COM 211

Social Communications

Spring 2022

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*This syllabus was last revised on **1/19/22** at 9:12 AM.*

All elements in it are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and/or at the discretion of the instructor.

Description (revised 2022)

This course considers the fundamental principles, theories, and skills of social communications in the age of new media. The course fosters literacy on two levels: in terms of theory by examining topics pertinent to the digital world, and in terms of application by learning to use the tools of social communications. Through classroom pedagogy and personal research, students will explore the positive and negative impacts of social media and learn strategies for effective evangelization in a digital world.

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Goals

Related Department Goals (Dept. of Humanities & Science)

- Demonstrate and draw upon a knowledge and understanding of the foundations of human culture and their variety and historical development, particularly as experienced in the Western tradition.

- Listen and read with accurate understanding and proper interpretation; speak and write clearly, correctly, responsibly, and graciously, in keeping with established principles of effective communication; and develop a familiarity with other cultures and periods through various literary texts

Specific Learning Outcomes - By the conclusion of this course, students will gain …

1. a fundamental literacy living in the digital world ... and how this aligns with the teaching of the Church on communications

   o *assessed by class engagement and the test*

2. a proficiency in using the tools of digital communications ... and how they can contribute to priestly formation and ministry

   o *assessed by the skills portfolio*

3. a greater awareness of the transformative power of social communication ... and how this relates to faith formation

   o *assessed by the book review*

4. a stronger familiarity with multiple means of social communications ... and how these can be integrated into the life and work of today's parishes

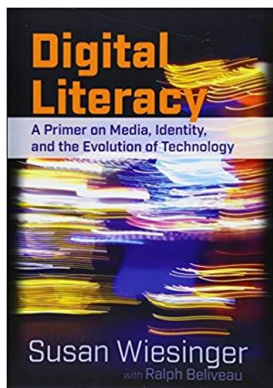   o *assessed by the final project*

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Assessment (to be explained further during class)

Assessment of learning in this course will be based on accumulated knowledge of the "what" and the "why" and the "how to" of social communications. Grades will be distributed as follows:

- **Sectional TEST** (30% of the final grade) ... based on reading and discussion of the *Digital Literacy* textbook

- **Class DISCUSSION** (10% of the final grade) ... focused on engagement with papal messages for World Communications Day

- **Skills PORTFOLIO** (30 % of the final grade) ... demonstrating development of particular skills associated with digital communications

- **Final PROJECT** (30% of the final grade) ... based on the application of *Transforming Parish Communications* in the development of a social communications plan for a local parish

- **Book REVIEW** (optional - for extra credit) ... based on a selection from the links under "supplemental sources" below

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Academic Resources

Readings for this Course (images linked to Amazon.com ... info also posted on Populi)

 required for class / test	*Digital Literacy:* *A Primer on Media, Identity, and the Evolution of Technology* by SUSAN WIESINGER 179 pages - published by Peter Lang, Inc. (January 2016) ISBN 978-1433128219 cost (Amazon): paperback = $40 / Kindle = $38
 required for class	*Messages for World Communications Day (WCD)* by POPE FRANCIS AND POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI available online at no cost

***Transforming Parish Communications:
Growing the Church through New Media***

by SCOT LANDRY

196 pages - published by Our Sunday Visitor (August 2014)

ISBN 978-1612787244
cost (Amazon): paperback = $20 / Kindle = $19

required for final project

Supplemental Sources (details to be provided in-class and posted on Populi)

- News articles
- Blog posts
- Journal articles
- Papal documents
- Podcasts
- YouTube videos
- TED talks

- LINK to segmented reading lists in a Theology of Social Communications
- LINK to a bibliography of books on social communications

Technology Requirements:

- **Email** -- course communications will ordinarily take place via the students' @scs.edu email account

- **Internet** -- students must bring to class each day some device (laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.) with a WiFi connection and open access to the Internet

- **Social Media** -- at a minimum, students must have a personal Facebook account that remains active throughout the course

