



Course Number: **MGT 553**

Course Title: **Using Technology to Build Community and Grow Your Organization**

Course Credits: **3**

Session: **Summer Semester B**

Prerequisites: **none**

Class Meeting: **Online**

Faculty: **Jayne Cravens, MSc**

Contact Information:

Email: [jcravens@gratz.edu](mailto:jcravens@gratz.edu)

**Please text 202 503 9078 or text via the class Slack channel before calling or trying to video chat with the instructor if you don't already have an appointment.**

**Students will be able to text chat as needed with the instructor via a special Slack channel, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays (Los Angeles time); invitations to join this channel will be sent at start of class.**

**Students can also add the instructors number to Signal (preferred), Telegram or Whats App for text chatting on demand 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays (Los Angeles time) if preferred.**

**The course instructor is happy to speak with students via Skype, Zoom, Slack, etc.; please make an appointment or text and ask if the instructor is immediately available.**

**The course instructor is committed to students' understanding and benefitting from this course, and will make every effort to promptly answer questions from students by their preferred communication method.**

Course Description:

### **MGT 553**

#### **Using Technology to Build Community and Grow Your Organization**

Community affiliations are rapidly evolving in the 21st century, reflecting significant changes in society at large. New tools are needed to keep in step with the challenges facing faith-based organizations. This course will examine Web 2.0 applications that can be used to foster connectivity, communication, and collaboration in order to strengthen communal organizations. Hands-on exploration of online tools will be required. Prior experience is not necessary.

## Course Level Learning Objectives (CLO):

As a result of this course, the student will be able to

- 1 Locate and evaluate a variety of online networking tools regarding their relevance to nonprofit management, faith-based organizations and communal service and education.
- 2 Match the needs of programs or organizations with which they are affiliated to different online networking tools and features – both tools that exist now and tools that will be developed in the future.
- 3 Create effective strategies for different tools to achieve the desired result in such areas as:
  - Public relations and community networking / community development
  - Client engagement
  - Marketing and fundraising
  - Volunteer engagement
  - Program management
  - Program assessment

Students will immediately join and become an online community themselves via participation in the class discussion board on the Gratz Moodle platform. Students will also be asked to join and explore other online communities, such as those on Reddit, GoogleGroups and LinkedIn, and the TechSoup online community forum. Through both course readings, podcasts, instructor videos and assignments, students will explore solutions to the challenges of building community both within the organization and their own program's greater community. They will also understand why online communities matter as a source for cultivating civility, civic participation, inter-cultural understanding and social inclusion.

Each online community tool for this course is freely available, at no charge, and will be explained fully as the course progresses. Other than the two text books, all reading materials, audio and video materials are also freely available.

The course is designed such that the time you spend on assignments and the final project will be very similar to the time and effort you would need as a manager of online community networks.

By the end of this course, students will also have created a strategy for a new online community they will, do, would or might manage, OR a strategy to improve/re-imagine/reboot an existing community they manage or are very familiar with. The strategy can be for an actual online community you already manage, a community you intend to start in association with your organization or cause, an actual community that you are familiar with but have no formal affiliation with, or an imaginary group for an imaginary organization or program. Students are expected to work on this strategy throughout the course, not just the last week of the course.

## Course Requirements:

- 1 Weekly reading assignments; all online reading assignments will be downloadable for offline viewing.
- 2 Weekly participation on Moodle discussion board for class (in many cases, completed assignments will be shared with the entire class via this board and other sharing tools; this is considered *active class participation*). This includes responses to classmates' posts. In addition to answering instructor questions on the discussion group, students will also be regularly encouraged to look for moments of "community" online, of examples of what we review in class (like inclusion and accessibility – or where it could be improved, or facilitating conflict) and share commentary about these observed moments on the class Moodle discussion group. Participation in the community will all be asynchronous.
- 3 Viewing recorded videos and listening to at least two podcasts (transcriptions will be available of original videos produced by the instructor; if you need a transcription of a video or podcast not produced by the instructor, because of poor Internet connectivity, contact the instructor). No required audio or video will be a live event (all are on-demand).
- 4 Use of Google Drive (for file sharing when the class Moodle is not appropriate).
- 5 Exploration of assigned online community/tools & resources.

