

Scheduled Office Hours:

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## Course Description

Social media writing, like all writing, entangles political, ethical, social, and cultural values. Writing and participating in any genre requires an awareness of discourse communities, your target audience, your motivation/purpose, and writing conventions that you may include or challenge. In this course, you will explore how these values play out in social media writing, community engagement, and research. You will engage with social media communities of your choosing, reflect on your engagements, conduct your own (ethical) social media writing research, and read scholars' social media research.

We will discuss the interwoven, complex worlds of social media. Social media writing is more than posting and engaging with others on digital platforms. Writing for social media comes with understanding the intersections of:

- **Breaking down the virtual/in-real-life binary:** How do our virtual activities impact the world, from how we present and others read our identities to climate change?
- **Data surveillance, big data, and advertising:** How do data and back-end information impact how we write and interact on social media?
- **Platform analyses:** What are the constraints and affordances of different platforms, different platforms' purposes, and the different modes and forms of engagement?
- **Ethics:** What are ethical guidelines for engaging on social media or studying social media engagement? In what ways do larger social media companies follow or ignore ethics?
- **Moderation (systems of accountability or lack-there-of):** How do platforms and/or communities encourage or discourage systems of accountability? How can we as individuals challenge online violence and harassment?
- **Community-building through textual creations, platform choices, and moderation policies:** How do we build and participate in different communities across different platforms? How are online communities formed through various connected interests, such as activism, positionalities, fandoms, memes, and more?
- **Audience awareness and reach:** How does building audience awareness help us reach our potential audience? What are the different methods for engaging with audiences?
- **Discoverability:** What are the different modes of discoverability on different platforms? How does this impact audience reach? How does this impact what we learn and see? How can we curate our newsfeeds and find the communities that empower us?
- **The spread of information and misinformation:** How does the spread of information through virality or searching impact our experiences on social media and understanding of the world?

## Class Environment Statement

Even though this is an online course, this is still a classroom. Language holds immense power, so we are all accountable for how we use it. Because we will be discussing sensitive topics, as writing is a sensitive action, we must be sure to respect and listen to one another. By embracing discomfort, especially when it comes to learning about and with digital tools and writing, we can learn so much from one another. Our course will be a place for empathetic inquiry and a space where diverse perspectives are valued. Please do not use any gendered, racist, abelist, classist, or otherwise harmful language.

Please also follow our course's Subreddit Guidelines and Rules. We will also have a larger discussion to add to these rules by discussing how we each learn and communicate in safe methods.

## Grading

### Participation (35%)

Since we are not meeting in-person, your engagement with the weekly assignments will count as your participation. You will receive 5% participation every week for 7 weeks (5% x 7 weeks=35%). Every **Tuesday** and **Friday**, you will have some informal assignments due, which I will be reading along. If you miss an informal assignment, that will hurt your grade. Please always keep in contact with me.

Informal assignments due every Tuesday and Friday:

### Reading Response (2% each week):

- Respond to all the reading discussions on the Subreddit and answer the question asked by your colleague. Sometimes, you will only have one reading; other times, there will be two readings. You are expected to write approximately 250-500 words in this response.

### Activity OR Social Media Post and Reflection (2% each week):

- Activity: Instead of posting on a social media platform and writing a reflection about it, you will follow the activity assigned for that day.
- Unless otherwise stated in the course calendar, you will reflect on your own social media engagement (approximately 250-500 words + at least one artifact, which may be a screenshot of proof of your engagement or something else). You will do some form of social media writing (whether you make your own post or comment on someone else's post), take screenshots/share URLs, and reflect on your engagement. You will post this on the course Subreddit under that day's "Engagement Reflection Discussion Board". In this reflection, engage with terms from the glossary or course readings.

### Glossary Submission (1% each week):

Update our course glossary with a new term or extend a term's definition. You can also build off definitions. Most terms have multiple and sometimes contentious definitions. If you want to add more.

- We will use Google Sheets to collect these terms. Google Sheets are designed for collaboration. In our Canvas platform under "Collaborations," you will find the link to the "Glossary of Terms" spreadsheet
- Towards the end of the semester, I will upload our terms to the course subreddit. You can come back to these terms for your final and for future research! By the end of class, you will have defined and/or come up with at least 14 terms per person. WOW, that's a lot of terms!

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### Reading Discussion Leads (15%)

You will choose to lead one discussion about one of the readings this semester. As the discussion leader, your job will be to summarize the readings and pose discussion questions for your peers in the class.

