

## Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2024

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area English  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org English - D0537  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 3011.02  
Course Title Social Media Rhetoric  
Transcript Abbreviation SocialMediaRhet  
Course Description This course examines the everyday rhetoric of social media, focusing on how people use social media to engage in the public sphere, to form communities, and to encounter other political, cultural, and global communities.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites Completion of GE Foundation Writing and Information Literacy course  
Exclusions  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 23.1304  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

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## Requirement/Elective Designation

Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will become more critical, ethical readers and writers who can theorize their relationship to social media. By the end of the course, students should be more aware of their rhetorical choices as citizens engaging in the public sphere.

### Content Topic List

- Social media
  - Rhetoric
  - Citizenship and Justice
  - Inclusivity
  - Public sphere
  - Communication

### Sought Concurrence

No

## Attachments

- Concurrence3011\_02.jpg: Concurrence letter  
*(Concurrence. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*
- Curriculum Map September2022.docx: Curriculum Map  
*(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*
- 3011 soc media citizenship form.pdf: Citizenship Theme Panel form  
*(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*
- ENGL3011\_02Mar2023 revision.pdf: Revised Syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Hewitt, Elizabeth A)*

## Comments

- Curricular map has been uploaded.  
A revised syllabus with highlighted changes has been uploaded. *(by Hewitt, Elizabeth A on 04/05/2023 02:28 PM)*
- Please see Panel feedback e-mail sent 12/01/22. *(by Cody, Emily Kathryn on 12/01/2022 10:50 AM)*
- Hello, the file title "3011 soc media citizenship form[98].pdf" appears to be broken and unreadable. Please reupload a readable file for the Panel to review. Thank you! *(by Hilty, Michael on 09/26/2022 12:06 PM)*
- - If this course will be able to count in your major (even as an elective), please provide updated curriculum map.  
- Please request concurrence from the School of Communication. *(by Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal on 07/19/2022 04:24 PM)*

**COURSE REQUEST**  
3011.02 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
Chantal  
04/05/2023

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	06/08/2022 11:34 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	06/08/2022 11:34 AM	Unit Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	07/19/2022 04:24 PM	College Approval
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	07/20/2022 12:12 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	07/23/2022 11:08 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	08/29/2022 05:21 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Hilty, Michael	09/19/2022 02:34 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	09/25/2022 01:41 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	09/25/2022 01:41 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	09/26/2022 10:18 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Hilty, Michael	09/26/2022 12:06 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	09/26/2022 12:49 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	09/26/2022 12:49 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	09/26/2022 12:50 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Cody, Emily Kathryn	12/01/2022 10:50 AM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	04/05/2023 02:28 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Hewitt, Elizabeth A	04/05/2023 02:47 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	04/05/2023 02:59 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin, Deborah Kay Hilty, Michael Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Steele, Rachel Lea	04/05/2023 02:59 PM	ASCCAO Approval

**Dear review committee: You asked that “the syllabus further underscore how the readings, assignments, and course content will allow this class to examine the concept of Citizenship for a Diverse and Just World at an advanced level — taking care to actively and directly use the language of the theme throughout the course proposal materials in order to make implicit Citizenship elements of the class manifest more explicitly. How does this course specifically address the concept of citizenship?”**

**I have added new language to address this throughout the syllabus, and I highlighted those additions in yellow. I added language and ELOs in the unit descriptions in the schedule to convey how the readings, in-class writings, and unit reflections tie into the ELOs for that unit.**

## **English 3011.02: Social Media Rhetoric**

### **General Education Course Proposal**

#### ***Proposal Information***

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- **Proposed Number:** 3011.02
- **Proposed Title:** Social Media Rhetoric
- **Proposed GE Category:** Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World (Theme)
- **Proposed Embedded Literacies Category:** Technology
- **Proposal Type:** New
- **Proposal prepared by:** Dan Keller

#### ***Description, Rationale, and Links to Other English Classes***

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This course examines the everyday rhetoric of social media, focusing on how people use social media to engage in the public sphere. On these platforms, people form communities and can encounter different political, cultural, and global communities. People use social media to engage in public discourse in various ways: they spread news, create attention for important causes, argue about social issues and matters of justice, make others aware of different lived experiences, and move others toward change and action. These are important ways that people enact and form different understandings of citizenship.

Because our perceptions of social media influence how we use it, students will study the rhetoric about social media (claims about it) and within social media (how we use it). Students will learn how social media platforms are designed to enable types of rhetoric (what we say and how, limits that users can also push against). Platform design also shapes experiences of inclusivity and diversity. We will learn how people work within, around, and against these designs.

Studying social media rhetoric can make students more critical of practices like anonymity, amplification, media manipulation, public shaming, mobbing, and doxing. These practices raise questions about how social media frames understandings of justice and power structures. Not only are matters of justice discussed on platforms (e.g., Black Lives Matter), but just/unjust behavior on

platforms is also a major concern and raises ethical questions. The course aims to help students become more critical, ethical readers and writers operating as citizens in this public sphere. By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate how what they read and write on social media are choices shaped by platform design, socio-historical contexts, and ethical considerations.