Note: You will need to sign up to use online tools sites and to share your username (not your password) with the instructor in many instances. It is highly recommended that the student keep this information in an organized and accessible format (E.g. A spreadsheet).

- 6 In some cases, proof of participation in online communities the instructor and other students do not have access to (such as an online community of volunteers at your respective nonprofit or program) will be required – therefore, screen shots may be requested by the instructor.
- 7 Work on the final project throughout the course and then submitting the final project on time.

## Textbook & Other Required Materials:

**The Networked Nonprofit: Connecting With Social Media to Drive Change** by Beth Kanter and Allison H. Fine, Jossey-Bass, 2010      ISBN: 978-0-470-54797-7

**Social Media for Social Good** by Heather Mansfield, McGraw Hill, 2012  
ISBN: 978-0-07-177081

Online required materials will be listed in association with each assignment on the class Moodle. These include web pages, PDF files, YouTube videos and one-two podcasts. Other than the two

text books, all reading materials, audio and video materials are freely available and most can be downloaded for offline reading or listening.

## Accommodations

Gratz College is committed to equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in compliance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Any students needing accommodation should contact [disabilities@gratz.edu](mailto:disabilities@gratz.edu). All requests for accommodations need appropriate advance notice by the student and require supporting documentation from appropriate professionals testifying to the disability. If approved, you are responsible for discussing approved accommodations with faculty.

## Evaluation Methods

- **Moodle Forum Participation & Weekly Assignments = 33.3%**
- **Other Online forum participation & Weekly Assignments = 33.3% of Final Grade**
- **Final Project = 33.4% of Final Grade**

	<b>% of Total Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Adequate / Standard</b>	<b>Incomplete or Below Standard</b>
Moodle forum participation & affiliated assignments	33.3%	Adds information and commentary to the Moodle forum regularly and completely, as asked for in each assignment; frequently provides especially helpful or insightful comments on posts by other students and the instructor; and, even sometimes, proposes their own discussion starters. In these posts and responses, apply the principles presented in readings from assignments in a way that demonstrates a solid, growing understanding of online community networking principles detailed in readings, videos and/or podcasts.	Adds information to the Moodle forum regularly, as asked for in each assignment. Also provides on-topic comments on posts by other students and the instructor in a way that demonstrates at least some the principles presented in readings, videos and/or podcasts.	Does not complete all written work on the Moodle forum and does not regularly comment on what others have posted (goes three weeks or more without commenting at all, or skips two or more lesson-affiliated thread on the Moodle board completely, for instance), or posts to the class Moodle community are just a few words and do not demonstrate an understanding of online community networking principles as detailed in readings and assignments.

Other Online forum participation & affiliated assignments	33.3%	Completes all assignments regarding online communities for each lesson, such as adding questions and comments to assigned online communities regularly, sometimes initiating discussions through questions and comments and commenting on the posts of others that are NOT students in this Gratz class, applying the principles presented in readings in a way that demonstrates a solid, growing understanding of online community networking principles.	Adds questions and comments to assigned online communities regularly, as required in assignments, with posts demonstrating an obvious effort to apply the principles presented in readings from reading assignments.	Does not post to at least half of online communities outside of the Moodle regularly, or posts are comments of just few words and do not demonstrate an understanding of online community networking principles as detailed in readings from assignments.
Final Project	33.4%	Completes the final assignment on time, in a highly-detailed manner, applying the principles presented in readings from assignments in a way that demonstrates a solid, growing understanding of online community networking principles, including quoting class readings and other materials to justify strategies / choices and steps. Includes mission of the community, platform or community tool to be used, target populations, plan implementation steps/a timeline, how the group will or could be leveraged for public relations, client support, program	Completes most of the final assignment, meeting the word count requirement and showing an earnest attempt to apply the principles presented in readings from assignments and to demonstrate a growing understanding of online community networking principles. Generally articulates WHY this online community is important and worthwhile to create or revise, and generally articulates potential to the organization,	Does not complete final assignment at all, or completes assignment in an abbreviated format, falling short of the word count and falling short regarding information to demonstrate an understanding of the principles presented in assignment readings. Does not articulate WHY this online community is important and worthwhile to create or revise, and does not articulate the potential to the organization in a convincing manner.