Your discussion questions should also tie in larger themes/issues from both texts. You will post these on our course subreddit **two days** before the reading response is due (example: if the reading response is due Tuesday, you should post your full discussion lead by Sunday), and your colleagues will respond on your post by Tuesday. In this discussion, tackle these steps about the reading:

- Provide a basic summary of the reading.
- What are the arguments the author is making?
- How do these arguments apply to social media writing?
- What are some important terms or definitions that appear in the text?
- Provide **2-3** questions for your peers to answer. These questions should ask your colleagues to engage more deeply with the text on an individual, cultural, and/or political level.

Note that some of the readings will have *two* shorter texts/projects/videos, so if you choose to write about these, talk about how these two readings relate.

### Formal Assignments (50%)

You will have **four** major formal assignments, each worth 12.5% of your grade, which you will receive letter grades and feedback on. For each of these assignments, I will provide a detailed prompt with my expectations articulated. [Please see the assignments section below for more information.](#)

- Peer review (2.5% for each)
- First draft (5% for each)
- Final draft (5% for each)

### Glossary Terms

Every Tuesday and Friday, you will be required to submit **one** new glossary term, or expand upon a definition that was created by one of your colleagues. Here are some potential terms to begin with. You may use terms we run across in our readings or any terms you find relevant to the course in your own research/social media engagement!

- |                               |                       |                     |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| - Social Media                | - Digital rhetoric    | - Multimedia        |
| - Circulation                 | - New media           | - Remediation       |
| - Influencer                  | - Information systems | - Publics           |
| - Facial Recognition Software | - Embodiment          | - Counterpublics    |
| - Viral                       | - Anonymity           | - Community         |
|                               | - Meme                | - Networked Publics |

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- Infodemic
- Design
- Advertising
- Algorithms
- Feed
- Big data
- Hashtag activism
- Fandom
- Data Surveillance
- Discoverability
- Algorithmic Bias
- Accessibility
- Access
- Slacktivism
- Troll
- Misinformation
- Surveillance Capitalism
- Parasitic Publics
- Remix
- SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
- Analytics
- Infographic
- Moderators
- Platforms
- Big Data

## Formal Assignments

*How will I be graded?*

Each assignment will have a rubric with a set of requirements and questions to think about.

*What if I want to incorporate specific examples from social media that I did not create?*

You are welcome to incorporate screenshots or even recordings of these communities. However, some users may not be comfortable with their information being used for a paper. Before using anyone's posts, **please reach out to them first and ask for their permission**. Please also anonymize posts when possible, such as erasing their usernames or avoiding any personal information when taking a screenshot. If the poster is an **influencer** (has a blue check) and does not respond, you can make your own ethical decision if you want to include their post without their permission.

*Will I need to use sources?*

For every assignment, you will be required to use at least **three** peer-reviewed or reputable sources, such as the New York Times. If you have any questions about the reputability of a source, please ask! I am always happy to discuss this.

These sources can include what we have read for class, or you can do your own external research. I will also include a mix of peer reviewed articles and popular culture think-pieces that may be useful on our Subreddit. Here are some great academic journals to check out:

- *Technical Communication: The Journal of the Society for Technical Communication*
- [Computers and Composition](#)
- [Transformative Works and Cultures](#) (open access)
- [Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy](#) (open access)
- *New Media and Society*
- *Game Studies*

## Assignment 1: Analyze a Social Media Discourse Community

Choose a social media discourse community that you engage with. This may be a Facebook group, a hashtag, a subreddit, a forum, or your own social media network.

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- Define this discourse community.
- What are some genres that often appear? Describe these genres and why they are often used.
- How do users engage with each other? Incorporate specific examples, if possible.
- Analyze how this discourse community engages using the specific social media platform. What are the constraints and affordances of that platform that either allow the discourse community to flourish or prevent it from flourishing?
- What are some of the social, political, ethical values? These may be parsed through community guidelines, the roles of moderators, the types of content that is posted/engaged with most, and more.
- How do the social media platform's constraints and affordances impact these discourse communities?

### Assignment 2: Your Social Media Story (autoethnography)

How do you use social media? What communities are you a part of? Which platforms do you reach across to participate in these communities? How do you position yourself on social media? How do the platforms inhibit or empower your identity-creation and performance online? How do your actions on social media impact your life? With whom do you engage and how?

While this is your story, every story should revolve around a particular *theme*. Similar to Moya Bailey's, Les Hutchinson's, and Amber Buck's pieces, connect your social media writing practices to a particular theme.