In teaching social media as a part of a Digital Media Composing course, I found that students were interested in learning the history and design of platforms, how they can read and write more effectively with them, and how social media rhetoric raises ethical questions. That course (English 2269) was filled with students wanting to fulfill a GE; few were English majors. They wanted to study this thing they engaged with every day. Considering how pervasive and powerful social media rhetoric has become, this social media rhetoric course feels necessary. I believe it will draw interest from many students on all campuses.

The course contrasts with many English courses through its contemporary focus on genres that many students read and write daily. Other WRL courses might incorporate social media as examples of rhetoric. This course, however, provides a deeper examination of social media rhetoric as an everyday practice, helping students connect those practices to central issues in rhetoric and digital media. While this course may consider examples of digital activism, it wouldn't approach them as deeply as the course being proposed on that topic. This course is not explicitly asking students to consider social media for digital activism; instead, it's about examining platform design and the rhetorics around and within platforms; it's about considering our rhetorical options and ethical obligations as citizens; it's about understanding how we form and experience communities; it's about how these designs, options, obligations, and experiences are connected to concepts of citizenship, justice, and difference.

**Relevance to the GE Category**

This class will effectively address the expected learning outcome for the Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World (Theme) category.

Theme: Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World		
Goals	Expected Learning Outcomes	Related Course Content
<b>GOAL 1: <u>Citizenship:</u></b> <b>Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on citizenship, across local, national, and global, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute it.</b>	<b>Successful students are able to ...</b>  <b>1.1</b> Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, global, and/or historical communities.	<b>In this course, students will ...</b> Describe and analyze how citizenship is constructed by different political, cultural, and global communities on social media.
	<b>1.2</b> Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.	Examine how social media enables and limits ways of being an interculturally competent global citizen; study how to be a responsible citizen on social media.
<b>GOAL 2: <u>Just and Diverse World:</u></b> <b>Successful students will examine notions of</b>	<b>2.1</b> Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of	Study how diversity, equity, and inclusion can be enabled, limited, and

<b>justice amidst difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within societies.</b>	diversity, equity, inclusion, and a variety of lived experiences.	articulated through social media platforms and the rhetoric of users.
	<b>2.2</b> Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.	Study how social media reinforces and challenges power structures; how social media platforms and users frame concepts of justice, difference, and citizenship.

This class will also meet the ELOs for the N/A category of embedded literacy.

Technology Literacy		
Goal	Expected Learning Outcomes	Related Course Content
<b>Goal 1: Successful students develop a critical appreciation of the relations between technologies and their contexts (social, cultural, and historical), and of the range of effects and consequences (legal, ethical, political) produced or enabled by particular technologies.</b>	<b>Successful students are able to ...</b>  <b>1.1</b> Critically describe the relationships between technology and society in historical and cultural contexts.	<b>In this course, students will ...</b>  Study and analyze how social media platforms interact with offline life; how platforms enable and promote forms of rhetoric; and how platforms arise in historical and cultural contexts.
	<b>1.2</b> Recognize how technologies emerge and change.	Learn how social media platforms have emerged and changed, with particular attention to platform competition, media ecosystems, and response to user behavior
	<b>1.3</b> Evaluate the social and ethical implications of technology.	Evaluate the social and ethical issues involved with a range of social media practices (e.g., anonymity, amplification, media manipulation, shaming, doxing).

### **Staffing**

Dan Keller, Katie Braun, and Christa Teston are all interested in teaching this class. It is also a course GTAs could teach.

### **Syllabus Status**

A sample syllabus is below, ready for review.

# Syllabus: English 3011.02

## Social Media Rhetoric

English 3011.02  
Ohio State University  
Semester/Year  
Days/Times  
Course Location

Dr. Daniel Keller  
email  
phone  
Office:  
Office Hours:

### Course description and goals:

This 3-credit hour course examines the everyday rhetoric of social media, focusing on how people use social media to engage in the public sphere. On these platforms, people form communities and can encounter different political, cultural, and global communities. People use social media to engage in public discourse in various ways: they spread news and different perspectives, create attention for important causes, argue about social issues and matters of justice, make others aware of different lived experiences, and move others toward change. These are all important ways that people enact and form different understandings of citizenship. **In this course we will read, write about, and discuss how forms of citizenship happen through social media. We are specifically examining how citizenship occurs through public discourse on social media.**

We will do the following:

- Examine common claims about social media, considering them as we create informed viewpoints about social media, its effects, and our relationship to it as citizens.
- Explore social media platforms: how they have emerged and changed, how their designs influence our uses, and how we work within and resist those designs **as rhetorically engaged citizens.**
- Study how matters of justice are framed by social media, examining how “real world” justice gets discussed on social media and how just/unjust behavior on social media raises ethical questions (e.g., censorship, harassment, threats, doxing, shaming, mobbing).
- Study how social media platforms enable and limit diversity and inclusion.
- Examine how social media platforms work, how messages spread, and how rhetorical practices differ across the platforms, **with implications for how we practice citizenship in these spaces.**
- Explore how social media is connected to notions of citizenship, the public sphere, and structures of power. An important thread involves examining how social media challenges traditional senses of things like audiences, private/public distinctions, media gatekeepers, and news and reliable sources of information.

