UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Social Media Analytics and Consumer Behaviour for User Experience Innovation

2627-2-F6303M021

Learning objectives

The course teaches students to read what people do online as observable data and to use it to design, launch and grow a digital channel, measuring every choice with platform KPIs.

By the end of the course students are able to:

- describe how platforms (YouTube, Instagram, TikTok) distribute attention and how this shapes what can be measured;
- design a complete digital strategy: goals, audience, platform, formats, editorial plan and KPIs;
- write testable hypotheses on hooks, formats, thumbnails, titles and duration, each with a variable, a metric and an expected threshold;
- run a content experiment on a real channel, changing one variable at a time and logging data at 24h, 72h and 7 days;
- read platform analytics and a shared dataset, telling a result from statistical noise;
- state the limits and confounders of their own experiment before the lecturer points them out;
- write a report in English and present a finding to a client starting from the data, not from a diary of what they did.

Knowledge and understanding. Students acquire the models of online consumer behaviour (trust, attention, organic, linear and networked influence, customer journey, zero moment of truth) and how the recommendation systems of the main platforms work, always together with current market data and real campaign and creator cases.

Applying knowledge and understanding. Half of the course is theory, half is a project work: in teams of 3-4, students open an educational channel from zero and publish about 20 videos in 8 weeks, feeding a class dataset of 150-200 videos that no single team could build alone.

Making judgements. The grade does not depend on views but on how well the experiment is designed, run and

read. Every report includes a mandatory section on limits and confounders.

Communication skills. Students present the state of their project in class every week and close with a written report in English and a 10-minute final presentation with questions on the data.

Contents

The course covers online consumer behaviour and social data analysis, applied to launching and growing a digital channel as a case of user experience innovation.

Theory (Thursdays): the state of the internet and online behaviour; digital and social media strategy; how YouTube, Instagram and TikTok work and how content is optimised; monitoring tools and dashboards; creator strategy and measurement; media planning, paid/owned/earned media and KPIs.

Practice (Fridays): the "From zero to 100k" project work. Teams open an educational channel, publish about 20 videos over six weekly sprints, log metrics into a shared class dataset and test their hypotheses against the data.

Teaching is built on real data and cases from creator management and brand consulting across different sectors. No programming skills are required.

Detailed program

The course runs over 8 weeks, from 8 October to 18 December 2026, for 48 hours in total: 27 hours of classroom lessons on Thursdays (3 hours, including project review) and 21 hours of students' autonomous work on the project on Fridays (3 hours, with teacher supervision).

Lessons (Thursdays)

1. 8 October. Introduction and state of the internet: online consumer behaviour, attention and trust shifts, internet usage, content as entertainment or information, how platforms surface content. Project work brief.
2. 22 October. Communication and social media strategy: goals, platforms, channels, content, KPIs; social media landscape and editorial formats; the rise of video and the enshittification of platforms; the medium as the message and its impact on brand image; social media funnel and zero moment of truth.
3. 29 October. YouTube and YouTube growth strategy: the click platform, how the algorithm works, optimising thumbnails, titles, duration and retention.
4. 12 November. Instagram and TikTok growth strategy: platform differences, hooks and formats, talents and growth dynamics.
5. 19 November. Monitoring tools and dashboards: platform analytics, reading the data of a content system, turning insights into action.
6. 3 December. Creator strategy and measurement: the creator business model, building a relationship with the audience, creator selection and measurement.
7. 10 December. Media planning and KPIs: paid, owned and earned media, reporting.
8. 17 December. Course wrap-up: key learnings, final project review and presentation rehearsal.

Project work (Fridays): From zero to 100k

- Week 1 (9 October): choose topic, audience and platform; map what is already out there; write 2-3 hypotheses to test; script the first 4 videos.
- Week 2 (23 October): produce and publish 4 videos with 4 different hooks, everything else constant.

- Week 3 (30 October): 4 videos, varying thumbnails, titles, duration and tone of voice, one thing at a time.
- Week 4 (13 November): 4 videos, varying format and duration.
- Week 5 (20 November): pause and comparative analysis; read the class dataset; revise hypotheses and decide a pivot motivated by data.
- Week 6 (4 December): 4 videos testing the revised hypotheses; focus on retention, comments and returning viewers.
- Week 7 (11 December): 4 videos and first report draft.
- Week 8 (18 December): final presentation and data breakdown.

Every published video enters the class dataset: one shared sheet, one row per video, closed-category metadata (platform, duration, hook type, thumbnail type, title structure, format, CTA) and metrics at 24h, 72h and 7 days (impressions, views, CTR, average view duration, 3s and 30s retention, likes, comments, shares, follower delta).

Pause weeks with no lesson: 15-16 October and 26-27 November.

Prerequisites

No formal prerequisites. Familiarity with spreadsheets and with basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, distribution, percentage change) is useful. No programming skills are required. The project work requires a smartphone, a free editing tool (CapCut or DaVinci Resolve) and professional or creator accounts on YouTube, Instagram or TikTok.

Teaching methods

Roughly half lecture and half interactive teaching.

Thursdays: 3-hour classroom lesson with real cases and market data, followed by a review of the teams' projects.

Fridays: students' autonomous work on the project with teacher supervision, 3 hours. The session opens with a 30-minute call for the data logging check, blockers and questions; teams then work on production, publishing and data logging.

Teams work from day one on a real, public channel: the project advances week by week in sprints and the class dataset grows with everyone's contribution. The last Friday is dedicated to final presentations in class.

Up to 10% of total hours may be delivered at a distance.

All tools used are free and require no programming.

Assessment methods

Assessment is entirely based on the "From zero to 100k" project work. There is no written examination for attending students.

Teams of 3 or 4 students with defined roles (on camera, editing, data) open an educational channel on YouTube, Instagram or TikTok and publish about 20 videos in 8 weeks, logging every video into the class dataset. Teams win

the challenge if at least one video gets more than 100,000 views, but views do not count towards the grade.

The grade depends on how well the experiment is designed, run and read:

- hypotheses and experiment design (20%): 2-3 hypotheses written in week 1 with a variable, a metric and an expected threshold;
- logging rigour and completeness (20%): every video logged into the class dataset by Friday of each week, with metrics at 24h, 72h and 7 days; a team that does not log damages everyone's dataset;
- analysis and interpretation, with limits and confounders declared (30%): outcome of each hypothesis (confirmed, rejected or inconclusive) with the metric, the numbers and one chart; comparison with the class dataset; a pivot motivated by data;
- report and presentation (20%): final report in English, 8-10 pages plus appendix, written as an experiment write-up for a client; 10-minute final presentation per team plus Q&A on 18 December;
- peer evaluation within the team (10%).

The final report contains: one page with one claim and one chart; the week 1 hypotheses verbatim; what was done; results, one per hypothesis; what the class dataset adds; the pivot; limits and confounders; three recommendations for the client and one thing to avoid, each tied to a number; an appendix with the full data table, video links, logging record and analytics screenshots.

Individual contribution is verified at the final presentation: questions are on the data, not on the videos.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Course slides, campaign data and readings for each session, posted on the e-learning platform.

Reference books:

- A. Mininno, M. Ascani, M. Pagani, Ogni brand è un creator, 2025.
- M. J. Salganik, Bit by Bit. Social Research in the Digital Age, Princeton University Press, 2018 (selected chapters, in particular on running experiments; freely available online).

Further readings assigned session by session, including industry reports on internet and social media usage, official platform documentation on recommendation systems and analytics, and articles on measuring content effectiveness.

Semester

First semester

Teaching language

English

Sustainable Development Goals

GENDER EQUALITY | RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION