# Course Syllabus

## Course Summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed Jan 15, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR1</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Jan 22, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 2</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<td>Wed Jan 29, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 3</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<td>Wed Feb 5, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 4</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<td>Wed Feb 12, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 5</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Feb 19, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 6 - Health Communities</strong> due by 8am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri Feb 21, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>Midterm Participation</strong> due by 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed Feb 26, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>OCAR 7</strong> due by 8am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri Feb 28, 2020</td>
<td>Assignment <strong>Midterm</strong> due by 11:59pm</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Wed Mar 11, 2020
Assignment **OCAR 9 - Fandom Communities** due by 8am

Wed Mar 18, 2020
Assignment **OCAR 10 - Hard to moderate communities** due by 8am

Wed Mar 25, 2020
Assignment **OCAR 11 - "Dangerous" communities** due by 8am

Wed Apr 8, 2020
Assignment **OCAR 13 - "Dangerous" communities Copy** due by 8am

Wed Apr 15, 2020
Assignment **OCAR 14 - Reflection** due by 11:59pm

Fri Apr 17, 2020
Assignment **Final Participation** due by 5pm
Assignment **Final** due by 11:59pm

Assignment **OCAR 12 - Monetary communities**

April 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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<th>Wednesday</th>
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<td>29 Previous month</td>
<td>30 Previous month</td>
<td>31 Previous month</td>
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<td>15 Click to view event details</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17 Click to view event details</td>
<td>18</td>
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</table>
Course assignments are not weighted.

SI 529 - Online Communities

**Reading and Assignments Schedule**

*Note: Any aspect of this syllabus, including the content and reading schedule, may be adjusted throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via Canvas. Students are responsible for checking Canvas on a regular basis. All readings are in Canvas or online.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading/Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Course Introduction; Process discussion; Approaches to understanding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Understand the importance of online communities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Define online communities vs. social media vs. communities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Lay out the basics of the socio-technical perspective</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Define mutual</td>
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| January 15 | **Dr. Lampe is out of town. We will still have class.**

Importance of online communities

Learning objectives:
- Define online communities
- Understand the various domains in which online communities operate.
- Discuss genres of online community.
- Reflect on the history of online communities
- Define the types of collaboration that are enabled by online communities.

Rheingold, H. (2012). *Net Smart: How to Thrive Online*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press. – Chapters 3 and 4


Kraut & Resnick, Intro.

PhD Level Only:
<p>|           | ● Provide examples of technical systems that support social structures. | Norman, D. Affordance Design. |
|           | ● Reflect on technological determinism. | |
|           | ● Begin to think about the complexity of individual and social factors that affect design. | A brief introduction to communities of practice - Wenger |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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</table>
| February 5 | Why people participate in online communities                         | ● Understand motivations for participation in online communities  
● Think about ways to increase commitment  
● How people make choices among multiple online community options  
● Habit vs. conscious choice in community participation  
● Diversity of motivations in online communities. | Kraut and Resnick – Chapter 3  
| February 12 | How to start an Online Community                                      | ● Understand the rarity of Building an Online Community 101 – Amy Chen  
Buzzing Communities – Chapter 2 & 3 | Kraut and Resnick – Chapter 6 |
online community success.

- Think about the inherent barriers to starting a community.
- Describe the various ways to generate membership.
- How to defeat the “cold start” problem.
- Reflect on re-vitalizing an older community with new members.

Socializing Newcomers

Learning Objectives

- What are the issues with adding newcomers to a site when it’s already mature?
- How do you protect, train, nurture, and filter “newbs”?
- What do new members need to know?

