



PAI 730-17

Social Media in the Public Sector

Syllabus – Fall Semester 2013

Meeting time and place:	Wednesday, 2:15pm-5:00pm 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/>. 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

A	93% - 100% of all possible points	Superior
A-	90% - 92%	range
B+	87% - 89%	Good
B	82% - 86%	range
B-	80% - 81%	Below expectations
C+	76% - 79%	
C-	65% - 75%	
F	0%	failure
I	0%	incomplete

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:

- Mergel, I. (2012): [Social Media in the Public Sector: Participation, Collaboration, and Transparency in a Networked World](#), Jossey-Bass/Wiley, ISBN-10: 1118109945 | ISBN-13: 978-1118109946.
- Mergel, I. & Greeves, W. (2012): [The Public Manager 2.0: A social media field guide for the public sector](#), Jossey-Bass/Wiley, ISBN-10: 1118109937 | ISBN-13: 978-1118109939.

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>
 - Federal Computer Week: <http://www.fcw.com>
 - Govloop, The Facebook for Government: <http://www.govloop.com>
- Government Twitter accounts & hashtags to follow:
 - @InesMergel
 - @GovNewMedia
 - @whitehouse
 - #gov20
 - #SocialGov
 - #OpenGov or #oGov

12. Social media in the public sector

Course outline – Fall semester 2013

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

Week	Date	Topics	Cases and guests	Tools	Assignments
9.	10/23/13	Social Media in Organizational Crisis Situations	<u>Case:</u> Bunny Butcher (Peta)	<u>Social awareness and monitoring tools:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dashboards 	>> Review of group exposés <<
10.	10/30/13	Social Media and Intra-organizational Collaboration	<i>Kent Aitken & Ryan Androsoff,</i> GCPedia, Canadian Govt	<u>Content co-production:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wikis 	Group 7
11.	11/06/13	Bridging the Gap: Open Innovation in the Public Sector	<u>Case:</u> Challenge.gov	<u>Crowdsourcing:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazon Mechanical Turk • Innocentive • TopCoder • Kickstarter 	Group 8 Assignment 3 due
12.	11/13/13	Measuring Social Media Impact	<i>Justin Herman,</i> GSA Social Media Lead	<u>Measuring tools:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Klout • Tweetstats, etc. 	Group 9
13.	11/20/13	Future of Social Media Final Class Project Presentations (Part I)	---	---	---
14.	11/27/13	Thanksgiving Break No classes	---	---	---
15.	12/04/13	Final Class Project Presentations (Part II)	---	---	---

13. Reading list and weekly topics

Spring 2013

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

Week:	1
Date:	08/28/2013
Subject:	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government 2.0: A new mandate in the public sector• Course schedule, readings, expectations

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:

- Boyd, D. M., & Ellison, N. B. (2007). [Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship](#). Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13(1), online.
- Bretschneider, S. I., Mergel, I. (2010): Technology and Public Management Information Systems: Where have we been and where are we going, in: Menzel, D.C., White, H. J.: The State of Public Administration: Issues, Problems and Challenges, M.E. Sharpe Inc., New York, pp. 187-203.

Prepare for computer lab:

- Mergel, I. (2012): Working the Network: A Manager's Guide for Using Twitter in Government, IBM Center for The Business of Government, Report "Using Technology" Series.
- Wyld, D. (2007): "[The Blogging Revolution: Government in the Age of Web 2.0](#)", IBM Center for the Business of Government report.

Suggested readings:

- Mergel, I. (2012): Social Media in the Public Sector, Chapter 1.

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:

- Dutta, S. (2011): Let the Revolution Begin!, in: IESE Insight Magazine, pp. 13-20.
- Hanna, R., Rohm, A., Crittenden, V. L. (2011): We're all connected: The power of the social media ecosystem, in: Business Horizons, 54, pp. 265-273.
- Saleem, M. (2012): Who hangs out where?, Harvard Business Review, pp. 1-2.
- Samuel, A. (2009): Waiting for Government 2.0: Why Do Public Agencies Take So Long to Embrace Social Media?, in: State of the eUnion: Government 2.0 and Onwards, by Goetze, J. and Pedersen, C. B., AuthorHouse, Bloomington, IN, pp. 111-124.
- Thompson, C. (2008): Brave New World of Digital Intimacy, in: The New York Times, 09/07/2008.

