



Positionality, Privilege, and Power: Teaching Social Media for Social Justice and Activism

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Abstract: Social media curriculum demands flexibility and adaptation on a term-by-term basis. This experience report examines the need for and implementation of a new social media course that focuses on social justice and activism in an undergraduate technical and professional communication major. Through the lens of students' positionality, privilege, and power, this course asks students to highlight voices and issues that are related to diversity, equity, and inclusion before creating and responding to issues they're passionate about.

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Introduction and Background

In 2012, I (Author 2) began teaching a course on social media titled “The Rhetoric of Social Media.” Developing this course got a bit of backlash, and looking back on it now, I often share with my students how the idea of “social media as a job” was laughable to many at the time of its proposal. That original course has been through many iterations, changing from a 3000-level course to a 2000-level course and taking the “confusing Rhetoric term” (based on a student survey) out of the title to attract more students. It is now titled “Social Media and Society.”

Over the span of a decade, the course shifted from seeming unnecessary to now needing to cover many topics: personal social media use; business and professional uses; and most recently, social justice and activism. Too much breadth and not enough depth left both the students and me, the professor, frustrated.

As students started talking more about the use of social media in their activist work, a second concern arose: some students absolutely did *not* want to discuss this, and they made it quite difficult to have these discussions. Even though the new title “Social Media and Society” allowed space for the very important topic of social justice and activism, the political climate did not ingratiate the subject matter to students taking it for the sole purpose of becoming social media managers. Now, instead of just talking about Hootsuite and analytics, students were being asked to discuss “-isms,” which they didn’t “sign up for,” according to course evaluations. Concerns of continuous additions to course objectives and seemingly conflicting student purposes for taking the course led to my proposal of a second social media course in our curriculum. This experience report, therefore, highlights the growing need and subsequent development of a “Social Media for Social Justice and Activism” course in a Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) undergraduate major. Course development was grounded in a response to the social justice turn within the field (Haas & Eble, 2018, Walton, Moore, and Jones, 2019), leading to course goals that focused on listening, individualization, and professionalization.

Social media courses, like social media itself, must change constantly to adapt to new technology, audiences, and uses. A recent survey of TPC programs that utilize social media within their curricula found that out of 112 TPC programs studied, only 24% explicitly mentioned social media within their course offerings and catalogs (Miller et al 2020). Though these offerings included course titles such as “Writing in the Public Interest” and “Developing Online Content,” it appeared that few had a specifically social justice approach. Based on this gap, our “Social Media for Social Justice and Activism” course was developed in accordance with my university’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) definition (University of Cincinnati, 2023). The course was granted the DE&I breadth of knowledge designation and was added to both the core “Culture and Diversity” category for our English major as well as to the curriculum for our new BA in Social Justice. In response to the above-mentioned student concerns and interests, our target audience was students who were interested in social media, and also particularly passionate about social justice issues. Though all students were welcome, the hesitant reactions from students in my general social media class led us to believe that providing a separate space to delve into the complicated and inherently personal nature of social justice work would allow for richer course discussion and, hopefully, true change. The course

description was carefully crafted to ensure students enrolling understood its intention (if the course title alone wasn't clear enough) and the course learning objectives ensured rigor and mastery of common TPC skills (see Appendix A).

Implementation and Outcomes

As a new faculty member in the department, I (Author 1) was offered the exciting task of implementing this new course in Fall 2022. I designed the course in response to calls within the field for incorporating social justice. Petersen and Walton (2018) remind us that “Social justice research often stems from personal experience and passion, therefore making the personal political. This essential connection of the personal and political is central to feminist research perspectives” (417). As someone who has grounded myself in feminist scholarship and storying, I wanted this course to connect the personal passions we see from so many of our students to the applicability of technical and professional communication. Namely, I drew from Walton, Moore, and Jones’s (2019) framework for enacting inclusivity and social justice within the field (and beyond) through their concepts of positionality, privilege, and power. Positionality asserts that identity meanings are fluid and contextual (63), privilege involves taking a critical look at who is valued in society (83), and both serve as a foundation to understanding how power can be understood and deployed for good (105). Essentially, I designed this course with the intent of carefully examining both our positionality, privilege, and power, as well as the ways in which we see these concepts enacted in social media and social justice. With that in mind, three primary goals of this course arose:

