Course Title: Personal Branding and Digital Communication

Course #: 1869

Course Description: Our Connected World is a unique and timely course. Students will be blending traditional academic skills with the modern and current content found in this course. Topics such as social media and marketing, educational uses for social media, and the professional integration of social media will be explored at length. This will allow students to navigate through their educational and professional pathways with imperative technological savvy while strengthening study skills and sparking an interest in future business and marketing pursuits. Students will obtain this knowledge through extensive reading of course materials and other prescribed readings, multiple academic writing assignments, listening, speaking and critical thinking.

UC/CSU Approval: UC approval pending

Grade Level: 11-12

Estimated Homework Per Week: 1 hour

Prerequisite: N/A

Recommended Prerequisite Skills: N/A

Course Grade Scale:
- Classwork - 30%
- Projects - 50%
- Final Exam/Project - 20%

Major Assessments/Units/Topics:

Unit One: History of the Internet & Social Media

The Internet has evolved quite a bit in its short history. The way it has integrated itself into our lives has changed and many people take it for granted. Students will analyze their use of Social Media, Social Networking, and technology in general. Students will use that analysis to think about what life was like in the past with different technology, and what may be in store for the future. A focus will be on online communities and how the Internet has flattened our world.
Students will read and analyze articles on the subject, look at historical artifices (such as old websites on the Way Back Machine), and reflect on their own experiences.

Key Assignment:

- Students will choose an element of a current technology (ex. Instagram, Google Chat, etc) and create three different flowcharts of how the technology works. One will be how it worked in the past, how it works today, and how it may work in the future. For example, the "Past Flowchart" for Instagram would be using a 35mm film camera, getting the film developed, and then driving to a friend’s house to show them their photos.

Unit Two: An Online Presence

In the early days of the Internet, having a handle or avatar was part of the fun. But now that the Internet is meshing more and more with people's professional and personal lives, it is important to have an online presence that is representative in a positive way. Students will discuss the importance of creating a presence that may affect them in the future. Students will analyze professional profiles and create their own using best practices. Online harassment, bullying, and other issues will be discussed. Students will also learn about and discuss online safety and privacy. Students will watch the documentary "Citizenfour", about the uncovering of the NSA. Students will debate and discuss the pros and cons of being "watched". Excerpts of the novel 1984 will be read and discussed.

Key Assignment:

- Create a Profile: Students will study how to make honest and engaging profiles based on the Tofurious method. Using a template that the students help create, students will write a short narrative about themselves to create a personal connection. They will also pick out or take two photos that represent them to go along with the profile. This profile will be used on the students’ blog.

Unit Three: Authentic Blogging

Online content creation has become a huge money-making industry in just the past decade. Youtube, Instagram, and Facebook have all revolutionized how people interact with photos, writing, and video. The Authentic Blogging unit is the first step in content creation for the students. Students create their own blog after learning how to analyze the market and fill a need. Students will create online content with writing and photos for the duration of the course. Students will ultimately create a large portfolio of writing and images as online content for their blog.

Key Assignment:
Blog project: This project will continue for the remainder of the course. Students will choose a passion (food, fashion, lifestyle, social justice, etc...) and write a blog about it. Students are to create all original content, including writing and photos. Students will connect with other blogs from around the world, comment on other student blogs to provide feedback and critique and try to build a readership.

Unit Four: The Social Network(s)

The Internet is an incredibly noisy place. Each social network is used differently and has strengths and weaknesses. This unit focuses on digging deeper into the individual social networks. Students analyze the history of the social networks, discuss on how it has changed the world, what sort of content it creates, and a variety of other details (how much money it makes, how it is evolving, what it's like to work for the company, etc). Students will also analyze the data Facebook and Twitter collects and learn how to leverage it to benefit their personal blogs. Students will be able to use critical thinking to determine which social network would be most effective to market an idea. They will expand on the previous idea by diving into how social networks can influence their academic and professional careers.

Key Assignment:

- Social Network Research Presentations: Students work in groups of 2 and 3 and pick a unique social network to research further. Students research the history of the social network, analyze the content it creates, and discuss the uses of it. Students will do thorough research and create a short presentation (using the social network in some form) and teach the other students about that particular social network.
- Students will develop social networks of their own and use background knowledge to further their academic and professional goals.

Unit Five: Social Media and Marketing

Social Media and Marketing focuses on the marketing side of social media. Students will learn about how social media can enhance marketing. Students will identify and evaluate various social media marketing strategies and explore how social media has changed our cultural expectations about marketing. In class, students will discuss which social media marketing strategies are best suited for different types of businesses, and the role social media marketing will play in the future. Then they will develop their personal brand for marketing via social media tools like LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and their blog.

Key Assignment:

- After watching and listening to Alexis Ohanian’s Ted Talk “How to Make a Splash in Social Media,” students will create a project exploring Reddit and the “Mister Splashy Pants” campaign. In particular, students are to relate what the “Mister Splashy Pants”
situation tells us about the internet and what some of the lessons are that businesses and organizations can learn from it.

- Students develop their “brand” by identifying what it is that they are trying to portray, their target audience and how they plan to address that audience.

**Unit Six: Social Media Campaigns**

In the final unit, students put everything they have learned together. Students will create original online content for a social awareness campaign. Largely self-directed, students take what they learned about online content and social networks and choose an issue in the world to research and create awareness for. This campaign will align with their personal brand and the message they are trying to send about their ideas and values.

**Key Assignment:**

- **Social Change Project:** In this cross-curricular project, students will research a problem in the world and create a multi-faceted social media campaign. Students will design their own website and use multiple social networks to create awareness. Students end the project with a presentation with the purpose of gaining support.

**Materials:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How To Tell Your Story In A Noisy Social World</th>
<th>Gary Vaynerchuk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984 George Orwell</td>
<td>Signet Classics</td>
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