Case:

- a) "Big Media" Meets the "Bloggers": Coverage of Trent Lott's Remarks at Storm Thurmond's Birthday Party, HKS case #849
- b) 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:

- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 2 - Social media technologies in the public sector, in: Social Media in the Public Sector.
- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 3 - Drivers for the use of social media in the public sector, in: Mergel, I.: Social media in the public sector, pp. 37-53.
- 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:

- Dunn, Brian J. (2010): [How I did it: Best Buy's CEO on Learning to Love Social Media](#), in: Harvard Business Review.
- Mergel, I. (2012): [A Manager's Guide to Designing a Social Media Strategy](#), IBM Center for the Business of Government (June 2012).

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:

- Aitoro, J. R. (2009). [GSA signs deals for agencies to use social networking sites](#). NextGov, 03/25/2009, online.
- Oxley, A. (2011). [A Best Practices Guide for Mitigating Risk in the Use of Social Media](#), IBM Center for the Business of Government, online report.
- Sundwall, J. (2012): A Guide to Using Social Media Well in Government and Advocacy, published online: TechPresident, November 19, 2012.
- USA.gov Social Media Guidelines:
http://www.howto.gov/sites/default/files/documents/socmed_editorial_guidelines_010411.pdf
- Van Eck Peluchette, J., Karl, K., Fertig, J. (2013): A Facebook 'friend' request from the boss: Too close for comfort?, in: Business Horizons, 56, pp. 291-300.

Suggested readings:

- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 5 – Regulations and directives for the use of social media in the public sector, in: Mergel, I.: Social media in the public sector, pp. 71-88..
- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 6 – Social media policy considerations, in: Mergel, I. (2012): Social media in the public sector, pp. 89-121.

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:

- Kaganer, E., Vaast, E. (2011): Converting Old Policies into New Value, in: IESEinsight, 21-28.
- Goldman, P., Gibbs Howard, S. (2013): To Tweet or Not to Tweet: What Business Can Learn from Social Movements, in: Rotman Magazine, Spring 2013, pp. 47-51.
- Hrdinova, J., Helbig, N., Stollar Peters, C. (2011): [Designing Social Media Policy for Government: Eight Essential Elements](#), CTG Albany, NY.

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 Greeves*, CIO Wake County

Required Readings:

- Mashable.com: [HOW TO: Implement a Social Media Business Strategy](#), 12/8/2009.
- Gladwell, M. (2010): [Small change; Why the Revolution Won't be Tweeted](#), in: The New Yorker, October 4, 2010 (available online).
- Shirky, C. (2011): [The Political Power of Social Media](#), in: Foreign Affairs, => Free version: available on Blackboard.

***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:

- Briones, R. L., Kuch, B., Fisher Liu, B., Jin, Y. (2011): Keeping up with the digital age: How the American Red Cross uses social media to build relationships, in: Public Relations Review, 37, pp. 37-43.
- Harper, E. (2013): [Learning from Government Successes at @NASA and @Interior](#), in: SproutInsights.com
- Kaplan, A. M., Haenlein, M. (2010): Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media, in: Business Horizons, 53:1, pp. 59-68.
- Mergel, I. (2010): Gov2.0 Revisited: Social Media Strategies in the Public Sector, in: PA Times, American Society for Public Administration, Vol. 33, No. 3, p. 7 & 10.
- Warren, C. (2010): [Which department owns social media?](#), available online: Mashable.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 Coultier*, Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services

Required readings:

- Baron, G., Philbin, P. (2009): Social Media in Crisis Communication: Start with a Drill, in: Public Relations Tactics, available online: https://www.prsa.org/SearchResults/view/7909/105/Social_media_in_crisis_communication_Start_with_a
- Dewey, C. (2012): Hurricane Sandy's social media clean-up efforts help New York, New Jersey recovery, in: Washington Post, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-11-20/national/35507983_1_social-media-staten-island-hurricane-sandy

