

NEXTcast 3.3: Naeema Farooqi and Humber's Global Summer School Social Media Course

In this episode, we sit down with Faculty of Media and Creative Arts professor Naeema Farooqi, to learn more about her experience teaching a popular Social Media course in Humber's Global Summer School.

Nathan Whitlock: Welcome to *NEXTcast*, a podcast about teaching and learning at Humber College. I'm Nathan Whitlock, an editor at Humber Press. Every episode on *NEXTcast*, we talk to faculty and staff at Humber who are leading innovation both inside and outside the classroom. In this episode, we talk to Naeema Farooqi, professor in the Faculty of Media and Creative arts, about the Social Media course she taught in Humber's Global Summer School.

Nathan Whitlock: Welcome. Welcome to *NEXTcast*, Naeema.

Naeema Farooqi: Thank you so much for having me.

Nathan Whitlock: Well, thank you for coming in. And thank you as well, you were part of a *NEXT* magazine article that's in our current issue about teachers starting full time and finishing their first year as full-time professor. Thank you for that.

Naeema Farooqi: Thank you so much. It was great sharing those experiences.

Nathan Whitlock: I wondering if you could just let us know what courses you teach and what programs you teach in.

Naeema Farooqi: So I'm appointed at the School of Media and Creative Arts, and I teach a number of courses across different programs. Currently I'm cross-appointed at the program, digital communication, bachelor of creative advertising, advertising and marketing communication, as well as add in graph. So I teach different courses there, usually along the lines of social media, marketing, entrepreneurship, project management, and so on and so forth.

Nathan Whitlock: So you cover a lot of ground in your teaching week?

Naeema Farooqi: Yes I do. And it's fun to teach in different places, because you get an idea about which program is, you know, going with their degree in which aspect, and it kind of allows me to be creative in terms of adapting what I'm teaching to those students who are graduating, say from digital communication as compared to creative advertising. So I kind of tailor it, makes it interesting rather than just be on repeat.

Nathan Whitlock: Right, right. And do you find sometimes you're teaching one, in one program, and you develop a lesson plan for something you realize, oh, I can actually use this-

Naeema Farooqi: All the time.

Nathan Whitlock: This is the perfect way into this other subject.

Naeema Farooqi: For sure. It kind of allows me to kind of add more to other programs as well, because you're constantly saying, hey, this worked for them, and probably this could benefit this program as well. So I bring it up, and then we have a chat about it, and go ahead and put it in.

Nathan Whitlock: Excellent. The program we're going to talk about today is this Global Summer School. And you recently taught what I've been told is the most popular course in that program, which is a very intensive three-week social media course. And that course has a particular capstone project. I wonder if you could tell us a little more about it.

Naeema Farooqi: Okay. So the social media course, we started it two years ago, so this was the third year running. When we started it in 2017, it was particularly only offered with the Aros Academy in Denmark. So there profs and myself, we kind of developed it under the guidance of Andrew Ainsworth. And we put it together, you know, literally put everything together, and say, hey, this is what we're going to do. This is how we are going to offer it to the students. And the class size was only 20 people the first time around. We had a very few Humber students most of them are from Aros Academy. And it was kind of taught... I was a course lead, and then we had other two profs who were visiting from Denmark also do bits and pieces here and there. So it was a very interesting experience, and it went down really well, almost like it was a pilot project that was done. And because it ran successfully, we did it again last year in 2018, but this time Larissa who was in our placement in our school, she had it opened up for other universities. I think it was open up to USA. So we did get some students too from USA last year, and we were able to run it again. This time it was around 29 people, and we had a sizeable number of Humber students as well.

Naeema Farooqi: This year it became very popular because we had about 49 students all, and we had representation from 18 countries within the class. So it was really-

Nathan Whitlock: Wow.

Naeema Farooqi: A fun course to teach with so many people from different universities, countries, dynamics. So it was, it, the course has kind of grown.

