

<b>Course Title</b>	Social Media Communication				
<b>Course Code</b>	DLNLT510				
<b>Course Type</b>	Elective				
<b>Level</b>	Master (LLM)				
<b>Year / Semester</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> / Fall				
<b>Teacher's Name</b>	Dr Evie Lambrou				
<b>ECTS</b>	10	<b>Lectures / week</b>		<b>Laboratories/week</b>	
<b>Course Purpose</b>	<p>This course aims at developing students' essential knowledge, attitudes, and critical thinking skills so they can acquire a solid theoretical foundation as well as practical skills for effectively navigating and utilizing social media with ethical responsibility.</p> <p>Through a combination of theoretical exploration and practical application, this course will examine the impact of social media: It will investigate how social media influence public opinion, shape cultural trends, and drive political and business outcomes. A critical approach will be taken to discuss the ethical boundaries of freedom of speech in the digital world</p> <p>The <i>Social Media Communication</i> course provides a critical understanding of how communication through social media affects the political, business, and sociocultural spheres. Social media is not merely a communication tool but a complex environment that shapes the public sphere, our perception of reality, and our social relationships. The course explores communication on social media from various perspectives, including discussions on truth, power, ethics, and control, as well as practical topics such as personal and professional branding, crisis management, and social media research. Additionally, we analyse the role of algorithms, content strategies, and the effects of digital communication on user behaviour.</p> <p>Through a balance of theory and practice, the course offers students opportunities to apply what they learn by developing blogs and vlogs, analysing social media content, and writing magazine-style articles. Furthermore, we examine the challenges and opportunities arising from the continuous evolution of the digital ecosystem, enhancing the skills necessary for effective communication in the modern digital world.</p>				
<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyse the impact of social media communication in political, business, and sociocultural contexts.</li> <li>2. Evaluate the ethical implications and power dynamics embedded in social media platforms.</li> <li>3. Identify strategies for effective personal and professional branding in digital spaces.</li> </ol>				

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand risk management principles for addressing challenges in social media communication.</li> <li>Conduct content analysis on social media and present findings in the form of a scholarly article.</li> <li>Create engaging and effective blogs and video blogs (vlogs) that demonstrate an understanding of both theory and practice in social</li> </ol>		
<b>Prerequisites</b>	none.	<b>Corequisites</b>	none.
<b>Course Content</b>	<p>The rise of social media is directly linked to the evolution of digital technology and the internet. From the early online forums and blogs to modern interactive platforms, online communication has undergone a radical transformation. In the early 2000s, the emergence of networks such as Friendster, MySpace, and later Facebook marked the transition from static websites to dynamic platforms that enable real-time interaction. The development of smartphones and mobile applications accelerated this shift, making social media an integral part of our daily lives. Today, these platforms are not just communication tools but essential spaces for expression, information, business, and political activity. Social media does not merely serve as a means of communication but also creates multifaceted connections and relationships with cultural, psychological, and economic implications.</p> <p><b>1.Introduction to Communication and Social Networks:</b> discusses the evolution, significance, and key concepts of social media communication. The following topics will be covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The historical evolution of social media platforms</b> (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, TikTok) and the transition from early forums and blogs to today's interactive platforms.</li> <li><b>Core concepts of social media communication</b>, such as networking, information diffusion (virality), algorithms, and personalized content feeds.</li> <li><b>The role of social media in shaping public discourse and cultural trends</b>, with an emphasis on participatory culture and trend creation.</li> <li><b>Types of communication in social networks</b>, including interpersonal, mass, and multimodal communication.</li> <li><b>The dynamics of social media use</b>, including its effects on social behavior, user psychology, and perceptions of reality.</li> <li><b>Challenges and ethical issues in social media communication</b>, such as misinformation, political polarization, privacy protection, and hate speech.</li> </ul> <p><b>2.Power, ethics and control in social media:</b> This unit examines ethical dilemmas, power dynamics, and control mechanisms inherent in social media platforms.</p>		

We will explore the following topics:

- **Misinformation and fake news:** causes, consequences, and countermeasures.
- **Ethical concerns in social media practices**, such as data mining, targeted advertising, and user privacy.
- **Power dynamics:** algorithmic bias, platform governance, and user activities.
- **Case studies on censorship, surveillance, and the role of social media in democratic and authoritarian regimes.**

**3. Identity on Social Media Platforms** In the digital age, personal and professional identity is no longer static but is shaped and evolves through interactions on online platforms. This unit explores how individuals create, manage, and adapt their digital identity, balancing privacy and public image, as well as personal and professional presence. Topics Covered: · Self-Presentation and Branding: Strategies for building a cohesive identity that reflects values, interests, and professional goals. Topics discussed:

- **Self-Presentation and Branding:** Strategies for building a cohesive identity that reflects values, interests, and professional goals
- **Balancing Privacy and Public Image:** Challenges and approaches to managing personal data and online exposure. ·
- **Algorithms and Audience Expectations:** The role of algorithms in promoting or suppressing content and how audience reactions influence personal and professional identity. ·
- **Benefits and Challenges of Digital Self-Presentation:** The impact of online reputation, mental health concerns related to maintaining a digital persona, and the risks of identity fragmentation due to excessive adaptation to trends and social expectations.
- **Tools and Techniques for Managing Digital Identity:** Methods for monitoring and evaluating online presence, adapting to changes in digital image, and best practices for protecting individual identity online.

**4. Risk management on Social Media:** focuses on identifying, understanding, and addressing **the risks associated with social media use**, both for individuals and organizations. Students will learn how to handle challenges such as **privacy breaches, reputational damage, and legal issues**, while developing **strategies for effective crisis communication**.