- **Listening:** Allowed students to see the power of the posts they were analyzing, the posts they were producing, and the overall strategies we were exploring as moves toward social change. This also meant listening to voices that the students did *not* inherently agree with but contained a lot of power in the virtual sphere, as part of social change means engaging across difference.
- **Individualization:** Channeled that listening into a focus on individualization as a means of not only igniting personal passion and examining positionality and privilege, but also concentrating a student’s skills and interests on the world’s need. An important element of this goal involved helping students to individualize their own social media goals and expectations, recognizing that their personality, preference, and style of social media authorship and use would vary.
- **Professionalization:** Allowed students to see that the work they are doing on social media (be it retweeting, content creating, or strategizing on digital campaigns) *is* professional communication and is becoming a highly valued form of communication in today’s world.

I therefore frame the discussion below around these three course goals rather than the chronological order of the class schedule. The course was grounded in five major assignments that culminated in a Digital Activism Proposal. These assignments provided a base for our course discussions and activities and allowed students to individualize their own interests and passions. I view this as both a direct response to Peterson and Walton’s call to “make the personal political” and a way to enact the “3 Ps” suggested by Walton, Moore, and Jones.

Goal 1 - Listening

Twitter Assignment

One of our major assignments for the course involved a weekly Twitter participation activity in which students were asked to practice both composing a social media post and analyzing it (see Appendix B). We began each class session with a discussion of a student's featured post, which consisted of an article or image that involved a social justice issue the student was passionate about. All students in the course commented on the Twitter post to generate online discussions. Presenters chose articles from a variety of genres—scholarly, scientific, popular—and a variety of topics such as body image, current events such as the overturning of *Roe vs. Wade* through the *Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling (see Figure 1), or local university updates. The rationale behind this assignment involved students actually *doing* the work of composing for social media. Students tended to focus heavily on the content, subject, and topic of the Twitter post instead of the effectiveness of the message. They were drawn to the lure of the headline, and fixated on the opinions that they held about the issue in place of considering the appeals, the structure, and what they found interesting. However, these discussions were the beginning of each of our class periods, and I think served to get the students thinking about the world that they encountered on social media.

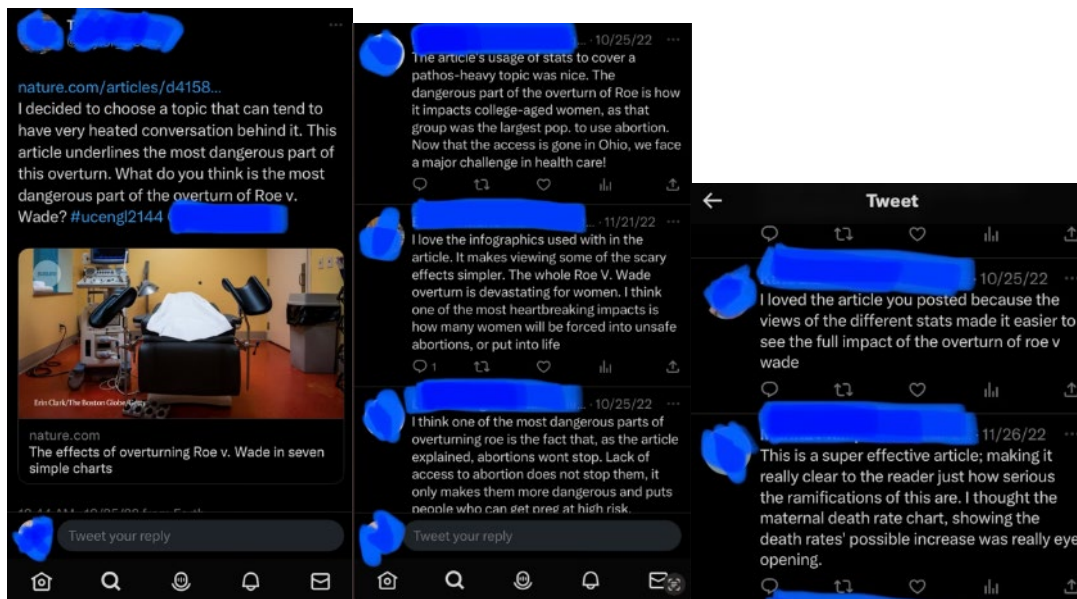


Fig. 1: Sample Tweets from students in class surrounding *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022).