The course aims to help students become more critical, ethical readers and writers who can theorize their relationship to social media. By the end of the course, students should be more aware of their rhetorical choices as citizens engaging in the public sphere through social media.

**Required Texts:** All readings will be available on Carmen. Some are open-access materials on the web; others are available through university databases, which I will link to on Carmen. Bring them to class in an easily accessible format.

## Goals & Outcomes for General Education Curriculum

This course meets the expected learning outcomes for the **Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World** theme. Successful students are able to ...

- 1.1** Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, global, and/or historical communities.
- 1.2** Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.
- 2.1** Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and a variety of lived experiences.
- 2.2** Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.

The course also meets the learning outcomes for **technological literacy**, which results in students being able to ...

- 1.1** Critically describe the relationships between technology and society in historical and cultural contexts.
- 1.2** Recognize how technologies emerge and change.
- 1.3** Evaluate the social and ethical implications of technology.

In units designed around these goals, students will read about and discuss related issues. Students will write about them through reading responses and in-class writing, and they will have opportunities for more extended thinking with unit reflections, two essays, as well as a final essay project that involves research. This course has been designed so that the learning outcomes for technological literacy are woven into the learning outcomes for citizenship for a just and diverse world. For instance, learning about the influential nature of social media platform design is part of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for participating as a citizen through social media. Learning rhetorical theories about how social media can be used to influence public discourse then calls for critical awareness of ethical implications. Learning about the relationship



between technology and society is part of learning about how social media can both reinforce and challenge structures of power.

The readings and writing assignments in this course are intended for advanced-level work (beyond what would be expected in a foundations course, which would involve fewer essays and fewer scholarly readings). Through such work, students should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- Identify different ways of being a citizen through rhetorical actions on social media; evaluate different definitions of citizenship. (ELO 1.1)
- Explain how rhetorical choices on social media are influenced by platform design and connected to ethical concerns; explain how they can become more responsible users of rhetoric on social media; and explain how these issues are connected to enacting citizenship on social media. (ELO 1.1, 1.2)
- Explain how social media platforms have emerged and changed, how they are part of a media ecosystem, and how they both reinforce and challenge power structures. (ELO 1.2)
- Explain how social media offers opportunities to communicate and understand difference, to encounter a variety of lived experiences, to form connections and communities; explain how social media platforms enable and limit diversity and inclusion (ELO 2.1., 2.2)
- Explain how social media is connected to and challenges traditional notions of citizenship and the public sphere, considering issues of inclusivity, diversity, equity, justice, informed publics, and social change (ELO 2.1, 2.2)
- Apply readings/scholarship to central concerns of the course, considering how your thinking has developed in unit reflections, and extending your thinking through essays (ELO 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2).

## Communication and Expectations

**Best options for contacting me:** Use Carmen Inbox or email [keller.507@osu.edu](mailto:keller.507@osu.edu): I will do my best to respond within 24 hours, M-F between 9 am and 5 pm. I rarely check email evenings or weekends, so please take that into account when trying to contact me. I will also hold office hours \_\_\_\_\_. If those times do not work for you, then contact me to set up an appointment.

Please know that office hours are not just reserved for questions and confusion. If you are interested in course topics and want to talk more, I'm delighted to do so. If you want to learn more about the English major or about college in general, I'm equally happy to talk about those subjects.

**Expectations:** This course is about social media, and I welcome you to bring your experiences, knowledge, and enthusiasm. We will read and write a lot about this topic. Much of that writing (reading responses, in-class writing) will be informal and low-stakes. The more formal writing is still connected to your experiences and interests. I

will bring my personal experiences as well as my expertise in rhetoric, literacy, and digital media. The readings and topics will challenge some of our common viewpoints on social media. This course is an opportunity to take this everyday experience and see it in new ways.

Some of the reading for this course will be difficult, but I will help by pointing you to the most important aspects and by guiding you through dense parts of the readings. Doing the reading will be crucial for the reading responses and the essays you will write.

### **Required Work:**

Reading responses: 20%

These are due in Carmen the night before we discuss readings in class. I will post more details for this assignment on Carmen, but here are the basics: Write about what surprised or interested you in the reading; select a short passage (more than 2 sentences) to respond to in some way (build on, ask questions about, make connections). Response lengths will tend to be about half a page. These reading responses will guide our discussion in class. I will provide writing prompts to steer your considerations toward citizenship and tech literacy. Throughout the semester, I will give guidance on how to improve these responses. You are allowed to skip four reading responses without penalty. **As noted in the schedule, the readings are organized into units around ELOs; these reading responses will ask students to think critically about the readings, analyze key ideas, make connections between texts.**

In-class writing: 10%

Writing is an excellent way to generate and explore ideas. We will definitely use in-class writing at the beginning of the course to see what you know in relation to the course outcomes and for me to learn about your social media experiences. And we will write at various times to develop our thoughts and to benefit class discussion: nearly everyone has something to say if given time to think about it. Think of this like a participation grade.

