

Abilene Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes

A = Approve I = Information Item R = Respond In Writing

Course Number: COMM 315

or Degree Plan(s):

The Department of Communication and Sociology would like to propose COMM 315 (Human Connection in Social Media) as a new course.

	Campus-Level Academic Review ¹	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Change to a Course Include signatures from all chairs/program directors for cross-listed courses. ¹						
1.	Title (description unchanged)	A	A	A	I	I	I
2.	Description (not affecting content)	A	A	A	I	I	I
3.	Course term(s)	A	I	A	I	I	I
4.	Content (change of course outcomes)	A	A	A	I	I	A
5.	Number of credit hours	A	A	A	A	A	A
6.	Course number within the hundred	A	A	I	I	I	I
7.	Course number beyond the hundred	A	A	A	A	A	A
8.	Prerequisites	A	A	A	I	I	I
9.	Course restriction (e.g., majors only, junior standing)	A	A	A	A	A	A
10.	Level change (U to G or G to U)	A	A	A	A	A	A
11.	Cross list course	A	A	A	A	A	A
12.	Department of record	A	A	A	A	A	A
13.	Open or close a course	A	A	A	A	A	A
	Change to a Degree Plan						
14.	Educational Program — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A
15.	Educational Program — Adopt/revise admission requirements	A	A	A	A	A	A
16.	GPA — Revise program-required GPA	A	A	A	A	A	A
17.	Minor — Revise	A	A	A	A	A	A

		Department	College	Provost	Academic Affairs	President	Faculty	Students	Other	System
	Full Review									
	Change to Catalog Information (for Campus)									
18.	General requirements for Bachelor's and Associate Degrees	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
19.	Policies governing academic probation and suspension	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
20.	Requirements for graduating with honors	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I
	Change to a Degree Plan									
21.	Educational Program — Add or Discontinue ^{2 3}	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
22.	Educational Program — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I
23.	Minor — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
24.	Minor — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	-	A	I
25.	Degree — Add or Discontinue	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	I
26.	Degree — Discontinue (Provost-proposed)	R	-	R	A	A	A	A	A	I

	Change to General Education Requirements for Undergraduates (System)	Department	College	Provost	Academic Affairs	President	Faculty	Students	Other	System
27.	Change course outcomes of an included course	A	A	A	A	A	A	-	A	I
28.	Add or drop a required course from the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	A	A	I
29.	Add or drop a course from a menu within the General Education Requirements	A	-	A	-	A	A	-	A	I
30.	Comprehensive revision of General Education Requirements	-	-	-	-	A	A	A	A	I

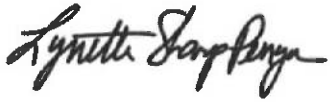
Notes

² Any change to a cross-listed course requires the signature of both department chairs or program directors overseeing the course to ensure that the courses stay in sync. This includes courses taught at other campuses (e.g. BIBL 101 and BIBO 101).

³ For undergraduate majors, a minimum of 30 hours is required. These programs must have a minimum of 6 elective hours, unless the requirements of external accrediting bodies make it impossible. Master's programs must include a minimum of 30 hours, and doctoral programs must include a minimum of 30 hours beyond the master's.

⁴ When a department/school or dean proposes closing a program, approval routing follows the typical process beginning with the department/school. An administrative proposal by the provost or senior vice president for academic affairs would follow the "provost-proposed" routing on the chart.

Department/School(s)



3-16-2026

Chair Signature

Date

Chair/Program Director Signature

Date

College Academic Council(s)

Chair Signature

Date

Chair Signature

Date

Dean(s)

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Teacher Education Council

Signature

Date

**Campus Academic Council:
Abilene Undergraduate or Abilene Graduate**

Signature

Date

Provost

Signature

Date

University General Education Council

Signature

Date

University Faculty

Abilene Faculty Senate Chair signature

Date

Dallas Faculty Council Chair signature

Date

Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Signature

Date

President

Signature

Date

Abilene New Course Application

You may delete the preceding instructional pages before submitting application.