Nathan Whitlock: Yeah.

Naeema Farooqi: But I didn't have two professors from Denmark this time. I had just one person coming in.

Naeema Farooqi: It is a very intense course. It's two weeks online and two weeks in class. Next year onwards, it's going to be running for three weeks. It's a very fun filled, but very intense day. So we start every day, there's a guest speaker. Every day, there's a lecture module, there's a guest speaker, and then there's a project that you were asking. So what I tried to do is bring a fun fact and a fun factor into the class by pulling in a real life client from the, from Toronto area or wherever. And first go and pitch them and say, hey, the students are coming, and we'd love to have you in our class. And because the thing is we do it through the building 'F', which is like an in-house communications agency within our school.

Nathan Whitlock: Right.

Naeema Farooqi: So through, when we do it through that, the client also has to pay a fee to the students directly. So it, there's money involved. So when you go to a client, you have to pitch it not only as it's going to add value to you, and all the students are going to be giving you ideas and presenting to you, but also, you have to pay them. So it's kind of like costing them about \$2,000, \$1,800 so that they can come, because that's only fair. If you like the project, you're going to use it. For top three winners, you need to pay them.

Naeema Farooqi: This year I was very lucky to have Grosche International, which is an amazing example of a Canadian entrepreneur. It's a husband and wife company. They started it like, at least from the basement of their house. And apparently they just sell glass bottles, coffee containers, and what do you call it, pitchers and coffee cups and tea teapots and stuff. But they have ingrained identity about their company and what it looks like in terms of being a B Corp. So they're a beneficial company. It's not a nonprofit company, nor is it totally a for profit company.

Naeema Farooqi: And my reason why I wanted this is when you, when I pick a client, I want the student to think out outside of the box. I want them to be inspired, be informed, and to make good choices as they're growing up. Right? And figuring out, hey, why do I need to buy a product, which is, you know, just supporting fast fashion, for example. How about a product which is going to give back to the community? So that that thought was very important for me. So I actually went down to Cambridge, met the CEO at 8:40 in the morning one day, because that's the only day he was available.

Nathan Whitlock: Sure.

Naeema Farooqi: Or only time. And then I pitched the whole thing to him. I have the videos of previous classes, and he agreed. He was very excited and very kind of them to actually make it to our class. So they'd come first in the class. I think they come second day because we only have 10 days worth of

classes happening, five days and five days. So they come in on the second day of our classes and tell the students, hey, this is our company. This is what we do. This about what we want you to do for us in our social media strategy. And then the client just goes away. They're there for an hour and a half, answer questions and go away.

Naeema Farooqi: And then our students start working on it slowly and surely. But the way it's done is because it's a short course, so the lessons have to be related to the part of the project that they have to work on, on that day. So from day two onwards, all through day nine when they have to mock, do the mock presentations to us as professors, we do everything from start, from scratch like social media calendar, how to create that, how to do a social media audit. We do the creatives, and they are all divided into these groups which they come up with themselves. And they named their agencies something, and they work on it.

Naeema Farooqi: Throughout this time, we are doing lectures. We are also doing guest speakers. We are also giving them time for working on their projects. It's running from 9 to 3. It's very stressful and intense.

Nathan Whitlock: It's a lot to do in a day.

Naeema Farooqi: It's a lot to do. And that's what the clients are like, how did you guys do it in two weeks? And the students are like, ask us.

Nathan Whitlock: There are probably some of those clients are used to working with agencies that are like, we'll see you in six months.

Naeema Farooqi: Exactly.

Nathan Whitlock: We'll have our pitch ready.

Naeema Farooqi: Yeah. So they were very happy, and they usually are very happy. They can see the efforts of the students' creativity, their teamwork. And there are many lessons that they're learning.

