SYLLABUS

Department of Communication Design

COMD3563: Web Traffic & Analytics

Spring 2024, Section D097
Class Meeting: Mondays 2:15pm – 5:30pm
| Pearl 124
Office Hours: Mondays from 12pm to 1pm | Pearl 122

Instructor:
Professor Noreen Whysel
Email: nwhysel@citytech.cuny.edu
Book a Meeting: http://www.calendly.com/comd-nwhysel

Course Description

In this course you will learn how to develop Internet content and effectively direct traffic to a website. Topics will include implementing Web Analytics, Search Engine Optimization, and Online (Social Media) Marketing. You will analyze data and assess reports on traffic to web sites; learn to write content to rank for key search terms, and to choose appropriately, and implement the best strategies that help to drive traffic to web sites.

While this course is NOT designated as "Writing Intensive", be prepared to write a number of blog posts and assigned sections of three required reports. You will write a minimum of 16 concise blogpost articles as well as complementary social media campaigns that will drive your audience to the website. Over time, you will establish your point-of-view, find your voice, and learn to edit your content and copy to suit a desired target audience.

There are 2 concise team reports and 1 individual report describing your roles, responsibilities, and experience on the project. The success of your writing will be partially measured by tracking the size of your web traffic audience.

2 class hrs, 2 lab hrs, 3 cr
Prerequisites: COMD2451 Web I

Course Objectives

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES	ASSESSMENT
For the successful completion of this course, students should be able to:	*Evaluation methods and criteria:*

Implement strategies to drive traffic to a web site via link building, social media, viral content, paid advertising.	Students will demonstrate competency by proposing and executing marketing strategies.
Write appropriately for users to find their web site through search engines (e.g., Google, Bing)	Students will demonstrate competency by writing appropriate content for the purposes of advertising, marketing, and gaining organic traffic.
Write content to drive traffic through a web site to lead to an appropriate conversion.	Students will demonstrate competency by writing marketing copy and explaining through presentation the logic behind the content structure.
Get search engines to index pages and send traffic to a website.	Students will display competency by optimizing the content and the structure of their pages. They will register their websites with major search engines.
Analyze where the traffic is coming from, who their users are, and the successes and failures to gain traffic and convert visitors.	Students will display competency through analyzing both tag-based and log-based analytic packages.

Required Text: None

Suggested Text:

Building Findable Websites: Web Standards, SEO, and Beyond
Aaron Walter ISBN-10: 0321526287

The Art of SEO: Mastering Search Engine Optimization (Theory in Practice)
Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, Rand Fishkin, Jessie Stricchola
ISBN-10: 0596518862

Web Analytics Demystified
Eric T. Peterson
Celio Media Group ISBN: 0974358428

Attendance Policy:
The COMD BFA and AAS are design studio programs. In-class activities and engagement with other students is a significant portion of the courses. Absences more than 10% of the total class hours will result in a 10% drop from your grade due to an inability to meet deliverables of participation. This is in addition to other penalties that will be imposed for failure to complete academic requirements. No more than 4 class absences will be tolerated. It is expected that you will be ready to work at the start of each period. Any 2 latenesses will be equal to 1 absence.

Academic Integrity:
Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

Inclusivity Statement

In this class, we want everyone to feel welcome, cared for, and respected. We know that our students have different backgrounds, and we value everyone's experiences and ideas. Learning new things can sometimes be hard and uncomfortable, but that's okay—it's part of growing. We will face challenges together, with openness and compassionate mindfulness. Everyone in this class is important just as they are. Our goal is to build a community where we respect each other, appreciate different ideas, and uplift all voices, including those from underrepresented groups.

Grading

90% = Course projects/assignments

Group Report	10%
Individual Report	10%
Website Content	35%
Traffic/Campaigns	35%

10% = Class preparation/participation/attendance

CP/P/A	10%

Topics

WEEK	Lecture Topic	Laboratory Exercise	Homework Assignment
Week 1 Sept 9	Overview of Web Traffic and Analytics Course ○ SEO and SEM ○ Analytics ○ Confirm prerequisites	○ Review course syllabus ○ Break students into teams ○ Community building	○ Competitive market analysis ○ URL options ○ Directorship positions ○ Description of project
Week 2 Sept16	Website Content Management ○ Manual installation of content management system ○ Create database ○ Install software ○ Create email accounts	○ Present concept to class ○ Present branding, website URL for group critique	○ Purchase hosting and domain ○ Install content management system ○ Design navigation system, logo. ○ Select design theme and plugins. ○ Write a concise description of the website's focus.
Week 3 Sept 23	Introduction to Web Analytics ○ What are analytics? ○ Content development ○ The myth of "keyword density" ○ Longtail keywords ○ Google Analytics ○ Webmaster Tools	○ Apply Google Analytics to site. ○ Register sites to Google, Bing ○ Research and Writing exercises. ○ Keyword development exercise.	○ Apply Google Analytics to individual project site ○ 2 blog posts + social media marketing required for the remainder of the course. (A minimum of 16 blog posts- approximates 300 words each plus social media campaigns required by course completion.)

