



FACULTY-LED
STUDY ABROAD

KIIS Berlin-Barcelona Program, Summer 2024

COMM 212 Intro to Digital Texts and Media

Instructor: Julie Snyder-Yuly, Ph.D.

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Instructor's office hours: on-site and by appointment

Syllabus subject to change

1. Course Description: Continually evolving social media platforms quickly become interwoven into our everyday lives creating new ways of communicating. These technologies enable individuals to create, collaborate, and share information with others. Students will explore the possibilities and limitations of social media as a tool for communication. Additionally, students will have hands-on experience with several forms of social media technology.

2. Overall KIIS Program Student Learning Outcomes:

KIIS Study Abroad Mission Statement:

KIIS provides high-quality education abroad programs for students from all diverse backgrounds that promote deep international learning, are integrated into the curriculum, and encourage critical and creative thinking. Our goal is to help students understand the wider world and develop personal and professional skills for lifelong enrichment. We strive to go beyond generalizations and cultural stereotypes to help foster a nuanced appreciation of the world in which we live.

Students participating on KIIS study abroad programs aim to:

- 1) Understand contemporary issues of their host country/countries (i.e. KIIS program location).
- 2) Develop skills to interact comfortably in a global setting.
- 3) Understand other cultures.

Prior to your KIIS study abroad program, and again at the conclusion of your program, KIIS will ask each student to a) answer a few multiple-choice questions, and b) write a short reflective essay (two paragraphs in length) related to the elements detailed above. There is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will not affect your grade in any way. The purpose of the exercise is to help KIIS measure the effectiveness of its study abroad programs.

3. Course Objectives and Specific Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically evaluate the use of social media;
- Identify challenges that arise from communicating through social media;
- Compare and contrast the purpose and features of different types of social media, including blogs, social networks, wikis, and photo- and video-sharing sites.
- Effectively utilize multiple forms of social media; and
- Analyze and evaluate real-world social media usage.

4. Major Topics covered in the Course:

- Historical to contemporary social media
- Identity
 - Gender, race, sexuality & self-presentation
- Relationships
- Playing and sharing online
- Cultural Production
- The dark side
 - Trolls, harassment, privacy, surveillance

5. Required Readings and Materials:

- Select readings will be assigned prior to departure.
- Laptop or device used for connecting and creating social media content and digital camera (cell phone camera is fine)
- Students should bring with them a blank journal or notebook that they will carry with them throughout the course.

6. Graded Assignments:

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|-----------------------------------|------------|
| • Engagement/Participation | 10% |
| • My Digital Life Analysis | 30% |
| • Daily Social Media Posts | 20% |
| • KIIS Experience Blog | 30% |
| • Departure Reflection | 10% |

Engagement/Participation:

- Students will read and be prepared to discuss the content, as well as apply it to real life situations.

My Digital Life Analysis:

- Students will analyze their current use of social media, as well as how they use it during their study abroad experience. Students will write a paper analyzing their social media use and create a visual presentation to highlight the types of communication technology they use, social media sites they regularly visit, and the types of content they create.

Social Media Posts:

- As a class we will identify a specific social media site that we want to use (Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc.) to post daily about our experiences abroad. These might be things

we are doing, learning, and seeing. Students will create or use hashtags and work to create broader audiences for viewing their posts.

KIIS Experience Blog:

- Each student will create a channel, blog, or website that will highlight their KIIS experience. This will include photos, videos, and written content to highlight aspects of what they are learning, the cultures and countries they are visiting, and/or the people they are meeting. What is created should be professional quality – meaning all writing is grammatically correct, photos and videos are good quality and not blurry, there is a pleasing layout, and content is organized in a useful way. Consider this to be something you would want to be featured on the KIIS website.

7. Attendance Policy:

KIIS program participants are expected to be punctual and in attendance at all classes, presentations, meetings, and required excursions, and to remain with the program for the full academic period. Unexcused absences from classes and/or mandatory meetings will result in a lowering of the student's final grade, as will excessive tardiness. Multiple unexcused absences could result in expulsion from the program. Any absence from an academic class session must be excused for medical reasons.

8. Disability Accommodation:

KIIS will make every reasonable effort to provide accommodations for program participants with special needs or disabilities, but we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Be aware that many foreign countries do not have comprehensive legislation comparable to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). As a result, businesses and other establishments operating in foreign countries may not be able to provide accommodations.

If you have a disability accommodation need, we recommend you contact your KIIS Campus Representative, <https://www.kiis.org/about-kiis/contact-us/campus-representatives/> early in your program selection process so that s/he has time to discuss any specific needs, including which KIIS programs may be best suited. You also are welcome to contact KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, maria.canning@wku.edu, to discuss your disability accommodation needs (e.g. housing, transportation, excursions, class schedule, etc.).

Immediately after acceptance, notify KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, haley.mctaggart@wku.edu, if you have a special need or disability that might require any form of accommodation abroad. Failure to notify KIIS may prevent you from participating on your KIIS program.

If you require any accommodations abroad, you must provide KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning, or KIIS Admissions and Enrollment Specialist, Haley McTaggart, an accommodation letter from your home campus' disability accommodation office that lists the accommodations you are eligible to receive. Please do not request accommodations directly from your KIIS Program Director or other KIIS Faculty; the KIIS Office will notify your KIIS Program Director and/or Faculty after we have received your above accommodation letter.

In some cases, you may need to make arrangements for a caregiver to join you on your KIIS program, should your physician, campus disability accommodation office, or KIIS make such a recommendation or require it.

9. Title IX / Discrimination & Harassment:

Recent attention to gender discrimination and sexual harassment at colleges and universities reminds us of the importance of adhering to standards of ethical and professional behavior. KIIS Study Abroad is committed to supporting and encouraging safe and equitable educational environments for our students, faculty, and program directors. Students, faculty, and program directors are required to be civil and treat each other with dignity and respect. As such, harassment and/or discrimination of any kind will not be permitted or tolerated.

Sexual misconduct (sexual harassment, sexual assault, and sexual/dating/domestic violence) and sex discrimination are violations of KIIS policies. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to a) KIIS Assistant Director, Maria Canning (+1-859-200-1000) or KIIS Executive Director, John Dizgun (+1-270-227-2288), b) WKU's Title IX Coordinator, Ena Demir (270-745-6867 / ena.demir@wku.edu) or WKU's Title IX Investigator, Michael Crowe (270-745-5429 / michael.crowe@wku.edu). Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a KIIS program director and/or faculty member, KIIS program directors and faculty are considered "Responsible Employees" of Western Kentucky University and MUST report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator.

If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center, <https://www.wku.edu/heretohelp/> at 270-745-3159.

For more information on KIIS Title IX, see <https://www.kiis.org/students/health-safety/title-ix-clery/>; additional Title IX resources can be found here <https://www.wku.edu/eo/titleixbrochure2020.pdf>.

Everyone should be able to participate on a KIIS program, attend a KIIS event, or work in a KIIS environment (e.g. KIIS office) without fear of sexual harassment or discrimination of any kind. Be respectful of each other.