

Strategic Communication Media: Paper (25%)

You have two options for this paper: an academic literature review or a topic paper focused on certain area or issue related to social media. The difference is that the academic paper will review the academic literature and lead to research questions/hypotheses. The topic paper will rely on industry sources such as reports, white papers, newspapers, trade journals, etc. Follow APA style for in-text citations and your reference list

Due March 7 (will be accepted as late as March 19 by email/hard copy).

The paper must be original!

Topic Paper Description

The topic paper will introduce a topic related to social media, discuss that topic in-depth, and provide a list of references. The paper will also include a cover page. The paper will be approximately 10 pages in length and use approximately 15 references from newspapers, trade journals, reports, white papers, etc. Include a cover page and list of references.

Topics for your paper might include one of the following as it relates to social media; crisis communication, mobile marketing, advertising in social networks, privacy issues, online reviews, geolocation, political campaigns, customer service/responsiveness. Try to think in terms of topics that would be relevant in a business context.

Academic Paper Description

The academic paper will introduce a topic related to social media, provide a literature review (and theoretical background, if relevant), list hypotheses and/or research questions to be tested, and provide a list of references. The paper will also include a cover page. The paper will be approximately 10 pages in length and use 5-7 references from academic journals plus additional references from newspapers, trade journals, etc. (or approximately 15 references from newspapers, trade journals, reports, white papers, etc.)

Steps to Writing Your Academic Paper

1. **Getting started:** Choose a social media topic that is useful, valuable, and important; contributes something to our understanding; has merit; and fills a need or gap in the literature.
2. **Reference list:** Conduct your research using the library databases (Proquest, J-Stor, etc.). Narrow your search to academic journals for your literature review sources. Remember to use 5-7 sources from academic journals for your literature review plus additional sources from newspapers, trade journals, etc. for your introduction. Make sure

your reference list is complete, accurate, and proofed for style. Follow APA style to compile the list.

3. **Cover page:** Follow APA style.
4. **Introduction:** It's good to begin the introduction with a "hook." A hook is a brief but enticing and intriguing paragraph that piques the reader's interest in your paper and topic. Next come right out and say what you're doing. "This paper will/hopes to/explores/explains/argues/studies ..." Last write a one-paragraph preview of the *organization* of the paper by writing a thesis sentence for each of the next sections. "Below I first provide a little background on the issue of...Next I argue that the literature..., etc." In the following paragraphs, discuss the topic using the trade literature.
5. **Literature review:** What you are doing in this section is discussing journal articles related to your topic and possibly theoretical studies that might apply to your topic.
6. **Research questions and/or hypotheses:** Write research questions and/or hypotheses at the end of the literature review section that are realistic and testable.

General Guidelines

Follow the APA stylebook for citations, levels of headings, rules for capitalization and use of numerals, etc. Use in-text citations. Proofread your paper carefully.

Common Errors

Do not quote sources **quoting sources** or even paraphrase sources **paraphrasing sources**. *Always* quote the primary source. That means you have to go get the real thing *and* you have to read it.

Long block quotes: Go lightly. The purpose of long block quotes is not to avoid having to paraphrase and explain. The purpose of block quotes is to share original words that should not be paraphrased for some special reason.

Two other sure-fire signs of new scholars are: First, beginning sentences over and over again with **theorists' names** (Barnes argued...Davis suggested)—once in a while here and there is OK, but not sentence after sentence—a common problem with student lit reviews. Another problem is quoting the journal or the article as in “The Journal of Advertising said...” or “In the article “Cognitive Effects of Advertising,” Smith said...”

Write your literature review in **past tense**.

Expression of Expectations for Performance

The best research papers will introduce an appropriate topic in an introduction section and then build a case for the research questions or hypotheses through the literature review. The research questions and/or hypotheses must be realistic and testable. The best papers will also follow the guidelines of the assignment including page length, number of sources, organization, and APA style. The best papers will be well-written with no typographical errors.