INSTRUCTOR

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Office Location: 50 Cooper Square, Suite 300, Room 304

Office Hours: Wednesdays 4:00pm to 5:00pm and online by appointment. To schedule an appointment, contact Mary Ann Mazzella at 212-998-9114

MEETING DATES AND TIMES

This 3-credit course is offered during summer session B from 6/30 through 8/4. The format of the course is blended; the course meetings are held in the classroom AND online in real-time with additional asynchronous online discussions and group project work.

Onsite classes are held from 6–9pm on the following Wednesdays: 6/30, 7/21, and 8/4.
Online classes are held from 6–9pm on the following Wednesdays: 7/7, 7/14, and 7/28.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

An electronic community is generally defined a group of people organized online around a topic or issue. In this course, students will be introduced to the landscape of online communities. Examples and case studies of online communities will be discussed and analyzed to identify the characteristics of effective communities and methods for evaluation. Students will review and interact with several online platforms used to design, develop and maintain online community. Students will use this knowledge to design and/or redesign an online community for a business client.

Why is this important?

New technological innovations have changed the way we communicate, cooperate, collaborate, and share. According to Nielsen Online (2009), 74% of the North American population has Internet access for a total of approximately 1.7 billion Internet users worldwide. “Until recently, the Internet was largely an information medium. However, in the last couple of years, the Internet has become increasingly social” (Weinburg, 2009, p. 3). There are a substantial number of users participating in large, Web-based groups.
outside of the work context. Many are organized around recreation and entertainment; some are organized around civic and political issues; some are organized around personal needs for support or advice; some are organized around technical topics; and some are organized around consumer products. With the growth in open-source technologies, social media, social networking, social new sites, social bookmarking, and advanced collaboration tools it is evident that these groups can be shaped into a source of business revenue. According to Grant McGarren (2010),

“The digital space is an economy after all. People are creating, exchanging and capturing value, as they would in any marketplace. But this is a gift economy, where the transactions are shot through with cultural content and creation. In a gift economy, value tends to move not in little "tit for tat" transactions, but in long loops, moving between consumers before returning, augmented, to the corporation” (¶8).

Prior to the introduction of the World Wide Web, community feedback to individuals and companies flowed one way. “The popularity of the Internet enables communication – both positive and negative – to flow continuously from an individual to its community of customers and then back again” (Powell, 2009, p. 69). This is made even more seamless with the rich set of Web 2.0 technologies available.

This change in community-based communication and feedback presents enormous business opportunities and threats. Throughout this course students will explore the characteristics of online communities, discuss the issues surrounding online communities and evaluate the best practices in participating and managing online communities.

A web camera and microphone are required for online participation in the course.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students will be able to

- **understand** the opportunities and challenges inherent in online communities;
- **identify** and **apply** the best practices and techniques used to design successful Web-based communities;
- **assess** and interact with select technologies used to create, manage, and maintain online communities;
- **lead, monitor, participate, experience** and shape online communication and activities and within an online course community; and
- **design/redesign** an online community.

REQUIRED READINGS

**Book**

ISBN-1422125009

**Case studies**


**Articles**


## Optional Readings

Select one book to review


## Additional Resources/Readings

Techipedia.com – Weinberg’s blog


## Evaluation Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Projects and Presentations</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Reading Practicum</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Online Discussion Assignments (5)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All grades are posted in the online course grade book.

## Course Requirements

### Class Participation and Attendance (10%)

Students are expected to attend all onsite and online classes. Attending class is defined as being present during the scheduled online and onsite class hours, actively contributing to class discussions, and fully participating in class activities. This requires that students read the assigned readings due for each class. This is to ensure that the student contributions are informed and expand the discussion. Students are encouraged to share their experiences relevant to the class topic.

### Team Projects and Presentations (50%)

Each student is assigned to work with a single team throughout the semester. Each
team works on two projects and presentations together. Team assignments are made during the first week of the course. Teams are provided with an online workspace to collaborate and communicate.

- **Team project 1 and online presentation (20%)** – Community site analysis
  Due 7/14 by 6pm.

- **Team Project 2 and onsite presentation (30%)** – Online community design/redesign
  Due 8/4 by 6pm

**Individual Reading Practicum (15%)** – Due 7/28 by 6pm

Write a 4 to 6 page paper critiquing any of the books (from the optional reading list) and applying the book to an online community issue, problem, or opportunities.

The critique must include:

1. An abstract, summary, or synopsis to summarize the essential contents and main ideas.

2. A thorough discussion of the author's theme (main underlying idea), purpose, and methods of development;

3. A discussion of the relationship between the work being reviewed and other works in the field and those readings discussed in class.

4. Evaluation of the work, clearly presented and well-supported

5. Application to an online community issue, problem, or opportunity

The paper must meet the following requirements:

- Double-spaced with 12 point Arial or Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins.
- Include a cover page, references, and format in APA style with proper use of citations.
- Include images where appropriate. Images, title page, and references page will not be included as part of the final page count.

Upload your paper to the “Reading Practicum” Drop Box. Please name the file with your lastname_firstname.doc or .docx.