Course ID (<i>Subject Code and Number</i>)	COMM 315
--	----------

1. Systems and Catalog Information Complete each item.

A	Course Developer	Kholo Theledi & Dorothy Andreas
B	Course Instructor	Kholo Theledi
C	Course Title	Human Connection in Social Media
D	Course Abbreviation for Banner if title is more than 30 characters	Human Conn in Social Media
E	College	CAHSS - Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
F	Department or School	CMSO - Communication & Sociology
G	Number of Credit Hours	3
G1	Number of Lecture Contact Hours	3
G2	Number of Lab Contact Hours	0
H	Is the course for a fixed or variable number of credit hours?	Fixed If variable, explain rationale:
I	Is the course repeatable for additional credit?	No
J	Maximum total number of credit hours a student can earn for this course	3
K	Course Schedule Type	<u>Lecture/Lab (LLB)</u> See Schedule Type definitions in the Reference section.

L	Number of Faculty Workload Hours	3
M	Grading Mode	<u>Standard</u>
N	Maximum Enrollment	25
O	Catalog Description (50 words or less)	This course examines the nature, utility, functions, ethics, and effects of social media on communication, culture, human relationships, and identity. Students gain theoretical and practical knowledge about social media from its earliest to latest manifestations and develop appreciation for the role of new media and communication in shaping society.
P	List any prerequisites (course/s, test scores, class standing, major, etc.)	Sophomore standing
Q	List any corequisites (these <i>must</i> be taken at the same time; note that a single requirement cannot be both a prerequisite <i>and</i> a corequisite)	none
R	If the course is cross-listed, specify the subject code and course number of the other course	no
S	Does this course require any additional student course fees?	<u>No</u> If yes, attach a completed course fee form (see form "Request to Add or Change Course Fees").
T1	Will the course be offered in fall terms?	<u>Yes, every year</u>
T2	Will the course be offered in spring terms?	<u>No</u>
T3	Will the course be offered in summer terms?	<u>No</u>

U	First semester this course will be offered under new Course ID. <i>May not be earlier than the coming fall semester.</i>	Fall 2027
V	Is this course required for a program(s)?	<u>Yes</u> If yes, submit a separate completed curriculum proposal to change the program(s). COS menu in BA and BS
W	Should the addition of this course be retroactively applied to the degree plan it supports? <i>This is rare, and rationale should explain compelling extenuating circumstances.</i>	<u>No</u> If yes, provide rationale:
X	Has this course been offered as a Special Topics course? <i>New courses are not required to be taught as Special Topics courses prior to approval.</i>	<u>No</u> If yes, provide course ID, term, and enrollment:
Y	List any courses in which the content overlaps the proposed course. (Course ID and Name). <i>Attach a statement from the instructor/dept chair of the existing course justifying the new offering.</i>	none

2. Curriculum

- A. Explain any effects of this course on any degree plans. If the addition of the course alters program requirements, submit a separate [Approval Chart for Curriculum Change](#) to update the program.

We are adding this course to the COMS degree in COS concentration for the BA and BS

- B. Justify the addition of this course to the current curriculum, explaining the gap it meets.

The use of social media is ubiquitous in relationships and the workplace and an important topic of research in our field. We have no courses that focus on this content. Adding this course addresses a gap in our curriculum.

3. Course Design

- A. Audience and Course Goal

1. Describe the intended audience, including prerequisite skills.
2. State the overarching course goal(s) in performance terms.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Measurements

	Student Learning Outcome	Measurement
1	Understand basic technology and economics about how social media work	Exam; Case studies (For graduate students: final research paper)
2	Understand how social media impacts the human mind, behavior, relationships, organizations, and the environment and various communication and media studies theories relevant to the study of social media	Case studies; Short reflection essays/journal entries; exam
3	Critically evaluate the impact of social media in different types of relationships and its relationship to/with power	Case studies; Final research project
4	Frame useful questions about future impacts of social media and computer technologies in relationships	Final research project (project or paper)
5	Critically reflect about their own social media habits and relationships and develop an ethical framework for social media use	Short reflection essays/journal entries

C. Text and Resources

Give the full publication information of the textbook/s and other required resources and outside readings. For **combined undergraduate/graduate** courses, make two lists:

A. full publication information; label **Undergraduate**.

Coates Nee, R. (2022). *Social media in the digital age: History, ethics, and professional uses* (2nd ed.). Cognella.