Unit Reflections: 10%

The course has 6 units: (1) rhetoric about social media; (2) how platforms shape rhetorical choices and experiences; (3) how platforms enable and limit inclusivity and diversity; (4) rhetorical options and ethical obligations; (5) how social media rhetoric circulates; and (6) social media as public sphere.

At the end of each unit, I will give you prompts for reflecting on what you learned that unit. These will ask you to explain your before/after thinking and how it was influenced by significant readings and in-class activities. Because each unit was designed to fulfill aspects of the Expected Learning Outcomes for “Citizenship for a Just and Diverse World,” and technological literacy, the prompts will also ask you to write about those

relevant aspects. That is, the unit reflections will connect directly with how social media frames issues of justice, difference, and citizenship.

Why do I assign unit reflections? It's a way of slowing down and looking back. It's a way of making connections within and between units. It's also a way of developing ideas that may turn into your final project. [at least 1.5 pages]

Essay 1: 10%

This essay draws upon what we learn in Unit 2, which involves the knowledge, skills, and dispositions involved with being engaged in public discourse via social media. This essay will involve an analysis of how platforms shape rhetorical choices and how rhetors work within and against platform design. You will explain why this knowledge matters for citizens engaging in public discourse on social media; you will do so using your definition of how engaging in the public sphere on social media is a form of citizenship. You will draw on relevant readings, observations of social media texts, and your own experiences. [3 pages]

Essay 2: 20%

This essay allows you to choose a topic that weaves together concepts and concerns learned across Units 2-4, which involve issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as intersections of justice, difference, and citizenship, and how these concepts interact with power structures. In-class writings and class discussions will help you narrow the topic. For instance, you might consider writing about examples that offer clear boundaries of just/unjust behavior in relation to shaming/mobbing; or examples of when social media rhetors worked around algorithms to spread awareness of different lived experiences. Whatever you choose, it will consider that intersection of justice, difference, and citizenship. As with Essay #1, this will draw on relevant readings, observations of social media platforms/practices, and your own experiences. [4 pages]

Final Project: 30%

The final project asks you to select a topic inspired by Units 5-6 and that also draws on relevant material from the previous units. *This work involves the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of social media citizenship, how that form of citizenship differs across communities, and how public discourse engages issues of difference and justice.* You will do research to find more sources that help you understand the topic better. Then, you will write an essay that acts like an explainer for a general audience: Why does this topic matter? What's at stake? How should people view the topic, and what should they do about it as citizens on social media? [8 pages]

### Grading Scale:

A	93	B+	87	C+	77	D+	67
A-	90	B	83	C	73	D	60
		B-	80	C-	70		

## Course Policies, Academic Integrity, and Behavior

**Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Critique ideas, not people. Remember that tone is hard to read on screen, so let's be generous with both our writing and reading: try to avoid a rude tone, and try to not read a rude tone where there may not be one. To truly learn from each other, we need to listen and be respectful in our interactions with each other.

**Attendance:** The discussion-based, collaborative nature of this class makes attendance very important. Much of what you'll learn will grow out of class conversations or will be presented in class. Because attendance is important, we will adhere to the following attendance policy: once you accumulate 3 unexcused absences (only absences for documented illnesses, family tragedies, religious observances, or documented university-related travel will be excused), your final grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade (for example, from a B to a B-); each subsequent unexcused absence will lower your final grade by another third.

**Late Work Policy:** It may not seem like much to ask me to re-open a closed assignment, but imagine that you're the fifth person to do so. Late work is inconvenient for how I plan my grading/responding time. I also understand that things happen. I'm trying to balance being understanding with keeping everyone on track and maintaining my ability to teach and grade well. Having said all that, here's what you should know:

- For major assignments (unit reflections, essays), everyone gets a 2-day grace period for turning it in late. After that grace period, I deduct 5 points each day it is late.
- Reading responses cannot be submitted late. Our class discussions are built on those responses.

**Academic Honesty:** It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

## Resources and Support

**Technology Support:** For help with your password, university email, CarmenCanvas, or any other technology issues, questions or requests, contact the IT Service Desk, which offers 24-hour support, seven days a week.

Self-service and chat: [go.osu.edu/it](http://go.osu.edu/it) phone: 614-688-4357 (HELP)

email: [servicedesk@osu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@osu.edu)

**Writing Support:** The Writer’s Studio is an academic support service available to all students. Writing tutors are available for one-to-one tutorials in Warner 210, as are laptops, style manuals, and other assistance. Drop-ins are welcome, or you can call 366-9411. Visit them directly or check out their helpful website at <http://newark.osu.edu/students/student-life/the-writers-studio/>

**Disability Services:** The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: Warner 226 (740) 366-9441, <http://newark.osu.edu/students/student-life/disability-services.html>

## Schedule

- Readings should be completed before class on the days they are listed.
- I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule and to the entire syllabus to meet the needs of the class; I will announce changes in class and also post them on Carmen.