The Right Way to Build an Online Community: 3 Rules From Investor and Flickr Cofounder Caterina Fake - Reid Hoffman
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Februa</th>
<th>Lifecycles and ecologies of members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ry 19</td>
<td>Learning objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● How people move through different types of participation.</td>
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<td>● The different roles that people play in online communities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Interaction between motivations and lifecycles</td>
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<td>● Why people leave online communities.</td>
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<td>● Identifying leaders in online communities.</td>
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<td>● How people manage their use across multiple platforms</td>
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Feverbee article on life cycles [http://www.feverbee.com/2013/01/the-online-community-lifecycle.html](http://www.feverbee.com/2013/01/the-online-community-lifecycle.html)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>References and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| February 26 | Encouraging Participation | **Learning Objectives:**  
  - Discuss the consequences of the “Power Law” problem.  
  - Basic levers for encouraging participation.  
  - Signaling norms.  
  - Diversity in types of participation.  
  - Features that encourage participation.  
http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2181037.2181040  
Sonia Livingstone: Parenting in the Digital Age  
| March 4 | Spring Break                 |                                                                                      |                                                                                      |
| March 11 | Positive effects of social media | **Learning Objectives:**  
  - What are the positive effects of social media?  
  - How those positive effects are tied to specific features.  
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Resources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Managing negative behavior</td>
<td>Identify the types of conflicts that can occur in online communities</td>
<td>Kraut and Resnick Chapter 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deciding when to moderate or not.</td>
<td>Designing Good Policy for Online Platforms and Communities – Cindy Au <a href="https://medium.com/@shinyee_au/designing-good-policy-for-online-platforms-and-communities-d04eb8535991">https://medium.com/@shinyee_au/designing-good-policy-for-online-platforms-and-communities-d04eb8535991</a></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Shaping community norms.</td>
<td>Gillepsie, T. Custodians of the Internet</td>
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<td>Lisa Nakamura - The Internet is a trash fire. Here's how to fix it.</td>
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<td>Brotsky &amp; Giles, (2007). Inside the “Pro-ana”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Funding and Monetizing Online Communities; Social Media in the Workplace</td>
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<td>Learning Objectives:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Learn how online communities make money or sustain themselves</td>
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<td>● Consider the role of social media and online communities in the workplace</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Ultimate Guide to Monetizing Your Online Community</td>
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<td><a href="https://printify.com/monetizing-your-community/">https://printify.com/monetizing-your-community/</a></td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Online/Offline mixed communities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Objectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Carroll, J. M., &amp; Rosson, M. B. (2013). Wild at home:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The neighborhood as a living laboratory for HCl. ACM Transactions on</td>
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<td>Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI), 20(3), 16.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Resource</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Flex time</td>
<td>At the mid term, we’ll get feedback from you about what kinds of questions we haven’t covered, and cover those topics on this day. Readings to be announced.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SI529 Online Communities**

Winter 2020 Course Syllabus
Professor Cliff Lampe

**Overview**

This course is intended to help students to analyze online interaction environments with an eye toward design. For the purpose of this course, a community is defined as a group of people who engage in sustained interaction. The group may be held together by a common identity, a collective purpose, or merely by the individual utility gained from the interactions. An online interaction environment is an electronic forum, accessed through computers or other electronic devices, in which community members can conduct some or all of their interactions. We will use the term ‘online community’ as shorthand for groups of individuals that conduct all of their interactions online and for collectives that use online interaction to supplement face-to-face interactions. Although “community” is not well-defined in the research literature, we will explore different dimensions of what constitutes a community and how mediated interactions can support or hinder their development.

- The spectrum of offline and online meetings.
- The specific issues of online communities to support civic engagement.
- How multiple organizations add complexity to online community design.
- The potential for supporting offline community with online tools


Digital Government: Not complicated, just hard. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBl5rRV8OfU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBl5rRV8OfU)