Course Discussions

An emphasis on asking students to rhetorically listen, with the intention to hear, was practiced weekly within our course discussions. I drew from Ratcliffe's use of rhetorical listening as a code of cross-cultural conduct, in which "rhetorical listening signifies a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to *any* person, text, or culture" (Ratcliffe 2005, p. 17). Throughout the class, I asked students to bring in social media posts that activated them. While many students chose influencers and accounts that fought for causes they cared deeply about, a

few students leaned into anger they felt at Andrew Tate, posts that harmed them as women, and that left them wanting to use their platform of social media for good. We conducted periodic listening activities in which a student had to present their partner's post to ensure that active listening was a major component to understanding and harnessing this work.

When conflicts, discomfort, and tension inevitably arose within these discussions, I encouraged students to consider their positionality and background, as well as the background and positionality of their partner, to “hear people’s intersecting identifications with gender and race” (Ratcliffe 2005, p. 17). For instance, one student opened our class discussion with a post about school-wide protests over sex education programming and the role that parents and educators should play in being explicit about sex. Though many students actively agreed with the post, others were clearly uncomfortable with the discussion as well as the idea of introducing these concepts to children of a certain age. By encouraging students to start by sharing their own positionality as it relates to this topic (attended a conservative private school, angered at their own sexual education as they matured, or silenced when asking questions), students began to piece together the viewpoints of their partners and classmates, leading to a much richer, more personal discussion. At the conclusion of the course, students mentioned that these sorts of class discussions—time to debate, to analyze, and to listen—were valuable to them and allowed them to understand their own positionalities in the context of the power they held.

Goal 2 - Individualization

Research an Issue Paper

Around five weeks into the semester, the course assignments and discussions shifted into the individualization and personal passions that I felt were so important to this course. This came through the introduction of the “Research an Issue” paper. Broken into two parts, the paper asked students to first research the roots of an issue they were passionate about (see Appendix C). Where did the idea of privilege play a role in creating the issue? The second part of the “Research an Issue” paper asked students to find where the issue plays out on social media. Whether a hashtag movement, a series of posts, or a particular account that the student really admired (ex: the Equal Justice Initiative when talking about racial justice), this portion of the paper asked students to report on and analyze who started the movement, the primary audience of the movement, and the essential calls to action. Taking a deeper and scholarly “detour” into their issue and objectively reporting on its portrayal on social media was meant to provide students with a toolkit for in-depth information with which to base future content. Further, such work models the professional and academic tone expected of those tracing social media movements for legitimacy, patterns, and overall implications (Welles, Bailey, Jackson 2020).

Students used scholarly sources to trace the “root” of their issue and where it might be enacted on social media today. Many students were able to discern, through tracing that history, the privileging (and silencing) of many voices in terms of policies put into place (in the case of a student examining mass incarceration), perceptions of groups of people (in the case of a student exploring the ways in which men perpetuated rumors of hysterical women that contribute to mental health stigma today), and who even has a voice on these platforms (in the case of environmental issues students explored). Further, this paper gave students the opportunity to

become informed about their issues in a way that individualized and enacted their interests in changing them, which they were able to do through the Digital Activism Proposal.

Digital Activism Proposal

As their final, cumulative project, I asked students to write a Digital Activism Proposal that involved creating a campaign around their issue (see Appendix D). Students could choose to create this campaign for an admired influencer, a company doing work within an issue of passion, or a new viral trend and discuss the ways in which that information should spread. In essence, the campaign had to be grounded in research students had done on their issue of interest and created with the audience they had explored in mind. As part two of this assignment, students also had to create a short “style guide” that outlined best practices both for the campaign and for working toward social justice on social media.

