



School of Information & Library Science  
144 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10011-7301

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## COMMUNITY BUILDING & ENGAGEMENT

Section: LIS 681-01  
Semester: Spring 2015  
Meeting Information: Thursdays 3:00 – 5:50 pm  
Location: 610  
Credits: 3  
Prerequisites: None

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the notion of community within cultural heritage institutions and the larger framework of cultural informatics. Particular emphasis is placed on social media as a tool for communication, engagement, and action. Topics include communities and digital commons, user studies, diverse populations, media studies, digital identity, social networks, information ecologies, social media adoption and use, community building, social advocacy and activism, and technology in the service of democracy.

### COURSE GOALS + LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The goals of this course are to:

- explore foundational concepts of community, media, and social action
- examine a wide range of theories and case studies in community building and community informatics
- survey tools and techniques for implementing social media campaigns
- consider possibilities and limitations of social media in cultural heritage environments

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- use social media tools effectively and with purpose
- develop and evaluate plans for community building and engagement in cultural heritage institutions
- critically evaluate discussions of social media and community in the popular and academic presses

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Julia Biando Edwards, Melissa S. Robinson, and Kelley Rae Unger, *Transforming Libraries, Building Communities*. Scarecrow Press, 2013. ISBN 9780810891814
- Laura Solomon, *Doing Social Media So It Matters: A Librarian's Guide*. American Library Association, 2010 ISBN 9780838910672
- Additional readings [available on Learning Management System via my.pratt.edu]

### COURSE WEBSITE

All students enrolled in the course have access to materials on Pratt's Learning Management System (a Moodle installation) available at [lms.pratt.edu](http://lms.pratt.edu). Please make sure you know how to access LMS and use Moodle. Also, please note that LMS facilitates communication using Pratt e-mail only. If you do not use your Pratt account, please use webmail to forward your Pratt e-mail to an account that you do use.

## COURSE FORMAT

This course is a seminar. Each student is required to read the articles assigned on a weekly basis in advance of the session for which they are assigned. Each session will be devoted to discussion of the required readings for that week, as well as student work pertaining to those readings. Students will bring their own ideas, experience, and interpretations to class and will learn from contributing and hearing others.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS + ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade in the course will be based on the following:

Twitter discussion	20%
Case study	80%

### Twitter discussion (20%)

Throughout the course, students are expected to participate in an ongoing Twitter discussion using the #LIScbe hashtag. This is a public discussion of issues related to the course and may include course readings as well as outside articles, resources, and issues. At minimum, students must follow the discussion throughout the course and tweet at least three times per week, some of which discuss the readings for the upcoming session (e.g., asking a critical question, applying the reading to issues in the LIS professions, and/or replying substantively to another student's tweet about the readings).

### Case study (40% final report, 10% monthly deliverables)

Students will complete a case study of a cultural heritage institution/organization of their choice, with special emphasis on social media. The case study should describe the site's current and potential communities, review existing plans/examples of communication and engagement, and present new research with related recommendations. The case study should be presented in the form an organizational report, approximately 20 single-spaced pages in length including images, plus appendices for research instruments and data (where appropriate). The case study will be drafted in stages, with a complete draft due before the end of the semester. This draft will be discussed in class, and a revised version is due on or before May 12, 2015.

1. *Organization and background* (approx. 3–4 pages) due February 5

Choose an organization (broadly construed) based in NYC to research. Detail its history, mission, and partner and peer/competitor organizations. Briefly describe its online footprint and note any initial thoughts on opportunities for community building and engagement.

2. *Research plan/methodology* (approx. 1–2 pages, plus instruments) due February 17–18 (24 hours before your research appointment)

Describe a coherent plan for researching communities related to your organization, including structured research about its social media presence. Be able to justify your methodological choices. Include any research instruments you intend to use.

3. *Analysis and interpretation* (approx. 3–4 pages) due April 2

Summarize and interpret your research findings. What else do you need to research? Based on your current findings, how well does the organization meet community needs, including information and outreach needs? Are there clear opportunities for improving outreach?

4. *Social media plan* (approx. 5–7 pages) due April 16

Present a coherent, integrated social media plan for the organization, including platforms, examples of social media posts/campaigns (mockups if possible), and workflows. How will the organization benefit from specific parts of this plan? What institutional changes would help the community?

*Additional parts of the report not included with monthly deliverables:*

- *Recommendations for offline community building and engagement (incl. institutional changes)*
- *Executive summary and revisions to all parts above based on feedback*

Students may work individually or in groups; if in groups, all members must send an email at the end to csula@pratt.edu (copied to all other group members) describing their individual contributions to the case study.

