

Digital Data and Analytics: MEJO 713

Dr. Joe Cabosky, JD -- Spring 2018

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Class Description and Goals

This course explores the fundamental concepts and principles that underlie techniques for extracting useful information and knowledge from data, particularly focusing on modern digital platforms. The primary goal of the course is to help you view problems from a data perspective and understand how to systematically analyze such problems. More importantly, the goal of this class is for you to learn what data actually mean and how you can use data strategically. This data-analytic thinking can then be applied in a variety of ways, from data-driven storytelling to the creation of actionable insights.

This course is designed to help you:

- Understand the types of questions that data can and cannot answer and how data are used in a variety of communication fields
- Understand the ethical implications of accessing/using data
- Understand the basics of data analysis
- Learn how to best communicate and present the results of your analysis

Texts and Readings

- Chapters 2-6 from StuKent Digital Marketing Analytics Textbook
 - This textbook is digital/online
 - These chapters should be free (if you have any issues with being charged, please let me know)
 - Access will be available by the first day of class on January 10th (but registration is required - An instruction email will be sent to give you registration information)
- Powerpoints and current Industry and Topical Readings will be required most weeks -- all of these readings will be posted under the **Sakai Resources tab**. To keep the class current and adaptive, these readings will populate throughout the semester but will always be available at least 1-2 weeks in advance.
- StuKent Simulation: We will also be using the StuKent Mimic Pro Simulation. This is the only thing you will have to pay for. Like the digital textbook, registration will be required, and it will be available upon the first day of class on January 10th (an instruction email will be sent to give you registration information).

Sakai, Email, Forums

Sakai: All course info will be posted on Sakai. Most of the content will generally be found under the Resources Tab -- most things you will need will be posted under each week's folder under the Resources Tab. To keep things current, folders will be populated with content throughout the semester, but I will always post readings and forum posts at least 1-2 weeks in advance, if not

more. You are responsible for any course changes that may be made on Sakai, including changes to the syllabus or assignments.

Email: Check your school email. You are responsible for any course communications I send through email.

Forums: As is standard with most online courses, the forums will serve as a critical part of this course. So, keep constant contact here. Forum posts will be posted 1-2 weeks in advance, but you should not respond to a forum until granted access and/or the forum is due. This will ensure you are learning and reviewing the material before responding to forum prompts. Most of the Exercises will also be completed via the Forums, and instructions will be given on each Exercise.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations to participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at <https://accessibility.unc.edu/>

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to contact the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, an illness, etc.

Honor Code

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (<http://honor.unc.edu>). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class.

Diversity

UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Please see more about our MJ Diversity and Inclusion plan here: <http://mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.

Accreditation

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;

Grading and Assignments

Grading

Consistent with graduate MJ Courses, grades will be distributed in the format of either a High Pass (H), Pass, Low Pass (L) or Fail (F). I will assign you a grade on your Forum posts, Simulator activity, Exercises, and on Final. Your forum posts and simulator activity will be assigned an overall grade once you have completed all posts and simulations, but if you have any questions about your progress on these, please don't hesitate to ask. I will give you a letter grade on each of your Exercises, as well as an overall Exercise grade at the end of the semester. Though I will not give specific points -- only a letter grade -- on assignments, the grading system generally breaks down as follows:

H: 90-100% - Professional equivalent: The work is stellar. If this was an internship, I would go out of my way to hire you, based on your work on the assignment.

P: 70-90% - Professional equivalent: You met all the requirements of the assignment. If this was an internship, you demonstrated that you were a competent employee. You showed proper work ethic, that you were thinking critically about the material, and that you understand the concepts of the class.

L: 60-70% - Professional equivalent: Though not a failing effort, you showed a lack of understanding the material, a lack of effort, and/or a lack of critical thinking.

F: Below 60% - Professional equivalent: Your work was not professional and did not show a competent level of understanding, effort or critical thinking.

