

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

COMM 160- SOCIAL MEDIA THEORY

I. Basic Course Information

A. Course Number and Title: COMM 160-Social Media Theory

B. New or Modified Course: New

C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Spring Year: 2022

D. Effective Term: Fall 2023

E. Sponsoring Department: Communication and Languages

F. Semester Credit Hours: 3

G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3 Lecture: 3
Laboratory:
Out of class student work per week: 6

H. Prerequisites/Corequisites: N/A

I. Laboratory Fees: N/A

J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: **Richard Treut, ext. 8429, Bick.Treut@raritanval.edu; Dean Patrice Marks, ext. 8802, Patrice.Marks@raritanval.edu**

II. Catalog Description

This course covers four basic topics surrounding social media: First it provides an overview of the role social media plays in society. Using a research-based approach students will explore how the internet and digital communication technologies influence society. Through their exploration students will gain a knowledge of historical, cultural and theoretical impacts of social media. Second, students will begin to address social media analytics and understanding the metrics used. Third, students will discover personal and professional branding strategies in social media. Lastly, students will research ethical issues regarding social media.

III. Statement of Course Need

- A. Social media has become a ubiquitous form of communication throughout our students' lives, creating new communication patterns with implications for our interpersonal relationships, societal standards, and advocacy. Social media platforms and emerging technologies have changed the way people gather, use and share information. Social media specialists communicate with the public through various platforms as they run employers' social media accounts, and work to build brand reputation. This course creates a foundational understanding of these forms of communication and is offered as a requirement in the Social Media Specialist Certificate Program.
- B. This course is not designed for transfer.

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course meets a program requirement for Social Media Specialist Certificate.
- C. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, www.njtransfer.org; b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

- A. Social Media History
 - a. Pre-1997
 - b. 1997-to present day
- B. Social Media and Culture
 - a. Interpersonal
 - b. Social Awareness
 - c. Education
 - d. Marketing
- C. Social Media and Persuasion Theories
- D. Social Media Analytics
 - a. Gathering data
 - b. Interpreting data
 - c. Measuring performance/Return on Investment (ROI)
- E. Social Media and Personal Branding
- F. Social Media and Ethical Issues
 - a. Privacy
 - b. Inappropriate Communication
 - c. Distortion of information
 - d. Transparency
 - e. Clickbait

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the history and development of Social Media (G.E. 7)
2. Explain the impact of Social Media on culture (G.E. 8)
3. Apply media ethics (G.E. Ethical Reasoning and Action)
4. Use Social Media analytics and metrics to determine ROI (G.E. 2)
5. Access and apply research on which to build Social Media campaigns (G.E. Information Literacy)

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Use information provided to understand the history and state of social media.
2. Recognize and explain the impact of social media on culture.
3. Discuss ROI of social media campaigns.
4. Explain persuasion theories in the context of social media.
5. Explain and evaluate social media metrics.
6. Apply personal and professional branding principles as they relate to social media.
7. Explain ethical issues surrounding social media and marketing influence.

C. Assessment Instruments

1. research papers
2. demonstrations
3. essays
4. journals
5. portfolios
6. tests/quizzes

VII. Grade Determinants

- A. essays
- B. projects
- C. tests
- D. presentations

Given the goals and outcomes described above, LIST the primary formats, modes, and methods for teaching and learning that may be used in the course:

- A. lecture/discussion
- B. small-group work
- C. computer-assisted instruction
- D. guest speakers
- E. student oral presentations
- F. simulation/role playing

- G. student collaboration
- H. independent study

VIII. Texts and Materials

- A. Suggested textbook- Zhong, Bu (2022) Social Media Communication: Trends and Theories. Hoboken, NJ John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- B. interviews
- C. journals
- D. film and video
- E. audio sources
- F. web sources
- G. other computer-based sources

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

IX. Resources

- A. Video Projection
- B. CATT Classroom
- C. Internet Resources
- D. Social Media Analytic Programs