Potential ideas:

- Social Media Use During the Global COVID-19 Pandemic
- Using Social Media for Activism (Hashtag Activism)
- Everyone's a Fan of Something: Your Fan Engagement
- Social Media and Professionalism
- Your Role in (Mis)Information Sharing

### Assignment 3: Digital Activism

You will be participating in digital activism! To participate in digital activism means you must **produce** something and post it somewhere. These will be your artifacts. Once you have posted your artifacts, you will write a short reflection paper due on [[date]]. In this reflection paper, you will talk about the types of artifacts you produced, your cause, your purpose of these artifacts, and the methods you used.

### Assignment 4: Multimodal Final Portfolio

Reflect on what you have learned from this course. Use specific texts you have written as evidence (reading responses, reading discussion lead, engagement reflections, your assignments, etc). How

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has your perspective on social media writing changed? What practices do you plan to implement in the future?

You can get as creative as you want for this assignment. Incorporate any media you would like, as long as you engage with a reflection about what you've taken away from this course, your social media engagement throughout the course, the readings, discussions with myself and your colleagues, and more.

## Campus Resources

[[insert campus resources]]

## FAQs

*What does "writing intensive" mean?*

The goal of this course is to develop your writing, analytical skills, and understanding of the intersection of writing, politics, culture, and sociality. Because this is a writing intensive course, this means a majority of your work will be writing.

*What are some of the technology requirements?*

You can use your mobile for most technology: we will be using a mix of Canvas to submit your larger assignments and Reddit to submit your informal assignments.

You must have internet access and some kind of social media accounts (these can be anonymous accounts, but keep in mind that you may be taking screenshots of your engagement). Each week, you will be asked to make 2 posts to a social media account of your choosing.

*Why are we using Reddit?*

Reddit's platform encourages the dissemination of information, community-building, and multimedia sharing. I have created a private Subreddit for the course. The Subreddit will only be available to us, and no one besides me and your colleagues (and those pesky data surveillance collectors) will be able to see your contributions. In our Subreddit, we will be able to have more in-depth discussions, share different types of media, and engage with each other as a mini-discourse community.

Like every platform, Reddit has its issues. We will be discussing this more in depth, but almost every social media platform you belong to is collecting and selling your data. These platforms generate profit based on users and activity; sometimes, too, this activity can be toxic or "parasitic publics" (Larson & McHendry). These platforms do not always take initiative to remove misinformation or violent/toxic behaviors and communities. However, as in most platforms, you can curate your own experience on both Reddit and social media platforms beyond. We will discuss moderation

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guidelines, newsfeed activities and algorithms, and reporting systems (when they work and when they fail). You will not be required to go beyond the boundaries of our course subreddit.

### *How can I protect my privacy on Reddit?*

Understandably, you may want to remain anonymous and not provide Reddit with any information about yourself. While you will be writing and posting on Reddit, you are free to disclose as much or as little personal information about yourself as you want. Alternatively, if you would like to write something personal and not post it on our Subreddit, you can always email me!

We will also be practicing respecting each other's anonymity. In our Subreddit rules, you are required to only refer to each other by our usernames and not disclose any demographic information about each other, unless explicit permission is given.

### *How will I learn in this course?*

Like most courses, what you learn depends on your commitment. Most of the learning in this course will come from your engagement with your peers, the readings, your social media communities, your assignments, and forms of feedback. I will be posting mini-lectures based on the particular weekly themes, providing detailed feedback on your "formal" writing assignments, and available for one-on-one video conferences.

### *How do we define writing?*

In this course, we will be defining 'writing' as all forms of creating textual objects. Textual objects may be anything from writing essays to creating memes/videos. You will have the opportunity to engage with different forms and genres of writing, and you may get as creative as you would like!

### *How will I be graded?*

Please see the grading policies and percentages below. You will have **four** major assignments, one reading discussion lead, and several informal assignments throughout the week.

### *Will I learn about social media marketing in this course?*

This is not a marketing course. There will be one class session dedicated to marketing tactics; we will also discuss advertising, data surveillance, and surveillance capitalism. If you are interested, you may analyze social media marketing strategies for your individual projects, though. You are always free to discuss, research, and analyze things like analytics, SEO (search engine optimization), influencer culture, engaging with consumers, advertising, and more. These are all essential parts of social media writing and engagement, after all.