		delivery, marketing, fundraising and, or volunteer engagement.	though more detail would be requested in a real-world scenario. References at least the textbooks and one other source in justifying some choices/strategies.	
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## Semester Schedule

Wednesday, June 30 First day of Summer Semester B

Tuesday, July 6 Drop/Add deadline for Summer Semester B

Friday, July 23 Final withdrawal date for Summer Semester B

Tuesday, August 24 Last day of Summer Semester B

## Class Schedule

### ◆ Final project

By the end of this course, students will have created a strategy for a new online community they will, do, would or might manage, OR a strategy to improve/re-imagine/reboot an existing community they manage or are very familiar with.

The strategy can be for an actual online community you already manage, a community you intend to start in association with your organization or cause, an actual community that you are familiar with but have no formal affiliation with, or an imaginary group for an imaginary organization or program.

Each week's lessons will contribute to the student's understand of different aspects of online communities and to the student's ongoing drafting of this strategy as their final project. You are strongly encouraged to work on this strategy throughout the course.

Your strategy should use the lessons from this course to support your proposal for the creation of an online community or the improvement of an online community you have chosen - again, for the creation of an online community, this can be a real community for a real organization or it can all be fully imaginary.

The strategy would be in a style and in the spirit of material that you would make available to all staff and, perhaps, potential donors. HOWEVER, you are under no obligation to ever actually present these materials to anyone outside of class - this is a speculative exercise meant for students to apply what they have learned to a real world scenario.

Your online community that is the subject of your strategy:

- Can currently be or imagined to be on any platform: GoogleGroups, groups.io, proprietary software you have access to (like Basecamp or Discord), Reddit, Twitter (as a weekly tweetchat with a particular hashtag keyword, for instance), LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. You will have to justify why you want the community on that platform, or for an existing community to stay on that platform.
- Can be focused on any target audience, or more than one: current volunteers at your organization, people concerned with a particular issue in a specific neighborhood, town or city, a particular professional group, attendees to a particular event, people who have taken a course at your nonprofit, anyone interested in your nonprofit or program, etc.

You will present the strategy for your community in two ways.

First, you will **prepare a slide show presentation** as you would for senior staff or the board, to other key members of your organization, or to potential funders. This is your “pitch” to gain their support. This is an overview that should promote understanding by those who may never be actually involved in the community. It will clearly articulate WHY this online community is important and worthwhile to create or revise. It will clearly articulate potential to the organization. It would provide only as much detail as you think they need in order to see the value of this new online community or revised community. That can be as:

- A slide show someone would read/go through at their own pace. It should not take more than 30 minutes to read through (reading it aloud will let you know if it’s too long). You should share your slides separately, either uploaded to the class Moodle in the designated space or via your GoogleDrive.

OR

- A slide show with audio (such as what you would present in a Zoom or Webex call), no more than 30 minutes long. You should upload this as an unlisted video on your YouTube channel. You should also share your slides separately, either uploaded to the class Moodle in the designated space or via your GoogleDrive.

You will also create **a detailed written strategy** for creating/cultivating/improving this online community, something that would provide all the details anyone who had seen the slideshow might want. This will be a written, detailed report that will repeat the information from your slide show but will add much more detail. Like the slide show, It will clearly articulate WHY this online community is important and worthwhile to create or revise. It will clearly articulate potential to the organization or program.