A note on grading rubrics: While the forum posts and simulations are pretty straightforward, each Exercise, as well as your final, will have an Assignment Grading Rubric. These will be posted under the "Assignment Rubrics" folder under the Resources Tab when each assignment is given out.

Late assignments will lose 10% for every day that they are late.

Assignments

Forums (20%)

Consistent with many of your Online courses in this program, much of your work will be based on keeping up with weekly readings, reviewing any powerpoint slides or additional materials, such as brief async videos, and related participation. A forum prompt will be posted each week, and your response will be due the following week. These prompts will populate throughout the semester. Each week's info will be posted in weekly assignment folders found under the Resources Tab. Forum discussion prompts will occur in the Forums Tab.

More than anything, I am looking for critical thought out of your posts. Each post will require at least 2-3 paragraphs of written thought and feedback. Many forum prompts will have a subset of questions. Additional information will be found within each forum prompt.

Readings

It is expected that you keep up with class readings. Each week, you can find the readings within the weekly folders under the Resources Tab. These readings will include a combination of: The StuKent digital textbook, current industry articles and reports, and data files. I will stay at least 1-2 weeks ahead of you in posting these readings, as the goal of the course is to give you plenty of time to complete assignments but also to allow us to adapt as the semester progresses. Many times, there are great new industry readings, so this format allows us to stay current throughout the semester. Readings can also include occasional Powerpoints I post, as well as any async materials I include, such as short instructional videos.

Simulator (20%)

A teaching principle of mine is the classic: One of the best ways to learn is to learn by doing. In short, the big goal of the simulator is to give you a real-world feel of what it's like to work with some of this data. Therefore, you will go through six rounds of digital data simulation via the StuKent simulator. Each simulation takes about an hour. You will make strategic decisions that relate to writing digital content, thinking about digital products, and how to communicate about those projects online when considering a budget. More than anything, I'm interested in what you learn from these simulations. Thus, at the conclusion of each simulation, I want you to think about all the data you just created and write informed feedback and analysis in response to your work.

Exercises (20%)

Exercises are essentially slightly meatier forum posts. While most of the simulations occur during the first half of the course, the exercises mostly occur in the second half of the semester. These exercises will require you to use data that I give you. Then, you will analyze that data to make informed, strategic decisions. **Exercise Rubrics will be posted under the Assignment Rubrics folder (under the Resources Tab) when each Exercise is given.**

Final (40%)

The final in this course will pull together all that you have learned from class readings, Powerpoints, simulations and exercises. It will require you to do a data and analytics review of an organization's digital activity. This will include your gathering of their public data, as well as

potentially capturing other 3rd Party data about that organization. You will write this up into a strategy & research memo. The memo will allow you to offer your assessment of the organization's digital presence, strategy and audience. The assignment will also allow you to demonstrate that you have competently learned the class material. The organization you review can be one that you currently work for, one that you would like to work for, or another real-world client that may interest you. **We will discuss the final about mid-semester. At that time, the full grading rubric for the final will be released under the Assignment Rubrics folder (under the Resources Tab).**

Notes on Class Structure

I hope that you will find that I'm willing to put in as much time into this course as you are, meaning: please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions. I always try to respond to emails within one business day. I'm also always open to Skyping, Google Hangouts or phone chats -- just email me and we can coordinate a time. Furthermore, I plan on having a weekly "open video office hour" one evening a week. I will confirm a consistent time after the first week of class, based on your feedback of what is best for the class. The format will basically be an unstructured hour where we have an optional sync session -- anyone that is available can log-in, and we will have the hour to discuss any further questions you may have as an individual, or as a group, about that week's material.

Class Schedule (as of December 22nd, 2017 - subject to change)

Week 1 -- Jan. 10th-12th

What are analytics? What are digital analytics? What do we mean by *data*?