- Haot, R. (2013): Hurricane Sandy, Open Data and Social Media, Open Government Partnership Blog: <http://blog.opengovpartnership.org/2013/01/hurricane-sandy-open-data-social-media-nyc-rachel-haot/>
- Hill, K. (2012): Hurricane Sandy, @ComfortablySmug, and The Flood of Social Media Misinformation, in: Forbes, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/10/30/hurricane-sandy-and-the-flood-of-social-media-misinformation/>
- Kaplan, A. M., Haenlein, M. (2011): The Early Bird Catches the News: Nine Things You should know about Micro-Blogging, in: Business Horizons, 54, pp. 105-113.
- Stone, A. (2013): Using Social Media to Enhance Situational Awareness, In Government Technology: <http://www.govtech.com/e-government/Using-Social-Media-to-Enhance-Situational-Awareness.html>.

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:

- Schultz, F., Utz, S., Goeritz, A. (2011): Is the medium the message? Perceptions of and reactions to crisis communication via twitter, blogs and traditional media, in: Public Relations Review, 37, 20-27.
- Harlow, W. F., Brantley, B. C., Harlow, R.M. (2011): BP initial image repair strategies after the Deepwater Horizon spill, in: Public Relations Review, 37:1, pp.80-83.
- Rein, L. (2012): [GSA Las Vegas spending scandal: Inspector general refers case to Justice for possible investigation](#), in: Washington Post, available online, 4/13/2012.
- Clark, C. S. (2012): [GSA hammered on 'outrageous' bonuses, conference spending](#), in: Government Executive, 8/1/2012.

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

- Andrus, C. D. (2005): [The Wiki and the Blog: Toward a Complex and Adaptive Intelligence Community](#), available online on SSRN.
- Carafano, J. J. (2011): [Mastering the art of wiki](#), in: JFQ, Issue 60, 1st quarter 2011, pp. 73-78.
- McAfee, A. (2005): Will web services really transform collaboration?, in: MIT Sloan Management Review, pp.78-84
- Weinberger, D. (2010): “Powering Down” Leadership in the U.S. Army, in: Harvard Business Review, November 2010.

Computer Lab

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

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

Required Readings:

- Brabham, D. C. (2008): [Crowdsourcing as a Model for Problem Solving: An Introduction and Cases](#), in: Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 14:1, pp. 75-90
- Chesbrough, H. (2003): The Era of Open Innovation, in: MIT Sloan Management Review, Volume: 44, Issue: 3, pp. 35-41.
- McKinsey & Company (2009): [And the winner is... Capturing the promise of philanthropic prizes](#), available online.
- Mergel, I. (2011): [Crowdsourced Ideas Make Participating in Government Cool Again](#), in: PA Times, American Society for Public Administration, Vol. 34, No. 4, October 2011, p. 4 & 6, Special Issue: From Bureaucratic to Cool: A Call for Public Service.

Case:

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

Computer Lab:

Crowdsourcing 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:

- Berinato, S., Clark, J. (2010): Six Ways to Find Value in Twitter's Noise, in: Harvard Business Review, June 2010, pp.
- Hannun, R. (2013): Forget money, forget politics. Which global leader really rules the Twitterverse?, in: Foreign Policy, available online:
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/08/09/klout_what_twitter_teaches_us_about_world_leaders
- Hoffman, D. L., Fodor, M. (2010): Can You Measure the ROI of Your Social Media Marketing?, in: MIT Sloan Management Review, Volume: 52, Issue: 1, pp. 41-49.
- Solis, B. (2012): Calculate the ROI of Social Media, available online:
<http://www.briansolis.com/2012/10/calculate-the-roi-of-social-media/>

Recommended Readings:

- Mergel, I. (2012): Chapter 7 - Social Media Metrics, in: Mergel, I. (2012): Social media in the public sector, pp. 122-142.

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)**