Bloomberg interview with Jennifer Pahlka [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEI8YgSdajM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEI8YgSdajM)
The course prepares students for roles as online community researchers, designers, managers, and users. It will introduce students to important concepts, terms, and theories that will help them understand how online communities are used by millions of people everyday for a variety of purposes. Throughout the semester, we will be gaining a better understanding of online interaction, community, and online relationships; specifically we will focus on how social science research can help us design interaction spaces that encourage community building and discourage behaviors that are harmful for the community. In doing so, we will connect social science theories with the goals of online community managers and with the alternative social and technical design alternatives available to them. Drawing from the Kraut and Resnick text, we will engage with design claims that are framed as: Alternative X will help/hinder the achievement of goal Y, in contexts Z. Students will draw on these claims to make design suggestions for a new or existing online community. This component of the course connects social science theories with the goals of designers, online community managers, and online community participants. In parallel with this effort, the rest of our time will be devoted to exploring different kinds of online communities, such as health-related communities or online discussion communities. This will enable us to become familiar with different kinds of groups and to apply our theory-based design claims to a unique community in order to determine how variables such as user motivations or community norms are affected by design decisions.

**Logistics**

Class meets Wednesdays 8:30am – 11:30am in Room G550 DENT

**Instructor:**

Professor Cliff Lampe  
Office Hours: Thursdays 1:00pm – 3:00pm 3360 North Quad or by appt.  
cacl@umich.edu  
Twitter: @clifflampe

Note on course communication: The best way to get in touch with us is through email. Please take advantage of office hours and email to ask questions and discuss course material. We are both very committed to make this course a valuable learning experience.

**Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, a student should be able to:

- Describe an online community using the concepts and vocabulary of multiple theoretical frameworks.
- Understand how social and technical systems interact in different ways.
- Be familiar with a range of online communities and how they differ from one another in terms of user practices, benefits and limitations, motivational structures, and design decisions.
- Understand design choices for online communities as they relate to social science theory and research.

There are no formal prerequisites.
This course assumes some familiarity with technologies and the ability to explore them on your own. This course will spend very little time explicitly teaching about technology, but will frequently assume it as background.

**Texts**
The required textbook for this class is the Resnick and Kraut book on online communities:


In addition to the textbook, we’ll be reading excerpts from a large number of books and articles. Links to electronic copies are provided through Canvas.

**Class Activities**
All of these (with the exception of the Kraut and Resnick book, which should be purchased) will be available electronically through Canvas. We will engage in four ways:

- **Description**: statements or questions about what the author claims.
- **Critique**: arguments about whether the author is correct or what the author has left out.
- **Connection**: how the claims or concepts relate to those in other readings.
- **Application**: how the reading applies to the communities we are studying.

We may have several speakers during the course of the semester. These folks are doing us a favor coming in to talk about their work. We are representing our school when they visit. Do not shame our house. Be prepared with good questions, engage with them actively, and appreciate their time. Guest speakers are always energized by an engaged audience. Part of that engagement is removing electronic devices while they are providing their time.

**Class Conduct**
The goal for our class conduct guidelines is to create an effective, productive, and comfortable mutual learning environment based on principles of mutual respect and reciprocity. In the first class of the semester, we’ll create a joint contract about the types of things that help foster such an environment for each of us. There are two key factors that are important for us to succeed: engagement and preparation.

- **Engagement**. It’s important that all students are engaged in the course, especially during our three-hour face-to-face meetings. That can mean different things to different people. If you don’t have something to contribute to a particular discussion, that’s fine, but it’s important to pay attention to your fellow participants and reflect their contributions.
- **Preparation**. We’ll be able to have a more productive discussion if we all come to class prepared to discuss the readings and the communities for that week. It’s important to note that we’re not asking you to be prepared for busy work, but rather to help you and your fellow learners get more from the material and our time together.

**Assignments**
There are a total of 1000 points possible for this course.

Weekly Online Community Assessment Report: 500 Points (max of ten, 50 points each)
Participation: 100 pts
Mid-term deliverable: 200 pts
Final deliverable: 200 pts

The points above will be used as percentages and recorded as letter grades in the standard university conversion:

- A: 95-100
- A- : 90-94
- B+ : 87-89
- B : 83-86
- B- : 80-82
- C+ : 77-79
- C : 73-76
- C- : 70-72

While all students will be assessed the same in the community reviews and participation, there will be three tracks for the other deliverables.

