## **Media and Social Networks (with Digital Methods for Analysis Module)**

## Prof. Gaia Amadori; Prof. Elisabetta Locatelli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Social media platforms have an increasingly relevant impact within society and contemporary communication processes. The course intends to present theoretical models to students so as to be able to understand how they work, in particular the platform society’s, and the production and organisation logic regulating them, with emphasis on network relations. Particular focus will be placed on the role of social media in the production and use of information linked to the health sector.

By the end of the course, students must be able to:

1. Knowledge and ability to understand: understand the principles of social media platforms; identify different ways of communicating on social media with particular reference to institutional communication and health/well-being communication; understand the functions and methods of social network analysis.
2. Applied knowledge and ability to understand: assessing the action of platform logic on communication dynamics; produce communication content linked to health; carry out social network analysis applied to social media.
3. Independence of judgement: Identify and recognise the motivational structures underlying the use and consumption of social media; assess the resource/objective ratio of a social media-based communication strategy.
4. Communication skills: Structure the presentation of a communications project.
5. Ability to learn: Acquire a working methodology related to workflow management, problem solving, information management and curiosity.

In more detail:

In *Part 1* (Prof. Elisabetta Locatelli)

Students will be introduced to the principles of social action in social media; the principles of social media platforms; and the dynamics of social influence in social media. The module will also examine the principles of communication on social media, in particular those related to the area of institutional communication and health and well-being communication.

In *Part 2* (Prof. Gaia Amadori)

Students will study concepts and methods of social network analysis and apply them to the study of communication flows in social networks and on the internet. There will be a particular focus on the study of the geographies of relationships between groups, accounts and content on social media.

***COURSE CONTENT***

In *Part 1* (Prof. Elisabetta Locatelli)

The first module aims to analyse, from a theoretical point of view, the social mechanisms of social media and algorithms and the operating principles for designing, preparing, managing and analysing social media communication campaigns. More specifically, the module will focus on the following topics:

1. Social media: Scenario, social principles, logic of the platforms.
2. Social media and the communication of health and well-being: Scenarios and principles.
3. Social media and processes of social influence: Theories and models.
4. Development of content for social media

The first part presents and discusses prominent communication projects with guests. There will also be projects.

In *Part 2* (Prof. Gaia Amadori)

The second module aims to examine the flows of communication in social networks, on the internet and on social media through simplified models aimed at visualising and reconstructing the geography of relations and analysing their form, evolutionary trajectories and reciprocal influences. To this end, Gephi data-analysis software will be explored and used.

***READING LIST***

*Part 1* (Prof. Elisabetta Locatelli):

K. Cotter, *Playing the visibility game: How digital influencers and algorithms negotiate influence on Instagram*. New Media & Society, 21*(4)*, pp. 895-913, 2019.

L. Fernández-Luque-T. Bau, *Health and social media: perfect storm of information.* Healthcare Informatics Research, 21*(2*), pp. 67-73, 2015.

E. Locatelli, *Influencers as socio-technical actors: mapping the paths of influence and the traces of the digital influencers’ system in Italy*. Journal Of Sociocybernetics, 2020, 17 *(1)*, 1-18. doi:10.26754/ojs\_jos/jos.202013940.

E. Locatelli, *Influencers as socio-technical actors: mapping the paths of influence and the traces of the digital influencers’ system in Italy*. Journal Of Sociocybernetics, 2020; 17 (1): 1-18. doi:10.26754/ojs\_jos/jos.202013940.

S. Moorhead-D. Hazlett-L. Harrison-J. Carroll-A. Irwin, et al. *A new dimension of health care: systematic review of the uses, benefits, and limitations of social media for health communication*. Journal of Medical Internet Research, 2013, 15*(4)*, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3636326/> .

E. Uzunoğlu-S. Misci Kip, *Brand communication through digital influencers: Leveraging blogger engagement*. International Journal of Information Management, 2014, 34*(5)*, pp. 592-602.

J. Van Dijck-T. Poell, *Understanding Social Media Logic*. Media and Communication, 2013, 1*(1)*, pp. 2–14. <https://www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication/article/view/70/60>

All articles are accessible via the University Library’s OPAC.

Details of further reading material in the form of essays, research and course notes will be made available on Blackboard.

*Part 2*

 Teaching materials used in class and uploaded onto Blackboard.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be delivered by the following means: commentary of texts, presentation of research and case studies, development of practical-operational competences of a critical and analytical nature and participation in projects. The first part of the course involves participation in a group project based on the brief assigned by the lecturer as per the learning-by-doing approach.

Students will also have the opportunity to explore course themes through the testimony of the professionals who will be contributing to the lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The final mark for the course will based on the assessments of both parts of the course, as follows: *Part 1* 70%, *Part 2* 30%.

For part 1, the mark is broken down as follows:

1. Individual written test (50%) which aims to check students’ understanding and ability to apply course content and the reading material.
2. A group project (50%) conducted by the students based on the brief assigned in class. The assessment of the project will be based on: ability to respond to the instructions and guidance provided in a relevant and timely manner (30%); creativity and originality of the proposed contents (30%); ability to argue the communication proposal (30%); organisation and graphic aspect of the final presentation (10%).

For *Part 2*, there will be an individual written test to verify the understanding of concepts and methods and the ability to apply this to exercises and case studies.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

In order to benefit from the course, students should have basic Excel skills (importing files, inserting columns, rows, basic formulas) acquired through Ilab/Blackboard tutorials and B2 level in English for studying the reading material.

Students who for reasons they can justify related to their studies are unable to attend the course must contact the lecturer at the beginning of the year to arrange a supplementary or replacement exam syllabus.

Should the Covid-19 health emergency prevent in-person teaching and/or assessment, ongoing or final, remote alternatives will be put in place via the university Blackboard platform, Microsoft Teams and any other means, details of which will be provided at the beginning of the course, so as to ensure the learning objectives set out in the study plans are fully met whilst safeguarding our students’ health.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.