Contents

1.	What is a Critical Introduction to Social Media?	1
	 1.1. What is Social about Social Media? 1.2. What is Critical Thinking and Why Does it Matter? 1.3. What is Critical Theory? 1.4. Critical Theory Approaches Recommended Readings and Exercises 	4 7 10 18 25
I.	FOUNDATIONS	29
2.	What is Social Media?	31
	 2.1. Web 2.0 and Social Media 2.2. The Need of Social Theory for Understanding Social Media 2.3. Explaining Social Media with Durkheim, Weber, 	35
	Marx and Tönnies 2.4. Conclusion Recommended Readings and Exercises	42 48 50
3.	Social Media as Participatory Culture	52
	 3.1. The Notions of Participation and Participatory Culture 3.2. Online Fan Culture and Politics 3.3. Social Media and Participatory Culture 3.4. Henry Jenkins and Digital Labour 3.5. Conclusion Recommended Readings and Exercises 	53 58 60 63 65
4.	Social Media and Communication Power	69
	4.1. Social Theory in the Information Age4.2. Communication Power in the Network Society4.3. Communication Power, Social Media and	71 72
	Mass Self-communication 4.4. Communication Power in the Arab Spring and the Occupy Movement	75 83
	4.5. Conclusion Recommended Readings and Exercises	87 89

vi Contents

I.	APPLICATIONS	95
5.	The Power and Political Economy of Social Media	97
	5.1. Social Media as Ideology: The Limits of the Participatory	
	Social Media Hypothesis	98
	5.2. The Cycle of Capital Accumulation	103
	5.3. Capital Accumulation and Social Media	105
	5.4. Free Labour and Slave Labour	117
	5.5. Conclusion	121
	Recommended Readings and Exercises	123
6.	Google: Good or Evil Search Engine?	126
	6.1. Introduction	127
	6.2. Google's Political Economy	128
	6.3. Googology: Google and Ideology	132
	6.4. Work at Google	141
	6.5. Google: God and Satan in One Company	146
	6.6. Conclusion	149
	Recommended Readings and Exercises	151
7.	Facebook: A Surveillance Threat to Privacy?	153
	7.1. Facebook's Financial Power	154
	7.2. The Notion of Privacy	156
	7.3. Facebook and Ideology	160
	7.4. Privacy and the Political Economy of Facebook	163
	Facebook's Privacy Policy	164
	Exploitation on Facebook	169
	7.5. Conclusion	171
	Recommended Readings and Exercises	175
8.	Twitter and Democracy: A New Public Sphere?	179
	8.1. Habermas's Concept of the Public Sphere	181
	8.2. Twitter, Social Media and the Public Sphere	185
	8.3. Political Communication on Twitter	190
	8.4. Twitter's Political Economy	198
	8.5. @JürgenHabermas #Twitter #PublicSphere	199
	8.6. Conclusion	201
	Recommended Readings and Exercises	208
9.	WikiLeaks: Can We Make Power Transparent?	210
	9.1. WikiLeaks and Power	212
	9.2. Wikileaks, Liberalism and Socialism	220
	9.3. WikiLeaks, Journalism and Alternative Media	225
	9.4. Conclusion	231
	Recommended Readings and Exercises	233

Contents	vii

10. Wiki	pedia: A New Democratic Form of Collaborative		
Worl	k and Production?	235	
10.1.	The Communist Idea	237	
10.2.	Communication and Communism	242	
10.3.	The Political Economy of Wikipedia	243	
	The Subjective Dimension of Wikipedia		
	Production: Co-operative Labour	244	
	The Objective Dimensions of Wikipedia Production	244	
	The Effect Dimension of Wikipedia Production:		
	The Pleasure of Co-operative Intellectual Work	247	
10.4.	Conclusion	247	
Reco	mmended Readings and Exercises	249	
III. FUTURES			
11. Conc	lusion: Social Media and its Alternatives - Towards a		
Truly	y Social Media	253	
11.1.	Social Media Reality: Ideologies and Exploitation	253	
11.2.	Social Media Alternatives	257	
	Data Protection Laws	259	
	Opt-in Advertising Policies	260	
	Corporate Watch Platforms as a Form of Struggle		
	against Corporatism	261	
	Alternative Internet Platforms	264	
11.3.	Towards a Truly Social Media and a New Society	264	
Reference	es	267	
Index			