**Topics Covered:**

**Social Media Risks:**

- **Types of risks:** privacy violations, cyberbullying, trolling, reputational damage, and legal liabilities.
- **The impact of social media risks** on individuals, businesses, and organizations.

- **Case studies of high-profile social media crises** (e.g., data breaches, viral controversies, and corporate backlash).

#### **Risk Assessment and Prevention:**

- **Tools and frameworks for identifying and assessing social media risks.**
- **Risk prevention strategies**, including clear social media policies, online activity monitoring, and employee training.
- **The role of privacy settings, encryption, and secure communication practices.**

#### **Crisis Communication Strategies:**

- **Developing a crisis communication plan:** key steps and best practices.
- **The role of transparency, accountability, and timely responses in crisis management.**
- **Case studies of effective and ineffective crisis communication on social media.**

#### **Legal and Regulatory Perspectives:**

- **Overview of laws and regulations governing social media use** (e.g., GDPR, copyright laws, defamation).
- **Ethical and legal implications of user-generated content, influencer marketing, and data collection.**
- **Navigating cross-cultural and international legal challenges in social media.**

**5.Content analysis:** This unit introduces students to the **methodologies and tools for conducting research on social media and analyzing content**. Students will learn how to **collect, interpret, and present data** to obtain and evaluate information regarding **social media trends, user behavior, and the effectiveness of various actions**.

#### **Topics Covered:**

##### **Introduction to Social Media Research:**

- The importance of **social media research** in understanding trends, audiences, and campaign performance.
- **Ethical considerations** in social media research: consent, data privacy, and transparency.

##### **Research Methodologies:**

- **Quantitative methods:** sentiment analysis, network analysis, and tracking metrics (e.g., likes, shares, comments).
- **Qualitative methods:** content analysis, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis.
- **Mixed-methods approaches** for comprehensive insights.

	<p><b>6. Practical Applications:</b> Blogs, Vlogs and Content Creation: This unit focuses on developing <b>practical skills for creating engaging and effective social media content</b>. Students will learn <b>storytelling principles, visual aesthetics, and audience engagement strategies</b>, while also practicing <b>blog and vlog creation</b>.</p> <p><b>Topics Covered:</b></p> <p><b>Principles of Content Creation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of <b>storytelling</b> in creating compelling content.</li> <li>• <b>Visual aesthetics:</b> choosing colors, fonts, and images to enhance messaging.</li> <li>• <b>Understanding the audience:</b> tailoring content for different user groups.</li> </ul> <p><b>Blog Creation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writing techniques for blogs:</b> structure, style, and audience engagement.</li> <li>• <b>Best practices for SEO (search engine optimization) and hashtags.</b></li> <li>• <b>Tools for creating and managing blogs</b> (e.g., WordPress, Wix).</li> </ul> <p><b>Vlog Creation:</b></p> <p><b>Fundamentals of video production:</b> scripting, visuals, and editing</p>
<b>Teaching Methodology</b>	<p>The course is delivered entirely online through an electronic platform and with the use of various digital tools, including communication tools such as video conferencing and chat rooms, collaboration tools such as discussion forums and blogs, as well as content development tools, including presentations with notes, narrated presentations, interactive presentations, and videos. The course notes and presentations are available to students through the electronic platform, along with recommendations for readings and bibliography. Students are encouraged to interact with their peers and the instructor through the platform and the various technological tools, with the aim of becoming active members of the online learning community formed within the course. Finally, through the use of different technological tools, each student is expected to create their own online learning community.</p>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<p>(a) <u>Textbooks</u></p>

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	<p><b>Raun, T.</b> (2018). Capitalizing intimacy: New subcultural forms of micro-celebrity strategies and affective labour on YouTube. <i>Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies</i>, 24(1), 99–113. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517736983">https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856517736983</a></p> <p><b>Li, D., &amp; Walejko, G.</b> (2008). Splogs and abandoned blogs: The perils of sampling bloggers and their blogs. <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i>, 11(2), 279–296. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180801946525">https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180801946525</a></p> <p><b>Abidin, C.</b> (2016). Visibility labour: Engaging with influencers' fashion brands and advertorial campaigns on Instagram. <i>Media International</i></p> <p><b>Khamis, S., Ang, L., &amp; Welling, R.</b> (2017). Self-branding, "micro-celebrity," and the rise of social media influencers. <i>Celebrity Studies</i>, 8(2), 191–208. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292">https://doi.org/10.1080/19392397.2016.1218292</a></p> <p><b>Smith, B. G. (2017).</b> "Social media in the digital age: A comprehensive guide to social media marketing." <i>Journal of Digital &amp; Social Media Marketing</i>, 5(1), 6-16.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>The assessment of the course includes formative, self-evaluation and summative assessment activities. Specifically, the assessment of this course includes the following: a final written examination, 3 assessment tasks, 2 online interactive discussions, a variety of weekly learning activities such as interactive activities, interactive presentations/videos and self-evaluation activities.</p> <p>Of the above, the following are graded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Final examination (50%)</li> <li>● 3 assessment tasks (10% + 10% + 15% + 15% = 35%)</li> <li>● 2 interactive activities (5% +10%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– (Interactive activity 5%</li> <li>– Interactive activity 10%</li> <li>– Assignment 1(10 %)</li> <li>– Assignment 2 (10r %)</li> <li>– Assignment 3 (15%)</li> <li>- Final Exam (50 %)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	Greek/English