Proposing a campaign allowed for creativity within the professional writing sphere and a creative outlet for revealing passion about student issues. For instance, one student created a grassroots campaign fighting gentrification in a portion of our city. Another chose to assume the account of a Black medical student influencer and create a campaign combatting racism in medical training. A third student chose a fact-based campaign advocating for and educating about criminal justice reform and mass incarceration that could be taken up by celebrities, organizations, or individuals. Having to explain the impact of their issue through reputable sources, and channeling important facts and details about their issue into a tone and digestible content that resounded with their intended audience, allowed students to professionalize their issue of choice and make progress toward true change.

Students strategized how the content for their campaigns would be delivered, identified patterns for use (time of day, frequency of posts, etc.), and provided important tips on the tone, style, and overall goal of the posts (see Figure 2). In final course evaluations, students commented that “the main projects were fruitful to my overall writing skills and social awareness for different issues.” Others suggested future interest in tackling their issue through social media channels, saying “The project helped me consider/define what I want to research in Grad School.” Concluding with a style guide offered students the professionalization needed to make these changes an effective reality. The highly individualized campaign, due at the conclusion of the semester to serve as a culmination of all they had learned, gave students the opportunity to enact some of the passion and drive they found in their issue, examine their own positionality, and suggest ways to exert the power of their own voice to make a change.



Figure 2. Sample Instagram

Project Timeline: The Posts should be done in a manner that follows a theme each week.

- Posts should start out with introductions to mass incarceration and the criminal justice system. Then and as more posts are made, the material gets deeper and more complex and focuses on a single aspect of the issue. Figure 1 shows a project timeline example.
- One post a day for each day of the week is plenty, as to not overwhelm the audience with an abundance of material. At the end of the week, a post with a recap and discussion of all the material learned would be effective in keeping the audience engaged and following along.
- Posting earlier in the morning will allow the followers to access the information earlier in the day so that they have a full day to look at the material, but too early would leave room for people to miss the post. 10am is a good medium.



I believe that this post would be most effectively used as a story post where people are forced to see the statistics as they click through. It could also be posted as a regular feed post. However, I believe that this would be less effective because people can easily scroll past without seeing the statistics once they see the first slide.

For Instagram, it is important to create content that is aesthetically pleasing as it is a platform for sharing pictures. I like the idea of using a brown color palette for the posts because this issue primarily affects black and brown people of color.

Fig. 2: Digital Campaign student samples featuring notes on outline and visual schemes for the campaign

Goal 3- Professionalization

Personal Social Media Audit

So that the students could see the world of social media and social justice as part of their future professions, they conducted personal Social Media Audits. Students were asked to audit a particular account of their choice for 7 days and report on the patterns and effectiveness they noticed in terms of posts, ads, content, timing, and other noticeable characteristics. Though students were not required to choose a social-justice-focused account for this assignment (see Appendix E), many students did. By presenting their findings in a visual and professional report-style manner, students began to see many of the voices they inherently follow as practicing a kind of methodological, scripted professional writing. Additionally, this assignment was meant to professionalize the idea of social media for students to prepare them for burgeoning careers in social media (Kimme Hea 2014).

Through this assignment, many students were “awakened” to the strategy behind some of the social media accounts they followed. Many mentioned noticing a “formula” that, as consumers, they were unaware of. One student, for instance, observed that a notable racial justice leader posted a lot more revenue-generating advertisements and content than he realized, causing him to consider the role revenue generation plays in even well-intentioned social media influencers. Another found that her body image influencer’s postings were genuine based on the way she broke down harmful posts from celebrities, as well as the ways in which she engaged with follower comments. Students also acknowledged the lack of inclusiveness or voice in the content their influencer put out or the inability to see or provide comments and feedback within the

account. They began to discern the ways in which we privilege certain voices over others, particularly in the highly visual world of social media.




