

Understanding Online Communities

Last Updated: Tue, 04/07/2026

Course prefix: CS

Course number: 8001

Section: ONC

CRN

35520

Instructor first name: Ana

Instructor last name: Rusch

Semester: Summer

Academic year: 2026

Catalog description:

The seminar will cover identity, free speech, and behavior in online communities. Online communities are spaces on the web where people find community and friendship around shared hobbies, life experiences, and more. We will first explore the nature of identity and self expression in online spaces and discuss the history of online social platforms. We will look into the business models and incentive structures that lead platforms to be designed the way they are today. Finally, we will tie everything together by discussing how platforms shape online behavior (for both good and bad).

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.