Due: Nothing, but:

1) Start digital reading on Sakai

(Note: Each Week, digital readings will include industry articles and/or class powerpoint slides -- sometimes, I will also include async video/audio that may correspond with the slides -- all materials will be posted under each week's folder within the Resources Tab);

2) Get situated with the class Sakai site;

3) Review the first forum writing prompt (due next week);

4) Watch the 17-18 minute intro video on the StuKent class site that details for you the overview of the digital simulator we will use in the class.

Week 2 -- Jan. 16th-19th

Where do the data come from? How do we use digital data?

Note: Off on January 15th, MLK Day

Due: 1) Forum Post I (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 17th)

2) Chapter 2: Internet Data: A Primer in the StuKent Analytics Book

3) Digital reading on Sakai

4) Start Simulation I on StuKent Simulator

Week 3 -- Jan. 22th-26th

Measuring audiences; Understanding audiences; Acquisition channels

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post II (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 24th)
 - 2) Chapter 3: Awareness and User Acquisition in the StuKent Analytics Book
 - 3) Digital reading on Sakai
 - 4) Start Exercise I (due next week)

Week 4 -- Jan. 29th-2nd

Measuring engagement; engagement vs. conversion

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post III (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 31st)(Due: Exercise I)
 - 2) Chapter 4: Engagement and Online Behavior in the StuKent Analytics Book
 - 3) Digital Reading on Sakai
 - 4) Start Simulation II on StuKent Simulator

Week 5 -- Feb. 5th-9th

Measuring retention; customer experience

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post IV (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 7th)
 - 2) Chapter 5: Goals and Conversions in the StuKent Analytics Book
 - 3) Digital Reading on Sakai
 - 4) Start Simulation III on StuKent Simulator

Week 6 -- Feb. 12th-16th

Impressions, clicks and costs - SEM vs. SEO; Keywords; ROI and conversion costs

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post V (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 14th)
 - 2) Chapter 6: Analytics for SEM in the StuKent Analytics Book
 - 3) Digital Reading on Sakai
 - 4) Start Simulation IV on StuKent Simulator

Week 7 -- Feb. 19th-23rd

Number crunching - learning to do your own statistical work

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post VI (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 21st)
 - 2) Digital Reading on Sakai
 - 3) Start Simulation V on StuKent Simulator
 - 4) Start Exercise II

Week 8 -- Feb. 26th-March 2nd

Analytics for display ads; A/B testing; Number crunching part II

- Due:
- 1) Forum Post VII (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 28th)
 - 2) Digital Reading on Sakai

3) Start Simulation VI on StuKent Simulator

Week 9 -- March 5th-9th

Analytics for news content; Wrap-up Number crunching

- Due: 1) Forum Post VIII (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 7th) (Due: Exercise II)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai
3) Start Exercise III

Week 10 -- March 9th at 5:00pm to March 19th at 8:00am

SPRING BREAK: Enjoy a break from class!

Week 11 -- March 19th-23rd

Video analytics/YouTube

- Due: 1) Forum Post IX (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 21st)(Due: Exercise III)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai
3) Start Exercise IV

Week 12 -- March 26th-30th

Facebook analytics and insights

- Due: 1) Forum Post X (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 28th)(Due: Exercise IV)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai
3) Start Exercise V

Week 13 -- April 2nd-6th

Website analytics

- Due: 1) Forum Post XI (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 4th)(Due: Exercise V)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai
3) Start Exercise VI

Week 14 -- April 9th-13th

Twitter + Instagram (and other) analytics

- Due: 1) Forum Post XII (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 11th)(Due: Exercise VI)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai
3) Start Exercise VII

Week 15 -- April 16th-20th

Ethics in digital data and big data

- Due: 1) Forum Post XIII (by 5:00pm, Wednesday the 18th)(Due: Exercise VII)
2) Digital Reading on Sakai

Week 16 -- April 23rd-27th

Topic: Final Review - One-on-Ones with Joe

Readings or Simulations: None

Due: Schedule 20-30 minute phone or zoom chats with Joe to discuss your final project - see Sakai info to schedule times.

Final Project Due: May 2nd at 11:59pm

Due: Submit via Sakai