



RUTGERS

UNIVERSITY | NEW BRUNSWICK

School of Management & Labor Relations

HRM & Social Media 37:533:355, Summer 2026, Online,
Asynchronous

May 26 – August 12, 2026, | Section K1

Instructors: Marshall Sponder, Tatiana Rodriguez

The last date to drop this course without a W is May 27, 2026

Course Description

In today's digital-first workplace, your online presence is part of your résumé. This course helps students develop a professional brand that is visible, authentic, and aligned with both personal career goals and employer expectations. Through a series of applied exercises and platform-specific strategies, students will build the components of a "Professional Visibility Kit" that includes a refined LinkedIn profile, brand story, digital moodboard, content strategy, and final portfolio.

Designed for the modern workforce, the course emphasizes culturally responsive communication, risk-aware digital behavior, and inclusive brand presentation across platforms. Students will explore storytelling, social capital, thought leadership, and the impact of digital reputation in hiring, retention, and professional growth—building a foundation for long-term success in today's hybrid and highly networked work environments.

The course is organized into 7 thematic topics, referred to as Modules, which are all available via the menu on the left-hand side of the screen when logged into Canvas.

These modules are:

- Module 1: Professional Identity: Building a Career Ready Brand
- Module 2: Strategic Storytelling: Influence, Identity, and Impact
- Module 3: Digital Networking and Social Capital Development
- Module 4: Managing Your Digital Footprint: Risk, Reputation and Resilience
- Module 5: Platform Presence: From Engagement to Thought Leadership
- Module 6: Social Media and the Modern Workplace
- Module 7: Brand Alignment Assessment

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop a consistent and authentic personal brand that aligns with individual career goals and employer expectations.
2. Build a professional presence across digital platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, personal websites, and content-sharing tools) that enhances visibility, credibility, and engagement.
3. Apply storytelling, platform strategy, and content mapping techniques to communicate effectively and strategically in professional online spaces.
4. Analyze and manage digital footprints and reputational risks to support long-term career resilience and brand alignment.
5. Demonstrate culturally responsive communication by incorporating inclusive practices in personal branding, networking, and content creation.
6. Prepare to design and assemble a Professional Visibility Kit that integrates visual, written, and strategic brand elements into a portfolio suitable for career development and digital engagement.

Course Materials

Textbooks: There are no required textbooks for this course.

The Readings, Lectures, Videos, and Real-World Applications sections in each module provide all instructional materials.

Computer and Other Technology Requirements

- Access to the internet

- Reliable computer
- Headphones/Headsets — recommended
- Webcam — optional
- Microsoft Word

For Canvas browser and computer requirements, visit: community.canvaslms.com

Canvas Student Apps are available for Android and iOS. If you are new to Canvas or need a refresher, visit the Course Tools Tutorials page in Canvas.

Course Structure & Schedule

This course runs from May 26 to August 12, 2026. It is delivered *entirely* online through Canvas, the Learning Management System. There will be no in-person classroom or remote sessions. Please make sure you understand and follow all due dates and deadlines. The 7 thematic modules each help you build a key component of your professional digital presence.

Deadlines are clustered throughout the semester, and assignments for more than one module may be due at the same time. This allows you some flexibility while ensuring accountability and helping you keep on track over the course of the semester.

While you may complete modules at your own pace within each deadline window, the course follows a clear progression. We recommend you work steadily throughout the summer semester.

Due dates are clearly communicated, with reminders sent via Canvas.

Each Module includes:

- Topic introduction & learning objectives
- Curated readings & media (videos, articles, and lecture slides)
- PlayPosit video lectures with interactive checkpoints
- Real World Applications/Case Studies
- Peer discussions and feedback
- Assignments and assessments tied to instructional materials
- Module quiz

There will be a cumulative Final Exam during the university exam period at the end of the semester. All content is delivered through Canvas, and modules must be completed in sequence.

Summer 2026 Module Deadlines

Module(s)	Due Date	Work Due
-----------	----------	----------

Modules 1 & 2	June 14, 2026	Assignment 1, Discussion 1, Academic Integrity Contract, PlayPosit Quizzes 1 & 2
Modules 3 & 4	July 12, 2026	Assignment 2, PlayPosit Quizzes 3 & 4
Modules 5 & 6	August 2, 2026	Discussion 2, Assignment 3, Quizzes 5 & 6
Module 7	August 12, 2026	Discussion 3, Assignment 4, Final Exam (Aug 11–12), Extra Credit Assignment.

Grading Structure

All required work falls into one of the categories below. Some assignments are auto-graded by Canvas. Your Instructor and Course Assistant will grade many assignments. Grades will be posted to your Canvas Gradebook within 10 days of the due dates.

A Note Regarding the Discussion Boards: Discussion Board Assignments are open for two weeks each. During those periods, Instructors and Course Assistants will actively monitor and respond to postings. Your grades will be available within 10 days of the Discussion Board closing.

A Note Regarding the PlayPosit Lectures: You can submit PlayPosit assignments as many times as you like during the active period before a deadline. The system stores your most recent score. If you start a PlayPosit and do not finish it, the system will record your score as a zero (0%). When you begin a PlayPosit, including a re-take, please complete it.

Assignment Category	# of Assign.	% / Points	Notes
Module Quizzes	7	29.4% / 294 pts (42 pts each)	Auto-graded multiple-choice after each Module. The score is visible immediately.
Moderated Discussion Board	3	15% / 150 pts (50 pts each)	Open 2 weeks each. Please respond to the prompt and comment on your peers' work. Graded within 2 weeks of closing.
PlayPosits	30	21% / 210 pts (7 pts each)	Video lectures with embedded questions. Please complete each

			session; an incomplete attempt will be recorded as 0%. Re-takes keep the most recent score.
Written Assignments	4	21% / 160 pts (50–60 pts each)	Graded by the instructor/CA within 10 days of the deadline.
Final Exam	1	13% / 130 pts	Multiple-choice covering all modules. Focus primarily on readings.
BLUE Course Evaluation	1	.5% / 5 pts	Submitted at the end of the semester.
TOTAL		1000 pts (100%)	
Extra Credit	1	3% / 30 pts	Optional Extra Credit – HRM and Social Media AI Prompt Guide Supplement and Questionnaire.

Grading Scale

Your final score will be converted to a percentage at the end of the course. For example, if you earned 960/1000 points, you would have a 96% in the class and earn an A.

Points Range	Grade
900–1000	A
880–889.99	B+
800–879.99	B
780–799.99	C+
700–779.99	C
699.99 and below	F

Note: To see your grade in points at any time during the semester, follow the instructions in the Canvas Gradebook support page linked in your Course Tools Tutorials.

Course Communication & Conduct Expectations

To help create a positive and inclusive learning environment, all students are expected to engage in the course with professionalism, respect, and courtesy. We value diverse perspectives and encourage thoughtful, constructive contributions to our shared learning experience.

Please keep the following in mind:

- Use respectful and inclusive language in all communications, including discussion posts, messages to classmates, and emails to the instructor.
- Avoid posting any content (e.g., videos, images, or links) that is unrelated to the course or could make others feel uncomfortable or excluded.
- Harassment, offensive language, or any behavior that disrupts a supportive learning environment will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity

Be sure to review and abide by the Rutgers Academic Integrity policy available at: studentconduct.rutgers.edu/student-conduct-processes/academic-integrity/

Use of GenAI Applications

This course incorporates AI tools as learning aids for professional development, including ChatGPT for content optimization, Canva for design, and other platforms for brand development. Students are expected to use these tools ethically and transparently.

When using AI tools for assignments:

- Clearly indicate which tools were used and how
- Ensure all submitted work reflects your own thinking and analysis
- Do not use AI to complete entire assignments without your input
- AI-generated content should enhance, not replace, your original work

Failure to properly acknowledge the use of AI tools may be considered a violation of academic integrity. When in doubt, ask your instructor for guidance on appropriate AI tool usage for specific assignments.

When using AI tools for the extra credit:

- The extra credit assignment is optional and available at the end of the semester, during the same period the Final Exam is available. *Use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini is permitted for the extra credit assignment.*

Staying on Track

Online learning requires a high level of discipline, dedication, and time management skills. While it offers flexibility, please still ***adhere to all due dates.***

To help you stay on track:

- Have access to a reliable computer and internet connection
- Log in to Canvas for your course daily
- Check for any announcements, updates to the syllabus, assignments, and/or discussions, and respond accordingly
- Actively participate in the Discussion Forums during the appropriate timeframes
- Complete the assigned readings and/or media
- Complete the assigned exercises and projects
- Adhere to all due dates
- Ask for assistance if you need it

If your computer fails, please have an alternative plan to access your Canvas course. Additionally, back up your important documents and assignments on a flash drive, cloud storage, or another external device.

Where to Next?

Have you:

- Carefully read the Course Home Page.
- Become very familiar with this Syllabus.
- Reviewed the Learning Support Resources section in Canvas.
- Submitted the Assignment: Academic Integrity Contract.
- Reviewed the Course Summary below to familiarize yourself with all due dates and deadlines.

Once you have followed the points above, you are ready to get started! Please continue to Module 1 and start your learning.

Course Summary

All deadlines are 11:59 pm ET.

Date	Details	Due
Thu May 28, 2026	Assignment: Academic Integrity Contract	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Discussion 1: Exploring Your Brand Identity and Digital Presence [<i>Open from June 1st to June 14th</i>]	due by 11:59pm

Sun Jun 14, 2026	Assignment 1: Personal Brand Blueprint + Moodboard	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Module 1 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Module 2 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Module 1 PlayPosit Lectures (1.1–1.6)	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jun 14, 2026	Module 2 PlayPosit Lectures (2.1–2.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Assignment 2: Strategic Storytelling Content Plan + Brand Risk Reflection + Storyboard/Moodboard	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Discussion 2: Digital Footprint Audit [<i>Open from June 29th to July 12th</i>]	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Module 3 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Module 4 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Module 3 PlayPosit Lectures (3.1–3.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Jul 12, 2026	Module 4 PlayPosit Lectures (4.1–4.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Aug 2, 2026	Assignment 3: Weekly Visibility Publishing Plan	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Aug 2, 2026	Module 5 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Aug 2, 2026	Module 6 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Aug 2, 2026	Module 5 PlayPosit Lectures (5.1–5.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Sun Aug 2, 2026	Module 6 PlayPosit Lectures (6.1–6.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Wed Aug 12, 2026	Discussion 3: Should Employees Be Their Company's Brand? [<i>Open from July 28th – August 12th</i>]	due by 11:59 pm
Wed Aug 12, 2026	Assignment 4: Digital Risk & Footprint Audit	due by 11:59 pm
Wed Aug 12, 2026	Module 7 Quiz	due by 11:59 pm
Wed Aug 12, 2026	Module 7 PlayPosit Lectures (7.1–7.4)	due by 11:59 pm
Mon Aug 11–Tue Aug 12, 2026	Final Exam (open Aug 11–12)	due by 11:59 pm Aug 12
Mon Aug 11-Tue Aug 12, 2026	Extra Credit Assignment - AI Supplement & Questionnaire	due by 11:59 pm Aug 12
Tue Aug 12, 2026	BLUE Course Evaluation (opens Aug 1)	due by 11:59 pm

Extra Credit

This course offers an extra credit assignment worth up to 30 points and available during the **last two days of the semester** (due by 11:59 pm on August 12, 2026).

To earn the extra credit, you must **first complete and submit all required assignments**, then use the *HRM & Social Media AI Career Guide Supplement* to extend your completed coursework using AI tools (Claude, ChatGPT, or Gemini) for real professional use—such as refining your LinkedIn profile, building a content calendar, or strengthening your personal brand portfolio.

Each section of the guide maps directly to a course module and provides customizable prompts that require your actual submitted work as input; *AI cannot do this work for you, it can only help you build on what you have genuinely produced.*

To receive the Extra Credit, please try out prompts from the AI Supplement and then complete a short questionnaire describing how you used the tools and what you learned.