Audience Analysis Assignment

To continue to lean into this idea of privilege and consider all voices through a professional communications lens, students created personas through the Audience Analysis assignment. Students worked in groups based on the issues they had identified within their “Research an Issue” paper to identify 3-4 personas that might provide insight into the audience following their issue (see Appendix F). I introduced the overall concept of personas using a few quick resources (Babich 2017, Jain 2020, Adichie 2009) instead of an in-depth analysis (Meloncon 2017, Friess 2017, Lichaw 2016) to allow students at this course level to get a sense of an important technical communication concept. Students were asked, in groups, to create visuals and make presentations around likely behavior patterns of these different personas, including their goals, behaviors, interests, family motivations, and common platforms. Importantly, one of the personas had to be someone who would *not* inherently agree with their issue, but who might be persuadable to at least begin the process of engaging.

Using personas to engage with the issue moved students out of the scholarly and traditional sources they were used to and asked them to engage with “the people.” As this was a group activity, students had the opportunity to conduct collaborative writing and inclusive, collaborative presenting. Establishing goals for their user seemed to be the most valuable component of this assignment. Students in the racial justice group, for instance, determined that many of the users they saw were seeking information, which in turn helped shape the ways they drafted their Digital Activism Proposals (see Figure 3). Students looking at accounts around body positivity and mental health discerned that their users were seeking validation, and therefore were inspired to lean into accounts that showed “real” people and debunk or push against accounts that perpetuated unrealistic lifestyle standards. This assignment, drawing on the power of the user, further allowed students to critically explore the positionality and privilege of the very people they were hoping to reach.

ERIC SMITH
PAROLE OFFICER IN RURAL AMERICA

Archetype: Traditional Christian Conservative
Gender: Male
Age: 30
Location: Midwest (Kentucky)
Race: White
Marital Status: Married
Family: Traditional Monogamous Church Family
Educational Status: High School Graduate

Goals

- Find accounts/users/movements supporting strong family values rooted in traditional Christian morals
- Posts related to crime mitigation (i.e. cops, prisons, criminal justice)
- Utilizes social media to broadcast community watch procedures/ongoing crime within their area
- Rally users to promote and advocate for the extension of criminal justice services and funding for prisons to support the security of his occupation

Frustrations (Pain Points)

- Campaigns on social media focusing on decreasing funding allocation to prison systems and policing in America
- Posts depicting criminal activities and unruly actions
- Advocation for equity and accountability at the systemic criminal justice level
- Politicians being “soft on crime”

Behaviors

- Invests and advocates for community corrections
- Regularly checks Facebook and is an active member of multiple crime and neighborhood watch groups
- Frequently posts on social media attempting to persuade their followers/voice strong opinions
- Engages in conversations/arguments online with people of opposite standpoints

"Prisoners are initially defendants and eventually clients. They are receiving a service from me, the same as if they were applying for a loan at a bank."

Fig 3: Sample Persona from Audience Analysis Assignment focused on mass incarceration

Homework

In addition to major assignments, students worked throughout the course to see social media as not only a channel for fighting social justice issues, but a true means of professional communication. This practice was enacted within their homework as well. Nearly each week, students reviewed readings and articles that focused on topics such as echo chamber engagement (Seneca 2020), the idea of slacktivism (Joyce 2012), performative activism (Phillips 2020), and even other types of activism in the world before social media (King 2012). Instead of the standard written response to these readings, students were asked to create a social media post in response. This could have been a character-limited Twitter post, an Instagram image with caption that they chose, or a TikTok video that they drafted and uploaded for me to view.

Framing weekly responses through the platform of social media not only allowed students to communicate their thoughts on the reading but provided them a direct opportunity to practice writing for social media in a more professional sense.

I was pleasantly surprised at how well students responded to the idea of framing a reading response as a social media post. Many of them incorporated graphics and images to accompany their post, which inspired a new kind of thinking about their issue (see Figure 4; student photo published with permission). Responses involve breaking down the issue, article, or reading into “bite-size nuggets” that forced students to drill down into the most relevant or important information in their work. Within evaluations and reflections, students mentioned better understanding the thought processes that went into their role on social media, as well as their own thought processes for composing what they had previously considered somewhat mindless posts. This allowed for the goal of professionalization, as well as a true listening to these posts and their messages, to be reached.



