PAI 730-17

Social Media in the Public Sector

Syllabus – Fall Semester 2013

Meeting time: Wednesday, 2:15pm-5:00pm
and place: Crouse Hinds Hall 425

Instructor: Ines Mergel, D.B.A.
Assistant Professor of Public Administration
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs

Contact: The best way to reach me is by email iamergel@maxwell.syr.edu
Phone: 315-443-1462
Office hours: Wednesdays, 10:00am-noon & by appointment.
Online office hours: Weekdays, 8:00am – 6:00pm

Office: Crouse-Hinds Hall 436
Center for Technology & Information Policy
1. **Goal of the Course:**
   This course provides an overview of current practices for managing the information assets produced by government and its stakeholders using social media applications. The course highlights the challenges and drivers of managing social media applications in government and non-profit organizations in the network economy, the differences to political communication and campaigning, risk mitigation, and understanding of the necessary information infrastructure. Students will examine through active learning exercises how management, technology and organizational components work together to create an interactive information infrastructure. Guest speakers will present innovative social media applications, strategies and tactics in class. The course is focused on strategic, managerial, and operative aspects of the innovative social media usage in government and makes therefore no assumptions about the students’ prior experience with computer hardware, software, and telecommunications.

2. **Learning Objectives:**
   Students will understand core competencies necessary for helping to managing new information technologies in the public sector and government organizations’ online interactions with stakeholders. Students will be aware of managerial strategies, policies and tactics and the conditions under which certain online practices may be enacted for improving results in different phases of the policy cycle. Students will know how to diagnose organizational missions to develop feasible application plans to solve “real world” problems. Students will learn how to effectively summarize, appraise, and communicate technical and professional information, through both oral and written media.

3. **Grading Method:**

   **40% final presentation:** The final project consists of a social media implementation plan of a real-life case. An exposé of your application plan is due on October 23rd, 2013. The application plan has to be presented in class and a written analysis is due on December 9th, 2013. Detailed instructions will be handed out in class.

   **30% course assignments:** You are expected to complete three assignments, which are due on September 18th, October 16th, and November 6th at the beginning of the class. You will receive the assignment instructions a week before the assignments are due and you will be asked to present your results in class.

   **20% active participation in class & tool presentation:** You are expected to actively do all readings for the class discussions, or email me in advance in case you are not able to prepare for class. To achieve maximum exposure to currently used social media tools in the public sector; every student has to prepare a short tool presentation. Instructions will be provided in class.

   **10% blogging and tweeting assignments:** You are expected to actively provide insights about the readings and your own research progress on our joint class blog: [http://gov20class.blogspot.com/](http://gov20class.blogspot.com/). This blog will be used as a joint discussion platform for this course. Be creative and upload your questions for guest speakers, suggestions for discussions, news, etc. You are expected to provide a minimum of five 250 words-blog posts throughout the semester. Instructions will be provided in class.
4. **BYOD**

Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD) to the classroom, but use them responsibly. You will be required to live tweet our sessions, take notes on the class blog, share pictures and articles on Pinterest with us, and collaborate online with each other. However, it is tempting to chat, skype, or facebook with your friends while you are online. Make sure that you stay on task and don’t get distracted!

5. **Grading scheme based on the MPA handbook**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100% of all possible points</td>
<td>Superior range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>Good range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% - 86%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 81%</td>
<td>Below expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76% - 79%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>65% - 75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>incomplete</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **Late assignment policy**

The deadlines for assignment submissions are non-negotiable. I do not accept late submissions.

7. **Academic freedom policy**

You are expected to respect the right of your peers to express their views on topics relevant to the course. If you would like to discuss topics beyond the scope of the class, please talk directly to me and I will try to accommodate your needs after class or incorporate additional material in following lectures.

8. **Missing classes – general participation**

Treat our class meetings as if they were professional appointments. Please arrive on time and be prepared to discuss the readings. Email me in case you will have a severe conflict or a family emergency. Participation in each class meeting is mandatory. You are allowed to miss two class meetings, but won’t receive a grade if you miss more than two class sessions – no exceptions.

9. **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, i.e., the presentation as one's own work through the words, ideas, and opinions of someone else, is a serious concern in any academic setting. This University, like all academic institutions in the United States, assumes that the written work of a student is literally the student's own, and that any original idea or research contributions taken from the published works of others will be properly acknowledged. When any material is taken directly from a published source, it must be appropriately cited. If a statement is used verbatim, it must be enclosed in quotation marks, as well as otherwise acknowledged. Syracuse University, through its various colleges and departments, will readily refer students to writing and style manuals that are universally recognized as acceptable by scholars and that very adequately demonstrate how students should handle
the issue of proper citation of material. Examples of such works include the student manual distributed by the English Department of Syracuse University, A Manual for Writers by K. Turabian, and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Students must understand that, like cheating on examinations, plagiarism is a serious instance of academic dishonesty. In this University, it will be dealt with as such.

