



OLLI 2026 Social Media: Practice and Critique

University of Minnesota, Spring 2013

Fridays, 215-345pm

McNamara Alumni Center, Room 235

Course Leader

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Course Overview

This course will examine the new media tools that have become prevalent in the digital age. We'll learn about tools used across media platforms, such as social networking, blogging, podcasting, webcasting, and videocasting, which are crucial to interacting and conversing in the digital age.

In addition to learning how to use these tools, we'll consider if and how they affect our social and business relationships and what we can do to enhance our knowledge of the Internet.

Readings

We will have readings, and the course leader will provide them. The readings will generally be short, contemporary, and offer diverse viewpoints.

Technology

This course is, in part, about social technology use. Therefore, using technology—especially social media—is required for all participants. Rather than blind adoption, we will critically engage with various new media to ascertain what best suits our interests.

Tentative Course Schedule

Mar 29	Introductions, expectations, and experiences. Question: What is “social media?”
Apr 5	New and social media technologies, adoption, and pro/con issues. Question: What are the consequences for using social media?
Apr 12	Social movements and media, blogging, and podcasting. Question: In what ways do social media affect contemporary social movements?
Apr 19	Facebook, Twitter, and Google (Oh, my!). Question: How can we use social media to connect and maintain relationships?
Apr 26	Audience, interaction, and business. Question: In what contexts do we engage social media?
May 3	Social media burnout, strain, and negativity. Question: How does technology wear us out?
May 10	TBD (Participant selected topic and question).
May 17	The past, present, and future of social technologies. Question: Where do we go from here?

Participant Expectations

Course participants are expected to do the following:

- Ask and answer questions
- Be critical, kind, and have fun
- Be patient with the technology
- Explore the content with an open mind

Course Leader Expectations

The course leader is expected to do the following:

- Answer and ask questions
- Be available and supportive
- Alleviate any technological stress or fear
- Work to make the course welcoming and fun

Other Considerations

If you have any questions, concerns, personal issues, disability issues that you feel may affect your participant, please do not hesitate to contact the course leader.

“Today we are beginning to notice that the new media are not just mechanical gimmicks for creating worlds of illusion, but new languages with new and unique powers of expression.”—Marshall McLuhan