Owlett, J. S., & Rossetto, K. R. (2024). *Social media and close relationships*. Cognella.

B. full publication information; label **Graduate**.

4. Supporting Documentation

Required of all applications	
1	Approval Chart for Curriculum Changes
2	Syllabus — Attach the syllabus for the course based upon the anticipated first-semester offering.
4	Library — Submit new course application and syllabus to the Library dean's office. Attach the Library's memo.
Attach if applicable	
5	Content Overlap — Include one document for each course you listed in Section 1Y. Attach statement from instructor/dept chair of existing course justifying the new offering.
6	Departmental Resources — List the resources that support the course and are available only through the department, if applicable. Attach the list of the holdings and the location(s).
7	Resources — List resources (other than library or departmental resources) that are needed to support this course (computers, lab equipment, other technology, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items and indicate possible sources or estimated cost of each. List the sources of any needed funds.
8	Expenses — List additional expenses needed to implement this course (full-time or part-time faculty, graduate or lab assistants, student employees, travel, special student costs, room renovation, storage facility, etc.). Attach a complete list of all items, the estimated cost of each and the source of the funds.
9	Justification — Attach any documents to which you refer in Section 2B.

COMM 315: HUMAN CONNECTION IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Spring 2027

Tuesday + Thursday | 9:30 - 10:50 AM | Sherrod 216

Instructor: Dr. Kholo Theledi

Office Hours: M, W 11:00 - 12:30 PM; Friday 11:00-12:00 Walking/By Appointment

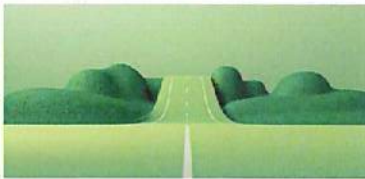


Course Description

This course examines the nature, utility, functions, ethics, and effects of social media on communication, culture, human relationships, and identity. Students gain theoretical and practical knowledge about social media from its earliest to latest manifestations and develop appreciation for the role of new media and communication in shaping society.

This 3-credit course meets for approximately 45 contact hours across the semester. Students should expect 4-6 hours of reading, writing, and project work outside of class each week, consistent with university guidelines. **Prerequisite:** Sophomore standing

Mission Statements



ACU Mission

To educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

College of Arts and Sciences Mission

To explore, expand, express, and impact the human story as we educate students for Christian service and leadership throughout the world.

Department of Communication and Sociology Mission

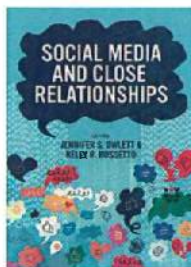
To empower students for Christian service and leadership by leveraging communication to craft strategic messages, strengthen relationships, develop teams, bridge cultures, and advocate for ideas, causes, and people.

Course Objectives/By the end of this class a successful student should:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment
Understand basic technology and economics about how social media work	Exam; Case studies (For graduate students: final research paper)
Understand how social media impacts the human mind, behavior, relationships, organizations, and the environment and various communication and media studies theories relevant to the study of social media	Case studies; Short reflection essays/journal entries; exam
Critically evaluate the impact of social media in different types of relationships and its relationship to/with power	Case studies; Final research project
Frame useful questions about future impacts of social media and computer technologies in relationships	Final research project (project or paper)
Critically reflect about their own social media habits and relationships and develop an ethical framework for social media use	Short reflection essays/journal entries

Required Course Materials

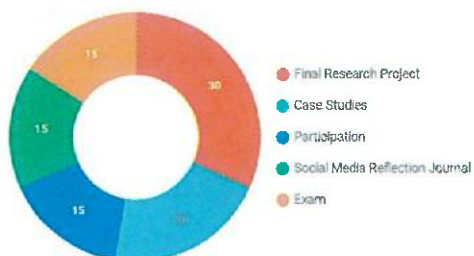
Required Access to LMS Canvas, ACU email, and two social media accounts of your choice



Required books:

Owlet & Rossetto, *Social Media and Close Relationships*, 2024

Assessment



Coates Nee, *Social Media in the Digital Age*, 2022

Course Grading

All assignments must be started and completed within the Spring 2027 semester.

