, follow-up on in-class discussion, timely reminder of campus resource previously discussed in class. You and your students should both retweet others' messages when those messages are relevant or interesting to the class. Students should also reply to at least 2 other tweets created by their classmates.

For these assignments to be most effective, you must be an active participant. If you are not yet active in using social media, you should be willing to learn with and from your students. For example, these assignments all focus on Twitter. For this component of the FYS course to be most successful, you should actively use Twitter to some degree, including creating and using a hashtag for your specific FYS class(es).

Potential Assignments

1. Require students to discover, follow, and monitor a specified amount of University-related handles and hashtags. You can provide students with options for which accounts to follow and students can choose which ones they are interested in. For example:

- @BlueHenSays
- @UDelaware
- @UDAdmissions
- @ITatUD
- @UDelPolice
- @UDCareers
- @UDLilBob
- @UDLibrary

A complete list of the UD Social Media Ambassadors can be found at <https://twitter.com/UDelaware/lists/smas> and a list of official UD social media accounts can be found at <https://sites.udel.edu/socialmedia/social-media-directory/>.

Each week, several minutes can be dedicated to discussing what new or interesting information students discovered by following these accounts. Toward the end of the course, students should be required to write a few paragraphs describing what they have learned and observed from following these users with a particular focus on how the user's posts have reflected the properties of social media previously discussed. The (brief) paper should contain at least three specific examples. We recommend a very lightweight rubric for this paper:

- Reasonably well-written and of sufficient length (at least 3-4 paragraphs).
- Clearly describes how this person used Twitter and includes at least three examples.
- Directly relates the person's use of Twitter to several of the properties of social media.

Additionally, you can require that students attend (at least) one event that was not previously included in lists of events but instead is organically discovered via Twitter

² Please remember to make the hashtag unique for each FYS class/section. It may be fun to ask students to come up with the hashtag!

especially if you use a version of the FYS Passport. Students should be required to note in their passport which event(s) they discovered this way and how they discovered it e.g., who posted about it and when.

2. Require students follow, observe, and possibly interact with a noteworthy individual whom the student believes uses social media responsibly and effectively. This person can be a politician, businessperson, philanthropic figure, author, musician, etc. After 1-2 weeks, students are required to write a few paragraphs describing what they have observed to explain (a) how the user's posts have reflected the properties of social media previously discussed and (b) why or why not the user's use of Twitter has lived up to the student's expectations of responsible and effective use. The (brief) paper should contain at least three specific examples. We recommend a very lightweight rubric for this paper:
 - Reasonably well-written and of sufficient length (at least 3-4 paragraphs).
 - Clearly describes how this person used Twitter and includes at least three examples.
 - Clearly explains why the person's posts were or were not responsible and effective.
 - Directly relates the person's use of Twitter to several of the properties of social media.

You might want to create a list of accounts from which students can select or criteria for selection e.g., candidates for political office, elected politicians or appointed policy makers, prominent or interesting scholars in your discipline or student's major.