Fig. 4: Examples of TikTok videos that students submitted based on their chosen issues

Future Changes

In today’s world where Critical Race Theory and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives are under attack (Lu et al 2023, Pollock 2022), courses like Social Media for Social Justice and Activism are critical for igniting student passion and connecting what students are already doing to real, effective change. Though this course has only had one iteration, plans progress for future sections. To better meet our established goals of listening, individualization, and professionalization, we plan to introduce the Digital Activism Proposal at the beginning of the course, allowing students to see each assignment in the course as leading to this ultimate campaign (and therefore meeting established goals). Another hope we have for the future is to incorporate community partners for students to work both with and for when it comes to their social causes, which will mutually benefit the students and the clients. We also plan to incorporate a deeper consideration of scholarly articles and research that address social media and social justice. By asking students to read and reflect on recent and exciting scholarship in our field that addresses these issues (Kimme Hea 2014, Vie 2014, Ray et al 2017, Lockett 2021, and

Jackson 2020), students can further see the professional side of this research that might pave the way for future careers. Finally, we hope to expand our use of platforms in future iterations. Though Twitter continues to be an easy and effective way to communicate as a course, we found throughout the semester that students were more drawn to TikTok and Instagram. Additionally, the unstable status of Twitter (Singla 2022) and its declining popularity among peers might soon make it a problematic platform to work from. Future research is needed to critically evaluate the use of these applications in the face of mounting concerns including data privacy and moral ethics. Regardless of the platform, shifting students to the actual effectiveness and rhetorical appeal of these posts instead of the content of the posts themselves will be a notable improvement in listening, individualizing, and professionalizing. Determining how to keep up with these changing platforms and how to help students professionalize will continue to be a challenging and exciting component to this work.

Conclusion

Our hope in this course was for students to connect the personal to the political while also activating the applicability that is vital to the field of technical communication. In response, students mentioned actively seeking opposing viewpoints to engage more deeply. “More than ever before I am looking towards the other side for a second opinion so that my ideology is not always biased,” said one student, thus achieving our goal of listening and expanding the ways in which students see the political as personal. Students mentioned feeling like their own voice felt harnessed through this course, which achieves our hope of individualization. One student wrote, “My activation has changed in that I feel less hesitant in speaking on my truth.” Students shared that they now read social media posts, particularly those surrounding social justice, much more carefully, which we believe acknowledges an achieved goal of professionalism. One student stated, “I notice how information is represented...I look to see the intention of posts rather than let them scroll right past me.” Future iterations of the course will lean into these goals, even as social media and the world’s pressing social issues continue to evolve. Starting with these three goals, through the lens of positionality, privilege, and power, led to student enactment, activation and, hopefully, real social change. In the spirit of enacting this type of change, we encourage any readers to use/adapt the included appendices in their own courses.

Authors’ Note:

The Institutional Review Board at the university in which this course took place deemed a full IRB review not required for this project.

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Appendix A: Course Description and Objectives

Course Description

Activism for social justice has a long history. With the continued growth of social media, we are seeing digital activism used to spur social change to address systemic issues such as racism, sexism, and more. In this course, students will analyze the success of movements such as #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, #LoveWins, and many others on myriad social media platforms. Students will analyze strategies and audiences involved in digital activism and propose potential calls-to-action for issues of social justice that are important to them. Leading up to the final proposal, students will complete readings and writing assignments focused on answering the question “how can social media promote social justice?” Discussions will center on community involvement; lived experiences; equity and inclusion; and strategies for success, including crowdsourcing, fundraising, and petitions. Additionally, students will learn the nuances of different social media platforms and learn to adapt their writing/posting style to each platform’s unique audience.

Course Objectives

- Analyze past or ongoing instances of digital activism
- Apply successful strategies to engage with current (or to create new) social justice movements
- Understand the differences in how social justice movements work on various social media platforms (Facebook vs Instagram vs Twitter vs TikTok, for example)
- Understand the importance of equity and inclusion in audiences working for social change
- Use concise, clear writing appropriate for each social media platform
- Utilize analytics to determine the success of a particular social media movement

Appendix B: Twitter Assignment Sheet

One of the most exciting, and also most daunting, aspects of social media is that it is constantly shifting. New tools, new topics, new trends happen every. single. day. How do we keep up? Well, we can't do it alone.