Please see assignment descriptions in Canvas.

Final grade calculation: A = 90-100 | B = 80-89.95

Be sure you keep your use of laptops and phones minimal and if/when in use focus on class-related activities. You may be called out if you use class time for non-class related activities and you will lose 5 points on your final course grade for repeated technology-related disruptions.



Attendance

Plan to come to class on time, it is very disruptive when people come in late. If you come in after we have completed an assignment/activity and you missed it due to lateness you may not have an opportunity to make it up. Attendance includes/implies active participation in class.

Academic Accommodations

Please let me know within the first week or two of class if you have accommodations through the Alpha Scholars program. Letting me know early helps us best figure out how to proceed. Please go to www.acu.edu/community/offices/academic/uap/alpha-scholars/overview.html for more information about Alpha Scholars.

Format and Citation policy

All written assignments must be formatted in 18th Chicago Style with 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced format, numbered pages, and one-inch margins. Proofread your assignments before you submit them.

Campus Resources

There are various resources and centers on campus that can provide the support you need during your time at ACU. Three resources you may find useful are the Writing Center on campus. [The Writing Center](#) helps students, faculty, and community members with writing projects for free. They have in-person and virtual appointments. The counseling center provides support and resources for emotional and other needs. You may contact [the counseling center](#) at counseling@acu.edu or 325-674-2626. Lastly, [the SOAR program](#) connects students with resources for various needs. If you have any questions about these services or need additional information feel free to speak with me.

Questions About Grades

I am happy to discuss any grade or feedback given on an assignment with you. Of course, I strive to give you fair and helpful feedback on your work but mistakes happen. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have a question or concern about a grade. Please submit any grade appeals in writing and promptly. You must wait 24 hours after receiving your grade before talking with me or submitting an appeal. Your appeal must be submitted within 7 business days. Submit

your written appeal via email within the aforementioned time frame. Use the assignment description/guidelines and/or rubric (if available) to frame your appeal. I will review your submission and provide you with a written response within a week. The semester moves fast and I have many assignments to grade so after one week grades will be considered final.

See the policy on AI in Canvas ("Academic Integrity"). Using AI to write your assignments and essays is not permitted. Each assignment you submit must be your own original work. The writing assignments in this course are manageable, there is no need to use AI.

Campus Resources

There are various resources and centers on campus that can provide the support you need during your time at ACU. Three resources you may find useful are the Writing Center on campus. The Writing Center helps students, faculty, and community members with writing projects for free. They have in-person and virtual appointments. The counseling center provides support and resources for emotional and other needs. You may contact the counseling center at counseling@acu.edu or 325-674-2626. Lastly, the SOAR program connects students with resources for various needs. If you have any questions about these services or need additional information feel free to speak with me.

Late Work Policy

All non-speaking assignments should be submitted on Canvas unless stated otherwise. Assignments will be penalized a letter grade for every 24-hour period that they are missing. Course work will not be accepted after 5 calendar days late.

Academic Honesty/Integrity/Plagiarism

Avoid academic dishonesty aka cheating. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following: Failing to give credit to sources used in a work in an attempt to present the work as one's own; Submitting papers or projects obtained from and or written by another source (this includes a research or assignment-generating service, generative AI, or club paper file) as one's own; Falsifying information orally or in writing; Receiving, giving, or using unauthorized aid on a paper, presentation, examination, or quiz; reusing your own work performed for a previous class to complete an assignment in this class; citing a made up or AI-generated source; representing another's work as your own; failing to give credit to sources used in a work in an attempt to present the work as your own; submitting papers or projects obtained from another source as your own, or receiving, giving, or using unauthorized aid on an exam. Academic misconduct may result in, but is not limited to, a zero on the assignment and/or an F in the course. Additionally, the department chair, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of Student Life will be notified. See the full university

policy, including how to appeal a decision, by following this link:

<http://www.acu.edu/academics/provost/policies/index.html>.