### Unit 1: Rhetoric about social media

*In this unit, we will question common claims made about social media (“it isn’t real life,” “it’s narcissistic,” “platforms are biased/neutral,” and so on). This is important because how we perceive social media influences how we use it and see ourselves in relation to it. We will form nuanced viewpoints about social media, about different forms of citizenship, including the knowledge, skills, and dispositions involved with being engaged in public discourse via social media (ELO 1.1, 1.2)*

#### Week 1

Jan 6: Introduction to the Course. Consider definitions of social media, rhetoric, citizenship, and community. **Why does it matter that we see rhetorical actions on social media as ways of enacting citizenship? What are conceptions of the “public sphere,” and why is social media now associated with those conceptions?**

Jan 8: “Pushing Back on the Rhetoric of ‘Real Life’” by Jordan Frith (12 pages); “The IRL Fetish” by Nathan Jurgenson (8 pages).

## **Week 2**

Jan 14: “What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon” by Theresa M. Senft and Nancy K. Baym (17 pages). Visit the Selfiecity website and read the Imageplots and Findings sections (2 pages).

Jan 16: “The Urge to Share News of Our Lives is Neither New nor Narcissistic” by Lee Humphreys (3 pages); “The Myth of Platform Neutrality” by Anupam Chander and Vivek Krishnamurthy (17 pages).

### **Unit 2: How platforms shape rhetorical choices and experiences**

*Our rhetorical choices and experiences are shaped by platform design: by interfaces, templates, algorithms, and other features. We will explore these features and learn how rhetors work within, around, and against these designs. This unit emphasizes rhetorical concepts for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions involved with being engaged in public discourse via social media (ELO 1.2).*

## **Week 3**

Jan 21: “The Rhetorical Template” by John Gallagher (11 pages); “Twitter’s New Order” by Will Oremus (7 pages). **Essay #1 assigned.**

Jan 23: “People Aren’t Meant to Talk This Much” by Ian Bogost (11 pages); “How TikTok Holds Our Attention” by Jia Tolentino (13 pages).

## **Week 4**

Jan 28: “Algorithmic Circulation: How Content Creators Navigate the Effects of Algorithms on Their Work” by Angela Glotfelter (14 pages); “The Right-time Web: Theorizing the Kairologic of Algorithmic Media” by Taina Bucher (19 pages)

Jan 30: “Gaming Reddit’s Algorithm: r/the donald, Amplification, and the Rhetoric of Sorting” by Ryan P. Shepherd (14 pages). In-class work on Essay #1.

### **Unit 3: How platforms enable and limit inclusivity and diversity**

*Platform design also influences issues of inclusivity, diversity, and equity. We will learn how rhetors work within, around, and against these designs to promote their sense of community. These considerations involve structures of power and have implications for diversity, inclusion, and a variety of lived experiences (ELO 2.1, 2.2).*

## Week 5

Feb 4: “Twitter Made Us Better” by Sarah J. Jackson (4 pages); “The Truth about Black Twitter” by Donovan X. Ramsey (8 pages); “Authenticity on ‘Black Twitter’: Reading Racial Performance and Social Networking” by Raven S. Marah (15 pages).

Feb 6: “‘I Click and Post and Breathe, Waiting for Others to See What I See’: On #FeministSelfies, Outfit Photos, and Networked Vanity” by Minh-Ha T. Pham (18 pages); “Feeling Asian Together: Coping With #COVIDRacism on Subtle Asian Traits” by Crystal Abidin and Jing Zeng (9 pages)

### Essay #1 due before Week 6

## Week 6

Feb 11: “TikTok’s Digital Eugenics: Challenging Ableism and Algorithmic Erasure Through Disability Activism” by Jennifer Sage Rauchberg (10 pages); “TikTok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface” by Jason Parham (16 pages)

Feb 13: “Indigenous Interfaces” by Kristin Arola (14 pages); “Invisible Censorship: TikTok Told Moderators to Suppress Posts by ‘Ugly’ People and the Poor to Attract New Users” by Sam Biddle, Paulo Victor Ribeiro, and Tatiana Dias (17 pages).

## Unit 4: Ethics

*Should platforms limit speech? How should rhetors engage each other? Practices such as anonymity, harassment, threats, doxing, shaming, and mobbing have challenged platforms and rhetors with how to respond. This involves analyzing and critiquing intersections of justice, difference, and citizenship, and how these concepts interact with power structures (ELO 2.2)*

## Week 7

Feb 18: “How Not to be a Troll: Practicing Rhetorical Technofeminism in Online Comments” by Kaitlin Clinnin and Katie Manthey (10 pages). “Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons” by Zachary Laub (8 pages). **Essay #2 assigned.**

Feb 20: “When Online Shaming Goes Too Far” by Jon Ronson (17 minute TED Talk); “The Politics of Digital Shaming” by Rita Koganzon (15 pages).