For every class period, one student will sign up to post an article, infographic, video (must have captions), etc. on Twitter for the class to read or watch. These posts will be the majority of our reading for this class, so the shares need to be relevant to social justice and activism. We want to learn something from these posts, so keep that in mind.

Keep it relevant and relatively recent. These posts don't always have to be content you find on Twitter! It can be any topic relating to social media, found on any outlet you use.

Assignment guidelines:

- Mention me in every class-related tweet
- Use the class hashtag in every class-related tweet
- Write concisely – you only have 280 characters
- Use tiny url to save characters (<http://tinyurl.com>)
- When it's your day to share, add at least one *open-ended question* to your content to generate discussion
- Each student must post at least one time by the Sunday night before the Tuesday you have signed up (you will sign up for class dates the first week via the editable google doc (Canvas > Modules > Twitter Posting Schedule); this is a minimum – you may post as often as you want)
- Engage with the class on a regular basis – you must reply a minimum of 20 times throughout the semester (this is a minimum – I highly encourage daily participation throughout the semester)

Of course, our opinions will differ. We will engage in constructive debate. Name-calling, bullying, and/or other abuse will NOT be tolerated; it can and will negatively affect your grade. When sharing opposing viewpoints, provide examples and links to support your view. Think long and hard about credibility.

Appendix C: Research an Issue Assignment Sheet

As we've learned thus far in the semester, social media can be a form of social justice when posts, content, and points of impact are well-informed and poised to make a change. In order to prepare for your ultimate campaign and more deeply investigate the ways in which you can make a change, you will be tasked with researching an issue of your choice. This assignment should be produced in a memo format and will be broken up into 2 parts:

1. Research the issue: It's important to gather FACTS any time you are working on promotion and spreading information to make a change. Choose an issue or social cause that you are particularly passionate about, and using memo format compile a brief report on the issue itself. Using valid sources (at least 3) and a variety of channels (note that they do NOT need to be connected to social media for this part), please answer the following questions:
 - a. What is the history of this issue? Keep in mind that this will NOT be comprehensive, as nearly all social justice issues are complicated and ever-evolving. However, take some time to investigate some of the root causes of this issue (ie: racial injustice, a history of stigmas with disability, or unsustainable practices that have led to a renewed interest in sustainability)
 - b. Whom is this issue affecting? This might mean finding data and using visuals that will ultimately help you investigate your intended audience.
 - c. What needs to happen? This should include a brief rundown of organizations that are fighting for your cause, proposed solutions to your issue, or even what an idealized world without this issue might look like

2. Issue on social media: Research a trending (current or within the last few years) social justice hashtag or a current petition on change.org. *Analyze* the movement/petition using memo format. Do research, take screenshots, and incorporate sources into your paper to support your analysis, making sure to answer the following questions:
 - a. Who started it and why?
 - b. What is the main premise of the movement?
 - c. Who is the intended audience?
 - d. On what platforms have you seen the movement shared?
 - e. What is the primary call to action? What are some of the most common posts? Who is sharing and posting?
 - f. How effectively does the movement/petition use the rhetorical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos)?
 - g. What is a difference YOU can make in this issue? How can social media be used as a tool to help toward this issue? In this section, I hope to hear your voice and see your recommendations, tying back into your research on the issue.

Appendix D: Digital Activism Proposal Assignment Sheet

So here we are! You've engaged with your peers on Twitter, you've assessed an individual profile, you've dug into your social justice issue of choice and you've done your best to anticipate your audience and their goals and needs. Now it's time to act! For your final, cumulative assignment, you'll act as a content manager for your issue and work to come up with a campaign that is needed to address your issue today. Part of your proposal must also involve imparting best practices for just how we *do* social media and social justice in today's fast paced world.

Part One: Proposal

Propose a new hashtag/petition you think would be relevant/needed today. Be sure to research and make sure it doesn't currently exist. Explain your hashtag/petition, making sure to answer the following questions:

- What is your hashtag?
- Why is this needed?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What are the possible calls-to-action? Sample content?
- What is the intended outcome? What are the interaction goals, and how are they measured? It's important here to think of the action component. Is your goal to find sponsors and funding, and if so who and how much? Are you looking to raise awareness, to grow followers?
- How would you use social media effectively to ensure this trends?