10. Required course materials

Our main reading material for the class is outlined on the detailed reading list and available for download on Blackboard.

The assigned cases are available at SU's Bookstore.

11. Recommended readings:


Come prepared to class and be ready to give a short overview of the main topics and questions presented in the readings. However, the objective in this class is not to repeat what is written in the readings, but to understand the general underlying concepts and connect them with your experiences.

Bring material you find in newspapers, blogs, or tell the class about your own experience. We will upload your own contributions to the course website or make them available by email to everyone.

- Recommended government technology blogs, such as:
  - Government Technology: [http://www.govtech.com/gt](http://www.govtech.com/gt)
- Government Twitter accounts & hashtags to follow:
  - @InesMergel o #gov20
  - @GovNewMedia o #SocialGov
  - @whitehouse o #OpenGov or #oGov
### Social media in the public sector

**Course outline – Fall semester 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Cases and guests</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.   | 08/28/13   | Course overview, syllabus review, course requirements Introduction to Government 2.0 & Twitter use | ---                            | Class tools:  
  - Twitter  
  - Class blog            | ---                          |
| 2.   | 09/04/13   | The Social Media Ecosystem Barriers & Drivers for the Adoption of Social Media | Case:  
  a) “America 2.0”  
  b) “Big Media”          | SNS: Facebook, Google+  
  Content creation:  
  Instagram, Pinterest  | Group 1                      |
| 3.   | 09/11/13   | Social Media (Content) Strategies                                      | Cases:  
  a) Cork’d  
  b) Ayojak            | Content curation tools:  
  - Tumblr  
  - Storify            | Group 2                      |
| 4.   | 09/18/13   | Organizational Institutions for Social Media                           | Jed Sundwall,  
  CEO Measured Voice     | ---                        | Group 3                      |
| 5.   | 09/25/13   | Social Media Policies in the Public Sector                              | Analyze federal government social media policies | Social news site:  
  - Reddit                  | Group 4                      |
| 6.   | 10/02/13   | Social Media Implementation                                             | Bill Greeves,  
  CIO Wake County     | ---                        | >> Groups have formed <<  
  (first project ideas) |
| 7.   | 10/09/13   | Social Media Tactics in the Public Sector                               | Case: Planned Parenthood  | Social sharing:  
  - SnapChat  
  - Vine            | Group 5                      |
| 8.   | 10/16/13   | Social Media for Emergency Management                                   | Patrice Coulter,  
  Ontario Ministry of Community Safety  
  Case: Commonwealth Edison | ---                        | Assignment 2 due |

PAI 730-17 5/14 Ines Mergel (2013)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Cases and guests</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/23/13</td>
<td>Social Media in Organizational Crisis Situations</td>
<td>Case: Bunny Butcher (Peta)</td>
<td>Social awareness and monitoring tools:</td>
<td>&gt;&gt; Review of group exposés &lt;&lt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/30/13</td>
<td>Social Media and Intra-organizational Collaboration</td>
<td>Kent Aitken &amp; Ryan Androsoff, GCPedia, Canadian Govt</td>
<td>Content co-production: Wikis</td>
<td>Group 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/06/13</td>
<td>Bridging the Gap: Open Innovation in the Public Sector</td>
<td>Case: Challenge.gov</td>
<td>Crowdsourcing: Amazon Mechanical Turk, Innocentive, TopCoder, Kickstarter</td>
<td>Group 8 Assignment 3 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/13/13</td>
<td>Measuring Social Media Impact</td>
<td>Justin Herman, GSA Social Media Lead</td>
<td>Measuring tools: Klout, Tweetstats, etc.</td>
<td>Group 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/20/13</td>
<td>Future of Social Media Final Class Project Presentations (Part I)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/27/13</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break No classes</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/04/13</td>
<td>Final Class Project Presentations (Part II)</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. Reading list and weekly topics

Spring 2013

>> I keep the right to add or remove readings during the semester. <<

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week:</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>08/28/2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject:</td>
<td>Introduction:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Government 2.0: A new mandate in the public sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Course schedule, readings, expectations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tasks before our first class meeting:

- Please set up a Twitter account before our first class meeting and search for me (@inesmergel), start to follow me, and explore interesting account holders.
- Please set up a Gmail account before our first class meeting.
- BYOD: Bring your own device (laptop, iPad, or other device with a larger screen than a smartphone).

Required readings:


Prepare for computer lab:


Suggested readings:


Computer lab:

- Blogger: Blogging & RSS feeds
- Twitter microblogging
Week: 2
Date: 09/04/2013
Subject: Social Media Ecosystem
Barriers and Drivers for the adoption of social media in the public sector

Please watch:

- The *Six Degrees of Separation* movie: Available online
  http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/six-degrees-of-separation/

Required readings:
- Hanna, R., Rohm, A., Crittenden, V. L. (2011): We’re all connected: The power of the
  to Embrace Social Media?, in: State of the eUnion: Government 2.0 and Onwards, by
  09/07/2008.