## Week 8

Feb 25: “Disgust, Distributed: Virtual Public Shaming as Epideictic Assemblage” by Jodie Nicotra (14 pages); “Cancel Culture is Chaotic Good” by Chi Luu (12 pages)

Feb 27: “DRAG THEM: A brief etymology of so-called ‘cancel culture’” by Meredith D. Clark (5 pages); “What’s Shame Got to Do With It?” by Tressie McMillan Cottom” (3 pages) and “Why We Can’t Stop Fighting about Cancel Culture” by Aja Romano (13 pages)

### **Unit 5: How social media rhetoric circulates**

*To use social media in advanced ways, rhetors should understand how platforms have emerged and changed, how they compete with each other and respond to users’ concerns and demands, and how they work within a media ecosystem. This unit draws on rhetorical scholarship for knowledge, skills, and dispositions of engaging in public discourse as a form of citizenship. (ELO 1.2)*

#### **Week 9**

Mar 3: “intro” and “velocity” sections of “Composing for Recomposition: Rhetorical Velocity and Delivery” (5 pages); “Remixing and Reconsidering Rhetorical Velocity” by Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss (9 pages). In-class work on Essay #2.

Mar 5: “Circulation Gatekeepers: Unbundling the Platform Politics of YouTube’s Content ID” by Dustin Edwards (14 pages). In-class work on Essay #2.

**Essay #2 due before Spring Break**

**Spring Break. No class.**

#### **Week 10**

Mar 17: “Rhetorical Exhaustion & the Ethics of Amplification” by Jonathan L. Bradshaw (14 pages).

Mar 19: “Disinformation by Design: The Use of Evidence Collages and Platform Filtering in a Media Manipulation Campaign” by P.M. Krafft and Joan Donovan (20 pages); “Disinformation’s Spread: Bots, Trolls and All of Us” by Kate Starbird (4 pages). **Final Project assigned.**

### **Unit 6: Public spheres**

*Social media opens new challenges and opportunities with multiple audiences and publics: challenges to traditional senses of privacy, reliable information, and media gatekeepers; and opportunities to communicate and understand difference, to form connections and communities, and to promote justice and social change. This work involves the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of social media citizenship (ELO 1.2), how that form of citizenship differs across communities (ELO 1.1), and how public discourse engages issues of difference and justice (ELO 2.2).*



## **Week 11**

Mar 24: “I Tweet Honestly, I Tweet Passionately: Twitter Users, Context Collapse, and the Imagined Audience” by Alice E. Marwick and danah boyd (18 pages); “Finsta vs. Rinsta” by Taylor Lorenz (12 pages).

Mar 26: “When Memes Infiltrate the Physical World” by An Xiao Mina (8 pages); “Black Memes Matter: #LivingWhileBlack With Becky and Karen” by Apryl Williams (11 pages).

## **Week 12**

Mar 31: “Ben Franklin, the Post Office, and the Digital Public Sphere” by Ethan Zuckerman (15 pages)

Apr 2: “Social Media as a Public Values Sphere” by Parker and Bozeman (13 pages)

## **Week 13**

Apr 7: “How Social Justice Slideshows Took Over Instagram by Terry Nguyen (9 pages); “Butterfly Attack: The Origins of Fake Antifa Social Media Accounts” by Erin Gallagher (13 pages). Select one tactic to read from the Case Studies portion of the Media Manipulation Casebook site—many of them involve social media.

Apr 9: “Affective Rhetoric in China’s Internet Culture” by James P. Zappen (8 pages).

## **Week 14**

Apr 14: We will revisit two earlier readings (selected by class vote) and make connections with this unit. We will also do in-class work to prepare for the Final Project.

Apr 16: Last day. Look back at what we learned. In-class work on Final Project (due \_\_\_\_\_).

# GE THEME COURSES

## Overview

Courses that are accepted into the General Education (GE) Themes must meet two sets of Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs): those common for all GE Themes and one set specific to the content of the Theme. This form begins with the criteria common to all themes and has expandable sections relating to each specific theme.

A course may be accepted into more than one Theme if the ELOs for each theme are met. Courses seeking approval for multiple Themes will complete a submission document for each theme. Courses seeking approval as a 4-credit, Integrative Practices course need to complete a similar submission form for the chosen practice. It may be helpful to consult your Director of Undergraduate Studies or appropriate support staff person as you develop and submit your course.

Please enter text in the boxes to describe how your class will meet the ELOs of the Theme to which it applies. Please use language that is clear and concise and that colleagues outside of your discipline will be able to follow. You are encouraged to refer specifically to the syllabus submitted for the course, since the reviewers will also have that document. Because this document will be used in the course review and approval process, you should be *as specific as possible*, listing concrete activities, specific theories, names of scholars, titles of textbooks etc.

