

Using Social Media In Your Course

Use of social media has been growing at an exponential rate. Social media platforms provide an excellent opportunity to generate conversation and can be an effective teaching tool. Many of our students are accustomed to social media and we encourage you to find ways to engage your students in this manner. It can help you engage students in online conversation and share current articles and resources related to your course. Social media can also be an effective vehicle to generate enrollments for your course.

You may choose to integrate any number of social media platforms into your course, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Picasa, and blogs.

If you decide to set up a social media account for your course, please follow these guidelines:

Tell students whether participation is optional or required

We recommend that you make participation in social media an optional component of your course, rather than a requirement. But, the important point is to be clear in your syllabus about expectations surrounding the type of posts and frequency of participation expected, with a reminder that student-generated content should be professional and appropriate.

Decide who will have access and create privacy settings

Consider the pros and cons of having a public versus private group. Then adjust the privacy settings accordingly. Remember that the default setting for many social media platforms is to make all information publicly available.

Determine whether you will use your personal profile or set up a profile specifically for a course or courses.

If you use social media for personal purposes, we recommend that you set up a profile specifically for instructional purposes rather than having an account that combines personal and business content.

Respect the privacy of your students

Be careful not to disclose personal information about a student. Do not post photos or videos of your students without their permission. Do not collect or communicate information related to student ID numbers or contact information through social media channels.

Be clear that your opinions are your own

It is important that readers understand that opinions posted are your own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Harvard Summer School or Harvard University. Consider adding language to convey that in the account profile. Refrain from using the Harvard name in association with products, political parties or campaigns or causes. See [Use of the Harvard Names and Logos](#).

Think carefully before posting content

There is no such thing as absolute privacy or anonymity on the Internet. Once something has been posted, it is very difficult to eradicate it entirely. Websites archive content so even if you remove a post there will still be a record of it somewhere. Your post can quickly be shared and spread widely. For those reasons, it's important that you remember that you are a representative of Harvard University. Do not post anything that could compromise your integrity, or the integrity of the University. Be sure you are comfortable with the content you post being widely disseminated.

Monitor content posted by others

We recommend that you monitor the content being posted by others frequently. On rare occasions, you may have inappropriate content posted by a student or, if your content is public, by an outsider. If possible, immediately remove the questionable content. If you are unable to remove it, contact the person who posted it and ask them to remove it. Should you need guidance or have questions, contact [Elizabeth Marr](#).

Adhere to University and School trademark and endorsement policies

Use of the Harvard shield, Harvard Summer School shield, or images of iconic Harvard buildings is not permitted. Do not post anything that could be construed as an endorsement on behalf of the University. See [Use of the Harvard Names and Logos](#).

Make a plan for what happens after the course is over

Decide whether you will continue posting content after the course ends and whether you want to include future students in the same group. Be sure to communicate this to your students.

Use Summer School naming conventions and link back to our website

For group pages on sites like Facebook and LinkedIn, please name your group with the following format “Harvard Summer [4 letter subject] [course].” For example, a Facebook page or LinkedIn group for MGMT E-6020 would be named, “Harvard Summer MGMT 6020.” If the course has multiple sections, we suggest including the section number, “Harvard Summer EXPO 20e-2.”

When using hashtags on Twitter, consider using a hashtag in the format of “[#][four letter subject][course number].” For example: #envr101. We suggest this hashtag format to ensure that it is unique to your course.

We encourage you to link back to www.summer.harvard.edu, particularly if your content is open to the public. A link to your course description on the Summer School website can help prospective students find information about your course.

Consider using social media as a way to help promote your course

If you are posting content that is publicly available, the Office of Communications and Marketing may choose to share posts to help promote your course to prospective students. For example, you may consider setting up a Twitter account and tagging all of your posts with a hashtag that represents your course (Ex. “#envr101”). Encourage your students to use the same hashtag, which can help foster conversation. On occasion, the marketing department may “retweet” one of your posts to followers of Harvard Summer School’s official Twitter account, [@HarvardSummer](#).

If you have set up a social media account that is open to the public, please email [Elizabeth Marr](#) in the Office of Communications and Marketing and, if appropriate, your content will be shared via the School’s official social media channels.

Student-Created Accounts

The information above pertains to social media accounts administrated by instructors. If a student requests to set up an account for your course, please have them add language to the account profile that explains that the account is an unofficial one and is managed by students. Students may not use the Harvard University or Harvard Summer School shields.

Official Harvard Summer School social media accounts:

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/harvardsummer>
- Twitter: @HarvardSummer <http://www.twitter.com/harvardsummer>
- YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/harvardsummerschool>

Please contact [Elizabeth Marr](#) with questions or content suggestions.