# New Media Language and Tools

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

Digital media is a pervasive feature of contemporary society: convergent, connective, mobile and increasingly participatory.

The course aims to introduce students to digital media by presenting the historical aspects, theory and research surrounding the transformation of communication and culture in today’s connected and platform society.

Drawing on theories of the social modelling of technology and the results of empirical research, the course will focus in particular on investigating the processes of appropriation of digital media in the micro contexts of daily life and the macro-social consequences of mediatisation.

Students will take part in practical activities to acquire basic knowledge about brand communication strategies for social media.

By the end of the course, students will therefore be able to understand and identify the different historical-cultural phases in the evolution of the internet and digital media, as well as the different theoretical models of the socio-cultural matrix developed to account for the phases of development and diffusion as well as the various ways technology is used socially; they will gain an awareness of the mechanisms of the new digital platforms on a socio-technical level.

Furthermore, students will develop and be able to apply critical skills and independence of judgement to the consequences of the dissemination and use of digital media; they will be able to analyse and develop strategies for a social media promotional campaign.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is structured as follows:

– an introduction to the defining issues of the digital media as socio-technical artifacts on a technological, cultural, social and economic level;

– the reconstruction of the historical phases and various socio-cultural influences that have characterized the development and evolution of the digital media;

– theoretical interpretations of the social consequences of digital media, focusing particularly on mediatisation, datafication and social-digital inequalities in the platform society; and the theoretical perspectives that analyse the relationship between digital media and daily life, with a focus on its impact on social relations and on the processes of identity building for individuals and groups.

The course also includes an integral practical component designed to furnish students with methods and tools to practise developing– in the form of a group assignment – a content strategy for brands in the context of social media.

***READING LIST***

G. Balbi - P. Magaudda, *Storia dei media digitali. Rivoluzioni e continuità,* Laterza, Rome 2021.

L. Paccagnella e A. Vellar, *Vivere Online: Identità, Relazioni, Conoscenza,* Il Mulino, Bologna, 2016.

Other bibliographic materials may be made available online during the course, as well as the lecture slides, which are considered additional study materials.

Optional additional reading:

J. van Dijck, T. Poell e M. de Waal, *Platform Society. Valori pubblici e società connessa,* Guerini, Milan 2019.

N. Vittadini, *Social media studies. I social media alla soglia della maturità: storia, teoria e temi*, Franco Angeli, Milan, 2018.

Those who choose not to participate in the practical-applied component of the course (the practical group task) must study the following text:

G. Di Fraia, *Social Media Marketing. Strategie e tecniche per aziende B2B B2C,* Hoepli, Turin, 2015 (except chaps. 5 and 6).

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course includes classroom lectures, which will explore the subject in-depth by incorporating research materials, critical readings of theoretical essays and participation in public initiatives related to the course content.

The practical exercise will involve group assignments culminating in a presentation.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam covers the general part of the course and the practical component, both of which are mandatory for all students.

It will include:

* A written test at the end of the course (with open questions) or an oral examination (on the standard exam dates) on the theory-based content of the syllabus covered in class and on the course reading list.
* Students will give a presentation on a social media content strategy campaign for a brand/product that they have chosen. The aim of the presentation is to demonstrate students’ understanding and application of the methods and tools introduced during the practical task or, for those unable to participate, an oral examination on the text specified on the reading list.

There will be a single final mark based on:

* the result of the written test or the oral examination on the general part of the course, which is worth 70% of the final mark: the open questions in the written test will all be worth a maximum of 30 marks.
* Both the practical task and the oral examination on the reading list will be marked out of 30 and are each worth 30% of the final result.

In addition, students who participate in a public initiative (conference, exhibition, workshop, etc.) related to the themes of the course and submit a written report on its contents will obtain an additional mark for the general part of the course.

In both the written and oral assessments, students must demonstrate: knowledge of the history, theory and key figures related to the internet and social media studies covered in the general part of the course; and familiarity with and understanding of the contents of the texts on the reading list.

The examiner will be looking for: relevant answers, the appropriate use of specific terminology, logical and coherent structure of the discourse and the ability to identify conceptual links and open issues.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students can find all information on the syllabus, the course in general, and any classroom or timetable changes on the lecturers’ university webpage. Learning materials, documents, information and any useful notices will be available on the course Blackboard platform. The platform may also be used for online lessons (both live and pre-recorded), as well as for carrying out individual tasks and collaborative learning activities by the students.

*Prerequisites*

Fundamental prerequisites are basic knowledge of the theories of communication, both interpersonal and mediatised, and of the general development of the media system and the main periods of media history.

Should the Covid-19 health emergency prevent in-person teaching, distance learning alternatives will be put in place, details of which will be provided to students in good time.

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.