Course subject & number: ENG 3011.02

## General Expectations of All Themes

**GOAL 1: Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.**

**Please briefly identify the ways in which this course represents an advanced study of the focal theme.**

In this context, “advanced” refers to courses that are e.g., synthetic, rely on research or cutting-edge findings, or deeply engage with the subject matter, among other possibilities. (50-500 words)

The course examines social media as a form of citizenship, as a way of engaging in public discourse. It challenges students to think of social media usage as more than just an individual matter; for example, Unit 2 examines how platform design (interfaces, templates, algorithms) shapes rhetorical choices and experiences. The course also recognizes that users can push against these designs. This kind of nuance is a core part of the course.

Many of the readings are from scholarly journals, offering a deeper engagement with the subject matter. The readings have been selected to guide students toward complex views: social media platforms, for instance, both enable and limit diversity and inclusivity in different, specific ways. Unit 1 has students analyze rhetoric about social media to form nuanced views about how we should perceive and use social media. Unit 4 raises questions designed to get students thinking about ethical social media use: how can we be ethical, responsible citizens on social media?

The course requires learning rhetorical concepts: circulation, rhetorical velocity, amplification, rhetorical exhaustion, epideictic rhetoric. The course is designed to promote synthesis: readings have been gathered into units, and students will be asked to make connections between them in unit reflections as well as in their essays.

Course subject & number

**ELO 1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-

Students will write responses to the readings, which focus on how social media intersects with citizenship. These responses will incorporate theoretical concepts, personal experiences, and critical questions about the readings. The responses will lead to prompts for in-class writing that will call for more critical analysis and class discussion.

Unit 1 has students analyze rhetoric about social media to form nuanced views about how we should perceive and use social media. Students will form nuanced views about social media and its relationship to “real life” (public discourse, justice, diversity, citizenship). Unit 2 examines platform design, which engages critical thinking by refusing simple answers: how is it true that platform design limits our rhetorical choices as users? How is it also true that users can work within, around, and against these limits? What does this mean for how we engage in public discourse as citizens? Essay 1 asks students to draw on the readings and knowledge from Unit 2 to analyze how platforms shape rhetorical choices, and why that matters for the theme. (Other units and writing projects work in similar ways).

**ELO 1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.**

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Many of the readings are from scholarly journals, offering a deeper engagement with the subject matter. I’ll cite some of those scholars here: Arola; Bradshaw, Bucher; Edwards; Gallagher; Glotfelter; Marah; Nicotra; Shepherd; Abidin and Zeng; Clinnin and Manthey; Ridolfo and DeVoss.

The students will learn and apply rhetorical concepts in reading responses, unit reflections, and essays: circulation, rhetorical velocity, amplification, rhetorical exhaustion, epideictic rhetoric.

In the Final Project, students will do scholarly research to supplement course readings to write an essay similar to a Vox explainer article, something aimed at a wider audience. They will explain why the topic matters, why it matters, and how the audience should see it as social media users and as citizens.

**GOAL 2: Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.**

**ELO 2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.**

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

The first unit—rhetoric about social media—asks students to examine claims made about social media because how people perceive social media influences how they use it. Students are asked to analyze claims in the reading as well as claims they’ve heard outside of class, and to consider their experiences with social media to form nuanced viewpoints about social media. Many of the reading responses will offer opportunities to consider students’ experiences. In-class writings and class discussions raise the best opportunities to ask about connections with other courses (and when teaching this subject, I’ve seen students make connections with history, psychology, sociology, and other rhetoric courses).

And each unit reflection will contain a question about personal experiences and future use. By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate how their social media use is shaped by platform design, socio-historical contexts, and ethical considerations. This course asks students to make connections with their personal experiences and to consider how this course will influence how they use social media in the future (along the thematic lines of the course—in terms of civic participation, ethics, and so on).

**ELO 2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.**

Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

In-class writing and unit reflections are most relevant for this ELO. In addition to their other purposes (analysis, discussion), these writings are designed to help students make connections and to think about what they’ve learned.

At the beginning of the semester, students will write a low-stakes “pre-test” about questions related to the theme and unit topics. Unit reflections will ask students to look back at that “pre-test” writing, to write about what they’ve learned since then, about connections between units, and about out-of-class experiences and how this class will influence future social media use.

The course also has some creative work built into it. One of the readings (Arola’s “Indigenous Interfaces”) asks questions about how Facebook could have been designed differently. All of Unit 2 should get students to see platform design as a visible, changeable thing—as opposed to a thing that seems invisible and inevitable during daily use. In-class writing and discussion during this Unit will involve imagining how these things could be different.

## Specific Expectations of Courses in Citizenship

**GOAL 1: Successful students will explore and analyze a range of perspectives on local, national, or global citizenship, and apply the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship.**

**ELO 1.1 Describe and analyze a range of perspectives on what constitutes citizenship and how it differs across political, cultural, national, global, and/or historical communities.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

A starting view is that social media offers ways of participating in public discourse and that this is a form of citizenship. Students will examine traditional notions of citizenship and how social media complicates those notions. How does social media influence the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that constitute citizenship? By the end of the course, students should be able to articulate what it means to be a responsible citizen on social media.