**Weekly Discussion Assignments (25%)**

Students are expected to participate in all online class discussions in the course online
discussion forum. There is one discussion topic per week for five weeks. Students are encouraged to contribute and check the forum at least two to three times per week. Approximately 5 students will be designated to lead the weekly online discussions. Each discussion counts towards 5% of your grade. Your contributions to the weekly online discussions are assessed on the following qualities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Exceeds requirements</th>
<th>Meets all requirements</th>
<th>Mostly meets requirements</th>
<th>Partially meets requirements</th>
<th>Does not meet any of the requirements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Contributions to class activities are written, proofed, and directly relevant to the topic at hand.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>All contributions are supported with evidence, if required. Sharing personal experiences is essential in this course, however applying and referencing the salient course readings, cases, and other current literature is also critical.</td>
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<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Contributions were made within the assigned time period for the specific class participation activity.</td>
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TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SUPPORT

Epsilen
The online portion of this course will be held via NYU-SCPS Online – Epsilen is available at http://online.scps.nyu.edu.

Your user name and password was emailed to your NYU Stern email address five days prior to the course. Please contact me immediately if you are unable to access the course web site.

For an overview on using Epsilen, go to http://distancelearning.scps.nyu.edu/screencasts

Live Online Meetings
For the live online meetings, test out your system to ensure your computer is configured properly at http://snipurl.com/liveclassroom.
Review the following screencasts to learn how to use the Live Classroom:

- An Introduction to the Live Classroom  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gi469sG8UGc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gi469sG8UGc)

- Presenting in the Live Classroom  
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYBedd2cujY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYBedd2cujY)

If for any reason you cannot access the Live Classroom you may dial into the room using the following:

Phone: (201) 549-7592  
Pin: 44129059

**Online Technical Support**

If you need assistance contact the NYU SCPS HELP DESK  
North America: (877) 395-2996  
International: (216) 454-1153  
Email: scps.distancelearning.helpdesk@nyu.edu  
Live Chat: [http://distancelearning.scps.nyu.edu/chat.html](http://distancelearning.scps.nyu.edu/chat.html)

**HONOR CODE**

During orientation, you signed the Stern MBA Honor Code, promising not to “lie, cheat or steal to gain an academic advantage, or tolerate those who do” ([http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/scorp/committee.cfm?doc_id=4797](http://w4.stern.nyu.edu/scorp/committee.cfm?doc_id=4797)). The Honor Code applies to your conduct in all classes, including this one. Suspected infractions will be referred to the MBA Judiciary Committee.

**PLAGIARISM**

Any quoted or referenced source must have a citation. Any source without a citation will be considered plagiarism. New York University takes plagiarism very seriously and regards it as a form of fraud. The definition of plagiarism is below.

"Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as though it were one's own. More specifically, plagiarism is to present as one's own words quoted without quotation marks from another writer; a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; or facts or ideas gathered, organized, and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student's intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is not a conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism. Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper or course to dismissal from the university."

If you have any questions as to what plagiarism is, go to: [http://www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org)
## COURSE OUTLINE

This six-week class meets six times: three times in person (6/30, 7/21, and 8/4) and three times online in real time (7/7, 7/14, 7/28). Each week, there will be an additional **four hours** of asynchronous discussion.

### WEEK 1. INTRODUCTION AND ELEMENTS OF ONLINE COMMUNITIES: 6/30–7/6

**Topics**
- Course overview and demonstration of online portion of the course
- What is a good community?
- Social capital
- Participation
- Reeds law and the power law
- The groundswell trend

**In class activities**
- Groundswell inventory of social media/networking technologies
- Usage statistics poll

**Video**
- [http://www.amazon.com/gp/mpd/permalink/m1VYY28W5N6SD](http://www.amazon.com/gp/mpd/permalink/m1VYY28W5N6SD)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddCCwkM6Ul0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddCCwkM6Ul0)

**Readings**
- Chapter 1 – Why the groundswell – and why now?
- Chapter 2 – Jujitsu and the technologies of the groundswell

### WEEK 2. ONLINE COMMUNITY PLATFORMS: 7/7–7/13

**Topics**
- Defining technology types
- Blogs
- Microblogs
  - Twitter for business
  - Microblogging software
- Social media portals
Social networking sites
Social news sites
Social bookmarking sites

• Forums/bulletin boards

• Collaborative informational Web sites
  o Wikipedia

Readings

• Chapter 3: The social technographics profile

WEEK 3. ONLINE COMMUNITIES: RULES, TYPES AND PURPOSE: 7/14–7/20

• Online community rules
  • Communication in electronic communities
  • Governance (user-generated content)/Policy
  • Social media etiquette

• Listening
  o Online communities by sector

• User-generated content and the balance of power

• Evaluating the sociability and usability of online communities

• Online work communities

• Team project 1 and presentation – Community site analysis – Due 7/14

Readings

• Chapter 4: Strategies for tapping the groundswell
• Chapter 5: Listening to the groundswell

WEEK 4. PLANNING, DESIGNING AND MANAGING AN ONLINE COMMUNITY: 7/21–7/27

• The community manager

• Identity and membership
New York University
Leonard N. Stern School of Business

- Developing purpose
- Building community
- Maintaining community
- Monitoring the conversation

Readings
- Chapter 6: Talking to the groundswell
- Chapter 7: Energizing the groundswell
- Chapter 8: Helping the groundswell support itself
- Chapter 9: Embracing the groundswell

WEEK 5. COOPERATION, SHARING, AND PRIVACY ISSUES: 7/28–8/3

- The importance of failure
- Managing growth
- Dynamics of contributors
- Participant motivation
- Privacy
- Individual Reading Practicum – Due 7/28

Readings
- Chapter 10: How connecting with the groundswell transforms your company
- Chapter 11: The groundswell inside your company
- Chapter 12: The future of groundswell

WEEK 6. ONLINE COMMUNITY PROJECT PRESENTATIONS: 8/4

- Team project 2 and presentation – Online community design/redesign – Due 8/4
- Challenges and opportunities
- Synthesis and wrap-up
- Evaluation of course