### *What books will I need?*

We will only be using one book: *Social Writing/Social Media: Publics, Presentations, and Pedagogies*, an edited collection edited by Douglas M. Walls and Stephanie Vie. This edited collection is available for **purchase or available for free to download** on the WAC Clearinghouse site:



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<https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/social/>. All other readings--a selection of peer-reviewed articles, newspaper articles, or other texts--will be made available on Canvas.

### Course Calendar

Week	Administrative Info	Topic	Tuesday	Friday
Week 1 (May 3rd)	<p><b>April 30</b> – First day of online "I Am Here" registration for summer 1 and NUterm classes</p> <p><b>May 4</b> – First Day</p> <p><b>May 6</b> – Last day of online class add for summer 1 and NUterm classes</p> <p><b>May 8</b> – Last day of online "I Am Here" registration for full summer classes</p>	<p><b>Introductions:</b> What is social media &amp; social media writing? How can we empower ourselves in systems and platforms that may harm, devalue, or profit off us?</p> <p><b>Content Moderation and Guidelines</b> What are the roles of reporting systems, content moderation, systems of accountability, and ethical guidelines in social media engagement?</p>	<p><b>Activity: Introductions</b> (no Engagement Reflection due) - Introduce yourself on our Subreddit! - Select the reading(s) response you would like to lead</p> <p><b>Reading Response</b> - <a href="#">“The internet is a trash fire. Here’s how to fix it”</a> by Lisa Nakamura <b>Led by Cara</b></p>	<p><b>Activity: Moderation Guidelines</b> (no Engagement Reflection due) Contribute to the Moderation Guidelines discussion on our Subreddit!</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response (led by )</b> - <a href="#">“Censored, suspended, shadowbanned: User interpretations of content moderation on social media platforms”</a> by Sarah Myers West AND the <a href="#">Writing Program Administration Listserv Participation Guidelines</a> <b>Led by [student]</b></p>
Week 2 (May 10)	<p><b>May 12</b> – Last day of online class add for full summer classes</p>	<p><b>Discourse Communities</b> What is a discourse community? Why is it important to think about discourse communities when engaging with social media content?</p> <p><b>Ethics</b></p>	<p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> Describe your engagement and the discourse community with which you are engaging.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b></p>	<p><b><a href="#">DISCOURSE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS: First Draft</a></b></p> <p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> Platform comparison. Post on two separate social media platforms. Discuss the constraints and affordances of each.</p>

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		<p>What are some conversations around social media writing ethics? What about social media writing research?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“What Reddit Has to Teach Us About Discourse Communities?”</a> by Ryan P Shepherd <b>Led by [student]</b></li> <li>- <a href="#">“Reddit’s “Explain Like I’m Five”: Technical Descriptions in the Wild”</a> by Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“#transform(ing)DH Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities and Feminist Ethics”</a> by Moya Bailey <b>Led by [student]</b></li> <li>- <a href="#">“Toward a goodwill ethics of online research methods”</a> by Brittany Kelley <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>
<p>Week 3 (May 17)</p>		<p><b>Hashtag Activism</b> How has social media writing and engagement been used for justice, democracy, and equity?</p> <p><b>The Bad Place</b> How has social media writing and engagement been used for injustice, tyranny, and violence?</p>	<p><b>PEER REVIEW DUE</b></p> <p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> Find a cause you care about and engage in digital activism.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“The Intimate Screen: Revisualizing Understanding of Down Syndrome Through Digital Activism on Instagram”</a> by Kara Poe Alexander and Leslie A Hahner (<i>Social Writing/Social Media</i>) <b>Led by [student]</b></li> <li>- <a href="#">“#MyNYPD: Transforming Twitter into a Public Place for Protest”</a> by Tracey J Hayes <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>	<p><a href="#">DISCOURSE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS: Final Draft</a></p> <p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> Use this time to reflect on your social media engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Parasitic Publics</a> by Kyle Larson and George McHendry <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>
<p>Week 4 (May 24)</p>	<p>May 24 – Last day to drop a full summer class without a W</p>	<p><b>Embodiment and Real-World Implications</b> What is embodiment?</p>	<p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> How are you embodying particular practices,</p>	<p><a href="#">YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STORY: First Draft</a></p> <p><b>Activity: COVID-19</b></p>

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	<p>Grade</p> <p><b>Memorial Day</b> May 25th</p>	<p>Why is embodiment important to discuss with social media writing? How can our social media and online practices influence our relationship with ourselves, the world, and how others perceive us?</p>	<p>identities, and perspectives in your social media engagement? Show at least one example.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“Writing To Have No Face: The Orientation of Anonymity in Twitter”</a> by Les Hutchinson (<i>Social Writing/Social Media</i>) <b>Led by [student]</b></li> <li>- <a href="#">“Grad School 2.0: Performing Professionalism on Social Media”</a> by Amber Buck (<i>Social Writing/Social Media</i>) <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Reflection</b> Reflect how your social media participation has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic (show at least 3 artifacts)</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Readings Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“Data Centers Waste Vast Amounts of Energy”</a> by James Glanz <b>Led by [student]</b></li> <li>- COVID-19 Readings: <a href="#">The COVID-19 Social Media Infodemic</a> by Cinelli et al AND <a href="#">“Impact of COVID-19 on SEO”</a> Infographic AND <a href="#">“How COVID-19 Has Affected Media Consumption, by Generation”</a> Infographics <b>Led by [student]</b></li> </ul>
<p>Week 5 (May 31)</p>		<p><b>Data Surveillance:</b> Advertising and Facial Recognition Software</p>	<p><b>PEER REVIEW DUE</b></p> <p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b> Advertising Analysis. Describe advertisements you receive and how your online engagement may have led to these advertisements.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">“Shoshana Zuboff on 'surveillance capitalism' and how tech companies are always watching us”</a></li> </ul>	<p><a href="#"><b>YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STORY: Final Draft</b></a></p> <p><b>Activity: Become a Cyberpunk!</b> Let’s try fooling facial recognition software. Take a “Before” photo using a filter that uses facial recognition software. Use tactics from the CV Dazzle or from Thomson to dodge this tech and take an “After” photo using the same filter. Write about your experience.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p>

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			<p><b>Led by [student]</b>                      - <a href="#">“A DIY Guide to Feminist Cybersecurity”</a> by hackblossom <b>Led by [student]</b></p>	<p><b>Readings</b>  <a href="#">“How to hack your face to dodge the rise of facial recognition tech”</a> by Elise Thomson AND <a href="#">CV Dazzle Project</a>: Camouflage from face detection <b>Led by [student]</b></p>
Week 6 (June 7)		<p><b>Online Communities: Fandoms &amp; Memes</b></p>	<p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b>                      Engage in a fan community on one of the social media platforms you work with.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b>                      - <a href="#">“Still Flying: Writing as Participatory Activism Circulating Across the Firefly ‘Verse”</a> by Liza Potts (<i>Social Writing/Social Media</i>) <b>Led by [student]</b></p> <p>- <a href="#">“Narrative extraction, #BlackPantherSoLIT, and signifyin’: Black Panther fandom and transformative social practices”</a> by Tracy Deonn Walker <b>Led by [student]</b></p>	<p><b>DIGITAL ACTIVISM : <a href="#">First Draft</a></b></p> <p><b>Activity: Social Media Post and Reflection</b>                      Create a meme. Write about why you chose this mean, the significance of the meme, a description of how this meme is used, other examples of the meme, and (if known) the origins of the meme.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b>                      - <a href="#">“The role of popular media in 2016 US presidential election memes”</a> by Kyra Osten Hunting <b>Led by [student]</b></p> <p>- <a href="#">““This is Fine”: Reading, Making, and Archiving Memes after November 2016 (NCPH Twitter Mini-Con, October 2018)”</a> by Jim McGrath <b>Led by [student]</b></p>
Week 7 (June 14)	June 18 – Last day of classes		<p><b>PEER REVIEW DUE</b></p> <p><b>Activity: Accessibility Analysis</b></p>	<p><b>LAST DAY</b></p> <p><b>DIGITAL ACTIVISM: <a href="#">Final Draft</a></b></p>

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			<p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response</b>          - "<a href="#">Federal Social Media Accessibility Toolkit Hackpad</a>" by Digital.gov  <b>Led by [student]</b></p>	<p><b>Social Media Post and Reflection:</b> Think about what steps you'll take in your current and future social media engagement to make the world a better place.</p> <p><b>Glossary Term Due</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response (may remove)</b>          -"<a href="#">Can we block these political things? I just want to get f*cking recipes: ' Women, Rhetoric, and Politics on Pinterest</a>" by Katherine DeLuca <b>Led by Cara</b></p>
<p>Week 8 (June 21)</p>	<p>June 21 – Last day to drop a summer 1 or NUterm class with a W grade</p> <p>June 26 – grades due</p>		<p><b><u>June 23: FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE</u></b></p> <p>- Look back at your first introduction post and your writing/reading done throughout the course. How has your perspective on social media writing changed? What practices do you plan to implement in the future?</p>	