Naeema Farooqi: Usually I do core. Group work anyway in any course that I'm running. But this one's special because they are like people from different countries all together. And there's somebody from Yukon, somebody from Australia, and somebody from Norway, and somebody from US, and somebody from Humber. And they're all in this together. Even the students from Humber were from eight different programs all across. So we had students from criminal, and we had students from business, we had students from hospitality. So they weren't all media students. So it was the dynamics, and the things that you see coming up in the class inspire you to do even more.

Naeema Farooqi: And then we also take them out for trips. So the first year, we took them to Facebook and Google. Second year we took them to Shopify, you know. So this year we went to LinkedIn. So that was fun too.

Nathan Whitlock: How do you find time for these trips if they're, they've got these packed days and packed weeks?

Naeema Farooqi: Well, the hardest part is to get those trips done, right? To confirm it takes like four months to coordinate with Google or with Facebook or if it's Shopify, and like please, please, please. And we have guest speakers coming in from all these companies and also some social media influencers that I line up for them to come in. They could be people who are micro-influencers or they could be influencers with, you know, a couple of a hundred thousand followers or plus. So it's pretty nice of them to come and talk to the students and tell them how, what it took for them to be there, get there. And how did they, how was the journey, and what, how do they make their money? And being really upfront with all of that stuff, and Google coming in and saying, you know, how do the searches work, and how can you up the searches, and how, what's your Googleability index? How you are coming up on a Google search and so on, so forth.

Naeema Farooqi: So this course takes a lot to prepare.

Nathan Whitlock: Oh, it sounds like it.

Naeema Farooqi: A couple of months.

Nathan Whitlock: Yeah.

Naeema Farooqi: But it's one of the most fun courses that I teach.

Nathan Whitlock: I'm wondering what do you get out of that course especially? What do you feel you've learned even over the few years that you've been teaching it?

Naeema Farooqi: Because I've been teaching in different parts of the world, it just takes me back to all of those places. Right? I have, it's not like I've been in Canada forever. I've been in Canada for only nine years, and that too I've moved in three cities within Canada. But before that I did teach in UK, Middle East, and my own home country, Pakistan. So, you know, flavors of students from Europe and Middle East and back home, and then here and then, so it just, I just get so excited by seeing all of these. And end of the day, what I find fascinating is it really doesn't matter where you're from. The creativity, the teamwork, the language barriers, all kind of break down when you're working together on something which is exciting, interesting.

Naeema Farooqi: And if you give them that excitement, if you let them be themselves in a classroom, so every time you walk in my class in the morning, there's

going to be some upbeat music that's going to be greeting you. It's always on 15 minutes before the class time and will be a track related to what we are studying or something to uplift your mood. So for example, really near the crunch time when they are about to present, and the presentations are two, three days away, usually you enter to a beat like, Don't Worry, Be Happy. That song is playing, and you, so it just kind of, there are little things that you have to do to make the experience more welcoming. And they feel that they're doing something good.

Nathan Whitlock: Well, this course sounds fantastic, to be perfectly honest. I mean it sounded fantastic on paper. Now it sounds-

Naeema Farooqi: Thank you.

Nathan Whitlock: Even better with you telling us about it. I'm just sort of wondering if there's room for me to sign up for the next summer.

Naeema Farooqi: I hope so. I hope so. That would be so much fun to have-

Nathan Whitlock: Please leave a spot.

Naeema Farooqi: Otherwise you can come in as a guest speaker.

Nathan Whitlock: Oh, yes.

Naeema Farooqi: And talk to the students about-

Nathan Whitlock: I'm a podcast influencer and-

Naeema Farooqi: Exactly.

Nathan Whitlock: In the world of media, podcast media. Sure. But thank you so much for coming out. It's been amazing to hear about this.

Naeema Farooqi: Thank you so much for having me again.

Nathan Whitlock: *NEXT*cast is produced by Kristin Valois for Humber Press. To listen to previous episodes of *NEXT*cast and to read issues of *NEXT* magazine, go to Humberpress.com.

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