Case:
- “Big Media” Meets the “Bloggers”: Coverage of Trent Lott’s Remarks at Storm
  Thurmond’s Birthday Party, HKS case #849
- Barack Obama: Organizing for America 2.0, HBS case # 709493

Computer lab:
- Group 1: Online social networks: Facebook’s organizational pages
- Group 2: Content creation and sharing: Instagram, Pinterest

Suggested readings:
  Media in the Public Sector.
- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 3 - Drivers for the use of social media in the public sector, in:
- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 4 - Barriers for the use of social media in the public sector, in:
  Mergel, I.: Social media in the public sector, pp. 54-70.
Week: 3  
Date: 09/11/2013  
Subject: Social media (content) strategies in the public sector

**Cases:**
Please read the following cases and identify how both organizations designed their social media strategies. What were the main building blocks of their social media strategies? Which strategies are transferrable to government organizations and how would you apply them?

- Cork’d: Building a Social Network for Wine Lovers, HBS case #9-911-26
- Social Media Content Strategy at Ayojak, Ivey W12831

**Required readings:**

**Computer lab:**
Content curation tools (Group 3): Tumblr, Storify

---

**Assignment 1 due at the beginning of class: Your Personal Social Media Strategy. Instructions will be handed out in class.**

---

Week: 4  
Date: 09/18/2013  
Subject: Organizational institutions for the use of social media in government  
Guest speaker: Jed Sundwall, CEO Measured Voice

**Required readings:**
Suggested readings:

Week: 5
Date: 09/25/2013
Subject: Social Media Policies in the Public Sector

In preparation for our class meeting, please review publicly available social media policies and develop building blocks for an effective policy. Instructions will be discussed in class.

Required readings:

Computer Lab:
Social News Sites (Group 3)
- Reddit

Week: 6
Date: 10/02/2013
Subject: Social Media Implementation in the Public Sector
Guest speaker: Bill Grevers, CIO Wake County

Required Readings:

Final project team formation & Review of initial project ideas for final team projects.
Week: 7
Date: 10/09/2013
Subject: Social Media Tactics in the Public Sector

**Required readings:**
- Harper, E. (2013): Learning from Government Successes at @NASA and @Interior, in: SproutInsights.com

**Case:**
*While reading this case, think about the differences between traditional media tactics and new media tactics. Which of these tactics can be applied to the public sector?*
- Planned Parenthood and Susan G. Komen

**Computer lab:**
Social sharing
- SnapChat
- Vine
- Social search engines

Week: 8
Date: 10/16/2013
Subject: Social Media in Emergency Management
Guest speaker: Patrice Coulter, Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

**Required readings:**


Case:
• Commonwealth Edison: The Use of Social Media in Disaster Response, #KEL734

Assignment 2 due at the beginning of the class: 8-weeks on Twitter

Week: 9
Date: 10/23/2013
Subject: Social Media in Organizational Crisis Situations

Required readings:


Case:
• Bunny Butcher: Peta Protests Donna Karan New York, Ivey W11377

Review of final project plan draft (due at beginning of class). 1-page summary.
**Week: 10**  
**Date:** 10/30/2013  
**Subject:** Collaboration across organizational boundaries with the use of social media  
Guest speakers: Kent Aitken & Ryan Androsoff, GCPedia, Government of Canada

**Required readings**


**Computer Lab**

- Content co-production tools: Wikis (Group 6)

**Week: 11**  
**Date:** 11/06/2013  
**Subject:** Open Innovation in the Public Sector

**Required Readings:**

- McKinsey & Company (2009): *And the winner is… Capturing the promise of philanthropic prizes*, available online.

**Case:**

- Challenge.gov (instructions will be handed out in class)

**Computer Lab:**

- Crowdscouring tools (Group 7): Amazon Mechanical Turk, Innocentive, Kickstarter, TopCoder

**Assignment 3 due at the beginning of the class (11/06/2013).**
Week: 12
Date: 11/13/2013
Subject: Measuring social media impact in the public sector
Guest speaker: Justin Herman, General Service Administration

Required Readings:


Recommended Readings:


Computer lab:

• Social media measurement: Klout, Twitterstats, Radian6, etc. (Group 8)

Week: 13
Date: 11/20/2013
Subject: The future of social media in government
Final project presentations (Part I)

Your task: Use our blog to make a case for topics that were not covered in the classroom. What else should we cover in this class?

Week: 14
Date: 11/27/2013
Subject: Thanksgiving break – no class meeting

Week: 15
Date: 12/04/2013
Subject: Final project presentations (Part II)