## GRADING

All graded assignments are due on the date indicated. All assignments will be graded on a rubric basis, with the criteria circulated in advance. Final grades will be awarded as follows:

- A sustained level of superior performance demonstrated in all areas of course requirements
- B consistent level of performance that is above average in a majority of the course requirements
- C performance that is generally average and course requirements are achieved
- D below average performance and achievement of the course requirements
- F accomplishment of the course requirements is not sufficient to receive a passing grade

Late work will not be accepted without prior approval by the professor. Students with health conditions or no-fault hardships are strongly encouraged to notify the professor immediately to discuss their work plan.

## E-PORTFOLIO

Students entering the MSLIS degree program in fall 2012 are required to complete an e-Portfolio that is approved by their advisor before graduation. The e-Portfolio provides students with an opportunity to showcase their best work from SILS courses and an opportunity to demonstrate they have met the learning objectives of a MSLIS degree. Work completed for this course may be included in the e-Portfolio, esp. work satisfying bolded areas below. Students must demonstrate that their work jointly fulfills the following learning outcomes:

- 1. Students carry-out and apply research**
- 2. Students demonstrate excellent communication skills and create and convey content**
3. Students use information technology and digital tools effectively
- 4. Students apply concepts related to use and users of information and user needs and perspectives**
- 5. Students perform within the framework of professional practice**

Detailed information on the learning outcomes, requirements and how to create your e-Portfolio is available from: <http://www.pratt.edu/academics/information-and-library-sciences/sils-eportfolio/>

## POLICIES

### **Academic Integrity & Institute-Wide Policies**

Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Integrity Code and Judicial Process of the Pratt Institute. All infractions will be reported, and I am disposed to fail all violators for the entire course. Students must adhere to the Pratt Community Standards listed in the current Student Handbook.

### **Disabilities**

Students who require special accommodations for disabilities must obtain clearance from the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester. For further information, contact the Coordinator of Disability Services in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs at 718.636.3711.

### **Missed Sessions and Incompletes**

If you miss a session, be sure that you complete the readings, consult your classmates or the professor about the discussion, and (as always) demonstrate your knowledge of previous readings in later sessions. Students with three or more absences for *any* reason will not receive an A in the course and, in accordance with Pratt Institute policy, may fail the course. The professor is generally allergic to incompletes. Students with health conditions or no-fault hardships are encouraged to notify the professor immediately and discuss options for work plan.

### **Participation in Faculty Activities**

Students taking this class may be asked to participate in faculty research and service activities; all contributions will be appropriately credited.

### **Revisions to the Syllabus**

While this syllabus provides a reliable framework for the course, including readings and assignments, it is subject to change pending notice in class and on the course website.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a tentative outline of topics, readings, and assignments. On occasion, I may add, delete, or substitute topics or readings. Changes will be announced in class and posted to LMS; no printed updates will be given.

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS
1	1/22 <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>Course Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lee Rainie and Barry Wellman (2012). <i>Networked: The New Social Operating System</i>. MIT Press, Chs. 1–2</li><li>• <i>Transforming Libraries, Building Communities</i>, Ch. 1</li></ul>
2	1/29	<b>User Studies and Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talja and Hartel (2007). "Revisiting the User-Centered Turn in Information Science Research: An Intellectual History Perspective." <i>Information Research</i> 12(4) paper colis04. Retrieved from <a href="http://InformationR.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis04.html">http://InformationR.net/ir/12-4/colis/colis04.html</a></li><li>• Veinot and Williams (2012). "Following the 'community' thread from sociology to information behavior and informatics: Uncovering theoretical continuities and research opportunities." <i>Journal of the American Society for Information Science &amp; Technology</i> 63.5, 847–864</li><li>• Wilson and Peterson (2002). "The Anthropology of Online Communities." <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 31: 449–467</li></ul>
3	2/5 <i>Part 1 Due</i>	<b>Online/Offline Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Miller and Slater (2000). <i>The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach</i>. New York: Berg Publishers, pp. 1–25</li><li>• Baym and boyd (2012). "Socially Mediated Publicness: An Introduction" <i>Journal of Broadcasting &amp; Electronic Media</i> 56.3: 320–329</li><li>• boyd (2011). "White Flight in Networked Publics? How Race and Class Shaped American Teen Engagement with MySpace and Facebook" in <i>Race After the Internet</i>, eds. Lisa Nakamura and Peter Chow-White. Routledge, 203–222</li></ul>
4	2/12 <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>Research Methods &amp; Ethics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creswell (2008). <i>Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications. Chs. 8–10</li><li>• PERCS: The Program for Ethnographic Research &amp; Community Studies. "The Ethics of Fieldwork." Elon University. <a href="http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/org/percs/EthicsModuleforWeb.pdf">http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/org/percs/EthicsModuleforWeb.pdf</a></li></ul>
5	2/19 <i>Part 2 Due</i> <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>Research Conferences</b> — <i>Class does not meet; schedule an appointment</i>
6	2/26	<b>Community Informatics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gehner (2010). "Libraries, Low-Income People, and Social Exclusion." <i>Public Libraries Quarterly</i> 29: 39–47</li><li>• Williment (2011). "It Takes a Community to Create a Library." <i>Public Libraries</i> 50.2: 30–35</li><li>• Long (2001). "Libraries Build Community." <i>Journal of Educational Media &amp; Library Services</i> 39.1: 15–22</li><li>• Drueke (2006). "Researching Local Organizations: Simple Strategies for Building Social Capital." <i>Reference &amp; User Services Quarterly</i> 45.4: 327–333</li><li>• Urban Libraries Council (2006). "The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building" [report]. <a href="http://www.urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/Engaged_Library_Full_Report.pdf">http://www.urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/Engaged_Library_Full_Report.pdf</a></li></ul>