Part Two: Style Guide

In order to ensure that the work that we do is consistent, you'll include a cover letter to your campaign that will provide your audience with some best practices for this work. This one-page letter will guide us in ways to work smarter as opposed to harder and allow for opportunities for future campaigns to be recognizable, sustainable, and therefore far more impactful. Use this as a way to reflect on your campaign and argue for why you feel it is successful. You might want to include:

- Campaign Style—Here, you should describe the words, phrases, and novel terms used by a social justice campaign, as well as a guide for how/when they should be used.
- Campaign Content—Here, you should explain the types of content a social justice campaign should produce, and how often that content should be shared.
- Campaign Interactions—How does a social justice campaign interact with its issue at large? What will make it effective?

Appendix E: Personal Social Media Audit Assignment Sheet

When working with social media and social justice, the first goal is to be intentional in our writing and planning. We need to know what we're doing and we need to know why we're doing it, particularly if we want to make a change. If we don't, queries as to how and why we're working will not end well. This assignment is a starting point to tackle the problem of how and why.

You will be generating a social justice report on the audience and content of a social media account of your choice. For example, you might follow the Twitter feed of an influencer with a particular passion for disability rights or the Facebook page of a company that espouses sustainability. You could also choose a more regional or national/international presence (Kroger, Skyline, a local non-profit you admire). Try to choose someone with an issue you are passionate about, as you will likely be auditing this social justice issue overall in future assignments.

In tracking the media page, you should follow 7 days' worth of content from ONE channel (Facebook, TikTok, Twitter...your choice). In doing so, you'll keep track of when the page posts content (time of day), as well as the frequency of that posting (how often per day, per week, etc.). You will also need to record the types of content, creating your own system for classifying the post content. Alongside the post count, you should also look into how the page/feed/account responds to comments and comments on threads, and what the nature of those threads (positive, negative, etc) are. This should also be tracked with the same metrics as above. If possible, please also observe how and where you see certain posts reshared.

The goal of this work is to get a holistic understanding of the type of content generated by the channel and the level of commitment necessary to meet that bar.

Assignment guidelines:

- Introduction—This section should introduce the report, explain the subject matter, and forecast the development of the report
- Tracking Data—This section should report on the information discovered by tracking. As a reminder, posts and comments should be tracked by:
 - Time of Day
 - Frequency
 - Type Classification
- Takeaways—This section should explain the actions of the studied channel, explaining what they are able to do with the posts and comments created. What is the overarching purpose, in your analysis, of this work? What is the impact on the audience of the work, in your analysis? How does this work interact with the larger issue this account is trying to address, in your own analysis?

Appendix F: Audience Analysis Assignment Sheet

Part of making true change is real, intentional engagement. But how can you effectively engage with your audience if you don't truly know your audience? This assignment will allow you to work in groups with those preparing campaigns around related issues in order to better understand the audience you will be engaging.

Through following the guidelines provided in the class readings, your group will create a minimum of 4 personas that might describe common users around your issue. You will create these personas in a presentation format (see examples in our modules) and will be presenting them to the class. Please make sure the following are including in your personas:

- Persona name
- Photo
- Demographics (gender, age, location, race, marital status, family, educational status, etc.)
- Goals and needs- what is this person hoping to get out of social justice related content on social media? How do they typically find and interact with that information?
- Frustrations (or “pain points”)
- Behaviors (commenting, sharing, posting, and the types of channels you are likely to find them on)
- Bits of personality (e.g. a quote or slogan that captures the personality)
- Their relationship to social justice and social media: here, you should share the types of content, channels, etc. that this persona typically goes for. This will help as you begin to shape what your campaign might look like!

Remember, it's best to avoid the temptation to add a lot of personal details: one or two bits of personality can bring a persona to life, but too many details will be distracting and will make the persona less credible as an analytical tool.

In addition to creating these personas, you will share your findings with the class and will complete a brief group form and reflection sharing how you researched and identified these personas, as well as what you learned.