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**JRNL 332.01: Social Media and Audience**

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Scope
This course is about teaching students to appreciate audiences. To be able to identify specific
groups and users of information, research their digital and social media use and craft content for
social media platforms tailored to reach and engage those audiences. Students will learn the
basics of audience research and learn best practices for the major social media platforms.

Grading options
This course may be taken for a traditional letter-grade and may not be taken credit/no-credit. The
Montana University System’s plus/minus grading system will be used in this class.

Class Meetings
Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30-4:50 p.m., in DAH 009.

Instructor Info
Lee Banville, Professor, School of Journalism.
Office: Don Anderson Hall 406
Office hours: Mondays 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and Thursday 3:30-4:30 p.m. I’m also available at other times
by appointment.
Office phone: 243-2577.
My regular e-mail: lee.banville@umontana.edu.

Required Textbook
There will be reading and quizzes based on those readings, but the readings will be posted on
Moodle and distributed in class. There is no required textbook for this class.

Successful JRNL 332 students will:

- Understand the concept of audience engagement and its different uses within a newsroom or
  any organization.
- Have a basic understanding of active and passive audience research, how to conduct small-scale
  surveys and focus groups and working knowledge of online analytics.
- Produce content and analyze impact of different kinds of Facebook posts.
- Produce content and assess reach of Twitter posts.
- Produce content for other major social media platforms like Instagram, LinkedIn, SnapChat and
  Pinterest.
Course Grading

10% Attendance and Participation
10% Completion of Google Analytics training
20% Social media analysis and strategy for yourself
15% Analysis and Benchmarking work for partner
15% Quizzes and in-class content assignments
30% Content for social networks

Attendance and participation

Come to class and stay for the entire class period. Three unexcused will result in the lowering of your final grade a full letter grade. Excused absences must be cleared with me ahead of time. A couple of times this semester we may have meetings that fall outside of class time and there may be classes where you will not be expected to attend. If you are unsure of whether your attendance is mandatory, please email me.

Cell phones must be off or on vibrate while you are in class. Desktop computers should only be used for coursework. Anyone whose phone rings during class will be made fun of by me.

Academic Honesty

I expect your honesty in presenting your own work for this course. Academic misconduct at The University of Montana is subject to an academic penalty ranging from failing the assignment to expulsion from the university. Students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321

Plagiarism

As defined by “The University of Montana Student Conduct Code” plagiarism is: “Representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.” This is strictly prohibited in this class and any case of plagiarism in this course will be subject to the penalties outlines in the student code of conduct.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability from Disability Services. Please speak with me after class or during my office hours to discuss the details. For more information, visit the Disability Services for Students website at http://life.umt.edu/dss.

Basic course structure:

1 Week on Audience Engagement goals and understanding
2 Weeks analyzing other social media accounts and developing your plan for your account.
2 Weeks on Audience Research (The Right Angle/Journalism School/Other)
2 Weeks of Social Strategy development
3 Weeks on Content Development
2 Weeks on social media analytics
3 Weeks on metric analysis and second round of content
Section I: Audience Engagement as a Goal
It is, as you will find out, a bit of a buzz word. Something that many people want and you can market, but not everyone agrees what it entails and how to do it well. This first week, we will examine the concept, how it is being done and why it is important.

For Wednesday, read this PDF of "The best ways to build audience and relevance by listening to and engaging your community."

Also, read this brief blog post about "Define the Jargon: Audience Engagement"

Assignment: Choose a platform and a news organization or journalist and explore the content and come up for Monday a one-page description of who you think their audience is.

After that, you will use this research to develop a social media plan for yourself that will be implemented throughout the semester.

Section II: Audience Research

We will explore how to target and research audiences through the use of active research (surveys, panels and focus groups) and passive monitoring (Comments, Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, etc.)

During this section, you will examine user surveys and analysis of those surveys, construct and conduct a focus group for the School of Journalism and/or other partners and become conversant in the use of major digital and social media analytics.

To begin this section, you will read the chapter of Media Audience Research posted on Moodle as well as the chapter of Jeff Jarvis’s book Geeks Bearing Gifts on Metrics (also on Moodle).

Assignment: We will work with a “client” – either the j-school, the Right Angle podcast or another partner to research their audience strategy and then develop and test content for those organizations. You will be working in a group to do this.

Section III: Benchmarking and Metrics

One of the major components of dealing with digital media and social media in particular is how to use benchmarking and metrics to gauge the effectiveness of content.

Without strategy, analytics can become an end to itself and so we want to master the numbers so they do not master us.

To do that we will do a few things:
• You will complete Google Analytics training and email me the certificate.
• We will be doing a couple of assignments to develop benchmarks and assess content.

Section III: Content: Test and Repeat

With a social media strategy set up and a basic understanding of benchmarking and metrics in hand, we will create content for multiple platforms for both partners.

Central to this work will also be assessing the relative performance of the content, using strategic benchmarks.

We will then revise content and try new versions of content to attempt to better reach target audiences.

Additionally, we may develop practice content for all major social media.