In Units 2 and 5, students explore platform design and circulation, learning how users work with and against algorithms and templates, and learning how concepts like circulation, rhetorical velocity, amplification, rhetorical exhaustion can make students more thoughtful, skilled users of social media (and of participating in the public sphere through it). Unit 3 and Unit 6 get into different community views of citizenship. Unit 4 explores ethical considerations of how platforms limit speech and how users should engage each other. Practices such as anonymity, harassment, doxing, shaming, mobbing will be examined. This unit asks students to think about the ethics of engaging in the public sphere through social media.

Reading responses, in-class writings, and unit reflections help meet this goal.

**ELO 1.2 Identify, reflect on, and apply the knowledge, skills and dispositions required for intercultural competence as a global citizen.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Social media is worldwide. As Unit 3 explores, platform design and algorithms can limit or increase exposure to difference and diversity. Some readings offer opportunities to think about difference at the global level: "What Does the Selfie Say? Investigating a Global Phenomenon," "Hate Speech on Social Media: Global Comparisons," and "Affective Rhetoric in China's Internet Culture." These readings and the themes of Units 2, 3, 5, and 6 help students think about being a global citizen on social media.

In-class writings, discussions, and the final project (an essay aimed at a public audience) help meet this goal.

**GOAL 2: Successful students will examine notions of justice amidst difference and analyze and critique how these interact with historically and socially constructed ideas of citizenship and membership within societies, both within the US and/or around the world.**

**ELO 2.1 Examine, critique, and evaluate various expressions and implications of diversity, equity, inclusion, and explore a variety of lived experiences.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Unit 3 (inclusivity & diversity) and Unit 6 (public spheres) are particularly relevant here.

Unit 3 explores how social media enables and limits diversity and inclusivity, and how people use social media to form communities, and to represent and encounter a variety of lived experiences.

Some examples of Unit 3 readings: “The Truth about Black Twitter” by Ramsey; “Authenticity on ‘Black Twitter’: Reading Racial Performance and Social Networking” by Marah; and “Indigenous Interfaces” by Arola (which asks “What would Facebook look like if it were designed by and for American Indians?”). “TikTok’s Digital Eugenics: Challenging Ableism and Algorithmic Erasure” by Rauchberg is one of two articles that examines how TikTok’s algorithm has limited diversity and inclusion on the platform.

Unit 6 has readings that give a wider scope to the idea of social media as public sphere, and it extends thematic threads from earlier units. For instance, “When Memes Infiltrate the Physical World” by Mina; “Black Memes Matter: #LivingWhileBlack with Becky and Karen” by Williams; and “Social Media as a Public Values Sphere” by Parker and Bozeman help students examine and evaluate the impact of various expressions of diversity, equity, and inclusion on civic identity and political discourse.

Nearly all of the units touch on this ELO in some way, but the reading responses and in-class writing for Unit 3, the Unit 3 reflection, and Essay 2 will give students the most sustained opportunity to write about this ELO.

**2.2 Analyze and critique the intersection of concepts of justice, difference, citizenship, and how these interact with cultural traditions, structures of power and/or advocacy for social change.** Please link this ELO to the course goals and topics and indicate *specific* activities/assignments through which it will be met. (50-700 words)

Unit 3 (inclusivity & diversity), Unit 4 (ethics), and Unit 6 (public spheres) are particularly relevant here.

Unit 3 gets at issues of who gets seen and who has a voice on social media, and how power structures and inequities online replicate those offline. It gets at how people form communities to respond to injustices offline and online. Examples from Unit 3 readings: “Feeling Asian Together: Coping with #COVIDRacism on Subtle Asian Traits” by Abidin and Zeng; “TikTok’s Digital Eugenics: Challenging Ableism and Algorithmic Erasure” by Rauchberg; and “Indigenous Interfaces” by Arola. Arola’s article asks the question “What would Facebook look like if it were designed by and for American Indians?”

Unit 4 continues to examine the power of platforms (started in Unit 2, continued in Unit 3) regarding ethical responses to harmful rhetoric. How should platforms limit speech? What are the ethical responsibilities of users as citizens, as rhetors engaging in the public sphere? What is just/unjust behavior on social media? Some examples from the readings: “Disgust, Distributed: Virtual Public Shamings as Epideictic Assemblage” by Nicotra; “What’s Shame Got to Do With It?” by Cottom; and “Practicing Rhetorical Technofeminism” by Clinnin and Manthey.

Unit 6 continues many of the threads from earlier units (platform design, diversity, ethics) and provides more context (traditions, power structures) and more examples of how online-offline distinctions are complex and raise questions of how citizens use rhetoric (to express difference, convey values, promote social change). Some examples of readings: “When Memes Infiltrate the Physical World” by Mina; “Black Memes Matter: #LivingWhileBlack with Becky and Karen” by Williams; and “Ben Franklin, the Post Office, and the Digital Public Sphere” by Zuckerman.

The reading responses, in-class writing, unit reflections, and essays are designed to have students analyze and critique along these lines. The readings offer theories, arguments, and evidence to discuss, critique, apply, and reflect upon with personal experiences.