WEEK	Lecture Topic	Laboratory Exercise	Homework Assignment
Week 4 Sept 30	SEO Basics ○ How search engines work ○ Anatomy of a search engine ○ How search engines spiders think ○ How to design for search engine spiders	○ Content Development ○ Refine and Publish exercises. ○ Judging keyword value	○ Write 2 blog posts, develop, create content. ○ Refine content and functionality of site/ sequence. ○ Produce and publish content to the web, test. ○ Develop strong list of at least 20 keywords for your site.
Week 5 Oct 7	Social Media Marketing strategies: ○ How can Facebook, Google, Twitter and YouTube help to drive traffic to your site. ○ Ethical behavior	○ Implement social media strategies on your site. ○ Create Facebook profile, Facebook page, Twitter profile.	○ Promote your content using techniques discussed in class. ○ Write 2 blog posts on your site. Aim to write 2 posts a week for the rest of the course. ○ Prepare for weekly group presentations of analytics results.
Week 6 Tuesday, October 15 (MONDAY CLASSES ARE ON TUESDAY THIS WEEK)	Developing content. ○ How to write, design and develop effective content. ○ Curated content. What does it mean to curate content? What are some types of curated content?	○ Read blog posts on moz.com related to ○ Curated Content. Understand how your site might use these techniques.	○ Write 2 blog posts + social media marketing using techniques described. ○ Prepare for weekly group presentations of analytics results. ○ First report due next week for midterm grades.
Week 7 Oct 21	SEO Basics continued. ○ A lecture on the best ways to ensure that search engines properly index your site.	○ Review of teams' progress of project site. ○ Submit midterm reports (4 pages), confidential ratings, complete spreadsheet of written blogpost.	○ Review report of other teams. Give suggestions about ways in which the report might be improved. ○ Each student will present one (1) or more written blog posts, social media campaign copy. They will showcase the web traffic results via analytics.

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Week 8 Oct 28	Campaigns and campaign tracking. ○ What are they? ○ How do they work? ○ What is UTM data?	○ Implement campaign strategies via social media for team project site. ○ Presentation of teams sites, analytics, and social media strategies.	○ Review report feedback.
Week 9 Nov 4	Black Hat, White Hat, Gray Hat: ○ What are the different marketing techniques used for improving search rankings	○ Assess current strategies use. ○ Design strategies for improving search rankings	○ Complete implementation of campaigns on team project sites. Continue to write blog posts, assess
Week 10 Nov 11	Ad Campaign: Banner ads ○ Format, functionality, optimization for performance	○ Specs for banner ads ○ Begin to design banner ads for website. ○	○ Design banner ads and create UTM data string to share with affiliate sites.
Week 11 Nov 18	Rotating banner ads ○ A/B campaign testing ○ Present list of exam questions in advance for study	○ Implement event tracking of rotating banner ads on site ○ Design campaigns for A/B testing	○ Write blog posts. Drive Traffic. ○ Verify event tracking functioning.
Week 12 Nov 25	Event Tracking	○ Design Banner Ads ○ Class critique: text ads ○ Sketch out landing page	○ Consider where it is appropriate to implement event tracking. ○ What are the best categories, actions, and labels?
Week 13 Dec 2	Goals & Conversions ○ Determining the website's major and minor goals/ conversions ○ Implement tracking in the analytics	○ Assess website for implementation of goals and conversions. ○ Review for Final Quiz ○ Implement analytics for goals and goals and conversions.	○ Edit existing blog posts to improve interest. ○ Retweet updated posts. ○ Study for quiz ○ Implement analytics tracking for goals and conversions.

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Week 14￼Dec 9	Scientific Method￼○ Understanding the scientific method; how science methodologies can be used for marketing.	○ Present analytics to date.￼○ Assess strategies and improve the qualities of marketing efforts	○ Blog, drive traffic, tweak site￼○ Write/complete final reports for presentation and submission.
WEEK	Lecture Topic	Laboratory Exercise	Homework Assignment
Week 15￼Dec 16	**Presentation Day**￼○ Group presentations of project outcomes and analytics￼○ Share all files and reports via the cloud	○ Presentation of team outcomes: **Final report,** analytics, effective results.	○ Submit **group (4 pages)** and **individual reports (1 page)**;￼○ Submit confidential team member ratings