A few words about generative AI such as ChatGPT (adapted from Chris Beneke, Bentley University):

Language--writing and speaking--is integral to thinking. It is also hard to do well. Natural language processing (NLP) applications like ChatGPT or Sudowrite are useful tools for helping us improve our use of language and stimulate our thinking. However, they should never serve as a substitute for either. And, in this course, they cannot.

Think of the help you get from NLP apps as a much less sophisticated version of the assistance you can receive (for free!) from a Writing or Speaking Center tutor. That person might legitimately ask you a question to jump-start your imagination, steer you away from the passive voice, or identify a poorly organized paragraph, but should never do the writing for you. A major difference here, of course, is that an NLP app is not a person. It's a machine that is adept at recognizing patterns and reflecting those patterns back at us. It cannot think for itself. And it cannot think for you.

With that analogy in mind, you must adhere to the following guidelines in our class.

Appropriate use of AI for this class:

None. If you need spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification you can use the tools in MS Word or Google Docs.

Using AI to write your assignments and essays is not permitted. Each assignment you submit must be your own original work. The writing assignments in this course are easily manageable by all college students (especially upper-level college students), there is no need to use AI.

Obvious/Excessive use of AI will be treated as academic misconduct. If your submission is suspected of not being original work, you may be asked to orally explain and defend your work. Inability to do so will result in a loss of credit.

I'm assuming we won't have a problem in this regard but want to make sure that the expectations are clear so that we can spend the semester learning things together—and not worrying about the origins of your work.

Be aware that other courses you're taking this semester may have different policies and that your instructor remains the final authority on uses of AI technology.

Course Schedule Overview

Foundations: Week 1

- ☐ What is social media?
- ☐ What is the history of social media?

Theoretical Approaches to Social Media: Weeks 2–5

- ☐ Media ecology
- ☐ Media multiplexity
- ☐ Social information processing–hyperpersonal; context collapse
- ☐ Media convergence theory

Social Media and Ethics (An Ethical Orientation to Studying Social Media): Week 6–7

- ☐ Social media, ethics, and relationships (social media impacting human relationships)
- ☐ Advertising and ethics (commodification of human attention by corps.)
- ☐ Surveillance: Palfrey, Meta, and Individual Privacy / Content moderation
- ☐ Cyberbullying, trafficking, ragebaiting, trolling political indoctrination online (e.g. manosphere content/incel recruitment)

Utility, Functions, and Relationships: Weeks 8–11

- ☐ How social media works
 - ☐ Affordances of social media
 - ☐ Types of social media (from blogs to video games)
- ☐ Why we use social media
 - Social media and human connection(s)
 - ☐ Interpersonal relationships (friendship, family, dating; relationship formation and maintenance online)
 - ☐ Cybercultures/subcultures and community
 - ☐ Presentation or performance of self online (Identity and meaning making)
- ☐ Social/Political impact
 - ☐ Influencers, Content Creators
 - ☐ Advocacy and social change
- ☐ News and (Mis/Dis)Information in the new media age

Intersectionality and the Digital Public Sphere: Week 12

- ☐ Algorithms and Gender, race, class and social media platforms

Social media and Emerging Technology: Week 13

- ☐ Social media and AI: The changing landscape

Final Projects (Weeks 14-15)

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

LIBRARY

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 14, 2026
TO: Dr. Lynette Sharp Penny
FROM: Mark McCallon, Associate Dean for Library Information Services
RE: Course application for COMM 315 – Human Connection in Social Media

After reviewing the course application and syllabus, the library should be able to adequately support the proposed course. If additional resources are needed for the course please contact Laura Baker, Librarian Liaison for the Department of Communication and Sociology, at bakerl@acu.edu. Thank you for letting us examine the course application and syllabus.