7	3/5	<p><b>Strategies for Community Building</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Transforming Libraries, Building Communities</i>, Chs. 2, 3, and two chapters of your choice</li> </ul>
8	3/12	<p><b>Social Media: Theory and Demographics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McLuhan (1994 [1964]). <i>Understanding Media</i>, Part 1</li> <li>• Pew Internet (2014). "Social Media Update 2014" <a href="http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/">http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/01/09/social-media-update-2014/</a></li> <li>• Pew Internet. "Mapping Twitter Topic Networks: From Polarized Crowds to Community Clusters" <a href="http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/02/20/mapping-twitter-topic-networks-from-polarized-crowds-to-community-clusters/">http://www.pewinternet.org/2014/02/20/mapping-twitter-topic-networks-from-polarized-crowds-to-community-clusters/</a></li> <li>• Hazan (2010). "A Crisis of Authority: New Lamps for Old" in <i>Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage</i>, eds. Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 133–147</li> </ul>
9	3/19 <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>NO CLASS</b> —Spring Break
10	3/26 <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>NO CLASS</b> —Research Day
11	4/2 <i>Part 3 Due</i>	<p><b>Resistance to Social Media</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bigge (2006). "The Cost of (Anti-)Social Networks: Identity, Agency and Neo-Luddites." <i>First Monday</i> 11.12. <a href="http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1421/1339">http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1421/1339</a></li> <li>• Portwood-Stacer (2012). "How We Talk About Media Refusal," Parts 1–3. <i>Flow</i> 16.</li> <li>• Tufekci (2008). "Grooming, Gossip, Facebook, and Myspace" <i>Information, Communication &amp; Society</i>, 11(4); 544–564</li> <li>• Keller and Neufeld (2015). "Terms of Service: Understanding our Role in the World of Big Data" [comic]. Al Jazeera America. <a href="http://projects.aljazeera.com/2014/terms-of-service/#1">http://projects.aljazeera.com/2014/terms-of-service/#1</a></li> </ul>
12	4/9	<p><b>Social Media in LIS Environments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Doing Social Media So It Matters: A Librarian's Guide</i></li> <li>• Russo, et al (2010). "Participatory Communication with Social Media" <i>Curator: The Museum Journal</i> 51.1, 21–31</li> </ul>
13	4/16 <i>Part 4 Due</i>	<p><b>Civic Engagement &amp; Political Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knight Foundation and the Monitor Institute (2013). <i>Connected Citizens: The Power, Potential and Peril of Networks</i> [report]. <a href="http://knight.box.com/shared/ng70lqn9hb">http://knight.box.com/shared/ng70lqn9hb</a></li> <li>• Hara and Huang (2011). "Online Social Movements" <i>Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST)</i> 45: 489–522</li> <li>• boyd (2008). "Can Social Network Sites Enable Political Action?" in <i>Rebooting America</i>, eds. Allison Fine, Micah Sifry, Andrew Rasiej and Josh Levy. Creative Commons, 112–16</li> <li>• Comito, Geraci, and Zabriskie (2012). <i>Grassroots Library Advocacy</i>. American Library Association</li> </ul>
14	4/23	<p><b>The Future of the Information Society</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuchs and Sandoval, eds. (2014). <i>Critique, Social Media, and the Information Society</i>. Routledge, Introduction and two chapters of your choice.</li> </ul>
15	4/30 <i>No Tweets Req.</i>	<b>Case Studies Workshop</b>

16            5/7            **NO CLASS**—Studio Week  
*No Tweets Req.*

17            5/14            **Final Conferences**  
*No Tweets Req.*