- **Track 1 [Research Track]**: focus on studying the sociotechnical nature of online communities with connections to previous research literature related to online communities.
- **Track 2 [Design Track]**: focus on the design and use of online communities. These deliverables would be appropriate for a business audience.
- **Track 3 [Practice Track]**: work directly with a REAL client who has an organizational goal related to either the creation or maintenance of an online community.

These tracks should be picked at the beginning of the semester.

**Weekly Online Community Assessment Report - 500 Points (max of ten, up to 50 points each)**

Each week you will be filling out a worksheet that helps you understand the communities we’re examining for that session. We will list online communities within a genre each week through links on Canvas. You’re free to pick just one of those to analyze in more depth for the worksheet. However, we encourage you to look at the others since we’ll be discussing them all in class.

The goal of this assignment is to apply the research and readings we experience in the course to “in the wild” online communities, and to think about a generalizable framework that would work across all of the wildly different online communities that we’ll review. Each of the 12 content-focused weeks OCAR is worth potentially 50 points. This allows you to either skip one of these “extra” weeks, or to drop the lowest grade. These will be submitted via Canvas by 12pm each Wednesday.

**Participation: 100 pts**

On ten days throughout the semester, we’ll track participation in classroom discussions, activities, and breakouts on a scale of 0-10. This will be a measure of both contribution quantity and quality. Note that doing the readings and other preparation work is necessary for contributing to classroom conversations in a way that is productive and moves the discussion forward, not backward. In other words, please do not say something just to “say something” –
you need to contribute to the discussion in a meaningful way in order to receive full credit for this portion of the grade. As our primary form of interaction will be face-to-face, we encourage you to find a way to contribute to our discussions in this forum.

**Mid-term online community deliverable: 200 pts**
You will pick between three formats for this project: a research proposal, a design proposal, or a midpoint report to your client. A detailed rubric for these will be made available in Canvas. Tentatively due February 28 (Friday) 5pm.

**Final deliverable: 200 pts**
For the final product, there are also three alternative forms for you to choose from. A detailed rubric for this deliverable will be available in Canvas. Due April 17 (Friday) 5pm.

**Effort**
This is a 3-credit course, so you should expect to spend, on average, 9-12 hours per week on the course, over the course of the 14 week semester. Here’s an approximate estimate of how this time might be split up:

- required reading (3 hours)
- in-class time (3 hours)
- major assignments (4 hours/week averaged over the term)

**An Important Note on Plagiarism**
At the University of Michigan and in professional settings generally, plagiarism is an extremely serious matter. All individual written submissions must be your own, original work, written entirely in your own words. You may incorporate excerpts from publications by other authors, but they must be clearly marked as quotations and properly attributed. You may obtain copy editing assistance, and you may discuss your ideas with others, but all substantive writing and ideas must be your own or else be explicitly attributed to another, using a citation sufficiently detailed for someone else to easily locate your source.

All cases of plagiarism will be officially reported and dealt with according to Rackham policies. There will be no warnings, no second chances, no opportunity to rewrite; all plagiarism cases will be immediately reported to SI's Dean of Academic Affairs. Consequences can range from failing the assignment (a grade of zero) or failing the course to expulsion from the University.

For additional information about plagiarism, see the "Academic and Professional Integrity Policy Statement" in the SI Master's Student Handbook, the Rackham pamphlet on Academic Integrity, and the Plagiarism document from the UM Libraries. If you have any doubts about whether you are using the words or ideas of others appropriately, please discuss them with your professor.

**Accommodations**
If you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know as soon as possible. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/sswd/) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified
Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. We will treat any information you provide as private and confidential.

**Late Policy**
Late work will not be accepted for credit after 48 hours. Before then it will be accepted but there will be a penalty of 20% for each 24-hour period after the time it is due (usually 5pm on the due date specified in the syllabus, unless announced otherwise). In extreme cases (death in the family, severe illness), extensions may be granted. Students must communicate with instructors *before* the deadline in these cases.