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Proposed Course Calendar

Class DATE	Class TOPIC	TO-DO
January 19	Introduction to the Course	review syllabus
Part One: Social Communications Literacy		
January 20 *(Thursday)*	Life's Operating System	read *Digital Literacy*, intro & chapter 1
January 24	From Word to Message	read *Digital Literacy*, chapter 2
January 26	The Digital Ecology	read *Digital Literacy*, chapters 3 & 4
January 31	The Technological Paradigm	read *Digital Literacy*, chapter 5
February 2	Personal Identity	read *Digital Literacy*, chapter 6
February 7	Interpersonal Community	read *Digital Literacy*, chapters 7 & 8
February 9	Socio-Cultural Concerns	read *Digital Literacy*, chapters 9 & 11
February 14	(no in-class meeting)	read *Digital Literacy*, chapters 10, 12, 13
February 16	(no in-class meeting)	**complete sectional TEST online**
Part Two: The Church & Social Communications		
February 21	The Priest in a Digital World	read WCD Messages for 2010
February 23	Life Becomes History	read WCD Message for 2020 & 2022
February 28	Encounters in the Digital World	read WCD Messages for 2014 & 2021
March 2	Communication toward Communion	read WCD Messages for 2006 & 2019
March 7	Truth & Authenticity	read WCD Messages for 2008 & 2011
March 9	Digital Paths to Evangelization	read WCD Messages for 2012 & 2013
Part Three: Digital Communications Skills		
March 14	(no in-class meeting)	work on Skills Portfolio
March 16	(no in-class meeting)	work on Skills Portfolio
March 21	(no in-class meeting)	work on Skills Portfolio
March 23	(no in-class meeting)	work on Skills Portfolio **submit PORTFOLIO *by March 25***

Part Four: Social Communications in Parish Life		
March 28	The Parish in a Digital World	read *Transforming ...*, chapters 1-2
March 30	Parish Communications Ecology	read *Transforming ...*, chapters 3-5
April 4	Encountering via Social Communications	read *Transforming ...*, chapters 6-7
April 6	Engaging by Social Communications	read *Transforming ...*, chapters 8-10
April 11 / 13	no class - Holy Week	extra credit book review(s) to be submitted *by April 22*
Apr 18 / 20	no class - Easter Week	
April 25	Evangelizing with Social Communications	read *Transforming ...*, appendices **attend Cardinal Foley Lecture at 7pm**
April 27	The Parish Communications Project	
May 2	(no in-class meeting)	prepare Parish Communications Project
May 4	(no in-class meeting)	prepare Parish Communications Project
May 11	**submit FINAL PROJECT** *by midnight!*	

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FAITH | WORSHIP | WITNESS

Seminary Policies

Electronic Devices *(source: Faculty Handbook, revised Feb. 2018, p. 46)*
Electronic devices may be used for note taking in class; no other documents or digital applications are to be opened during class time. It is a distraction as well a sign of disrespect to fellow students, to the professor, and to oneself to be involved in activities other than class participation and note-taking. Phone use is prohibited in class as well.

Internet Use in the Classroom *(source: Syllabus Template, SharePoint)*
While the internet is a valuable source of information that can facilitate the learning process, it can often be a distraction within the classroom setting. Therefore, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, students in the classroom are <u>not permitted</u> to connect to the internet.

Because the digital world is the environment in which people live and work in the twenty-first century, students in this course are not only permitted to connect to the internet and use electronic devices in the classroom ... they are required to do so!

Attendance *(source: Catalog, p. 51)*
St. Charles Seminary requires attendance at all classes at the assigned times. Out of respect for others in the class, please be prompt in arriving for class.

As a general rule, the number of absences in a course should not exceed twice the number of weekly class meetings for the course. Students with absences in excess of the limit may be asked to withdraw from the course. In aggravated cases, excessive, unexcused absences may result in dismissal. Out of courtesy, students who absent are asked to communicate this fact – if possible, prior to the class day in question – to the Dean of Men of their respective Seminary, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and to the course instructor. Students are responsible for the timely performance of all class assignments and the gaining/mastery of class notes.

Late Work
Unless approved by the instructor prior to the due date, late work is unacceptable.

Incomplete Work
Failure to fulfill any of the requirements of this course may result in an F for the course. And to reiterate, plagiarism will result in an F for the course.

Exams *(source: Catalog, p. 52)*
Examinations in all courses are held on the dates and in the places designated on the final examination schedule. No seminarian is excused from an examination unless an exception is granted by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Seminary Grading System *(source: Catalog, p. 53)*
Letter grades are used to indicate the quality of a seminarian's performance in a course. Professors assign grades as the result of class work, reports, research papers, examinations, or a combination of the above.

Intellectual honesty *(source: Catalog, p. 54)*
As indicated in the Seminary policy, "no instance of plagiarism, cheating or falsification of research work, examinations or academic records will be tolerated and will make the seminarian liable to dismissal". A failing grade will be assigned where there is evidence of academic dishonesty.