In this detailed, written plan for your online community, you will detail what you summarized in your slide show presentation: you will identify who you want that community to be (and why?), the overall goal of your community (and why), the goals for the next month, the next three months and the next six months, what success would look like, how you will measure success, etc. The online community will need a mission/purpose and you will need to clearly state how this community fits within your organization’s mission and its goals. The community will need a target audience for membership, a method for creating code of conduct/rules (who will draft

these? Will you make it a collaborative process and, if so, how?) and how new members will be welcomed? What's the timeline for development? How will it be moderated? How will discussions be cultivated? And no matter what the primary purpose of the group, how will or could it be leveraged for public relations, client support, program delivery, marketing, fundraising and/or volunteer engagement?

If your plan concerns an already-existing community, please note how and why the mission/purpose will change, how the target audience will or won't change, the method for creating or revising the code of conduct/rules (or why they won't be), and how new members will be welcomed, the timeline for development, how it will be moderated, how discussions be cultivated and, no matter what the primary purpose of the group, how will or could it be leveraged for public relations, client support, program delivery, marketing, fundraising and/or volunteer engagement.

If this strategy is for an online community that already exists, you will identify who isn't on it but should be and how you reach out to them, the revised goals for this community (or why you aren't changing them), what challenges your community faces and how you can improve it, etc.

In this plan, note how you could cultivate diversity, a welcoming environment, inclusion,

The instructor plans on having one or two synchronous sessions in the final week of classes, so that **all** students have the opportunity to ask questions live about the Final project.

Again, students should be working on the final project throughout the course, spending the last week finalizing the final products, which are due August 25.

#### ◆ *June 30 week one topic: **Why online communities?***

Through readings and a video lecture by the instructor, students will explore answers to these questions:

- Why do online communities matter? What is a *community*? What are the different kinds of online communities? Where does online community networking "sit" within an organization's staffing chart/departments? How do online communities relate to marketing and donor cultivation and program staff, etc.?
- Students will introduce themselves on the class Moodle discussion and respond to each other's introduction, starting off their own experience as an online community themselves.
- Students will create accounts on TechSoup, Reddit, World Pulse, LinkedIn and Google, if they do not have them already or if they want an account specifically for class, separate from something they already use.
- On Twitter, students will create an account, if they do not have them already or if they want an account specifically for class, separate from something they already use, and follow the Holocaust and Genocide list curated by the instructor at <https://twitter.com/i/lists/1360387304368447492>.

◆ *July 7 week two topic: Humans Online*

Through readings and observations of online communities, we will explore:

- Different communications styles online.
- Diversity online (and off)
- Building trust online (including karma, gamification and badges).
- Leadership online.
- Moderation, Facilitation.
- Recruiting new members and welcoming people.
- Writing to engage.
- Introduction on how these topics relate to community networking:
  - public relations and community networking / community development.
  - clients.
  - marketing (such as event promotion).
  - fundraising.
  - volunteer engagement.
- You will answer questions on the class Moodle discussion about the readings and about your experiences in online communities (which you may not have realized you have experience with until you started taking this course).
- Throughout the rest of the course, students will be asked to find examples of each of these bullet points on various online communities – these can be examples of success or examples of things NOT to do.
- The final project will also be discussed, as students will begin to have the information necessary to begin drafting the very initial materials for such.

◆ *July 14 week three topic: Practical experience in engagement*

Through readings and a short video lecture by the instructor, as well as practical experience, we will explore:

- Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, video conferencing events (like via Zoom) and blogs as communities (engagement, not just information-sharing).
- Wikipedia as *community*.
- Very briefly about other communities (Telegram, WhatsApp, TikTok, NextDoor, etc.)

Students will have a range of assignments regarding tasks to complete on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, TechSoup, Reddit and World Pulse.

Students will also be asked to share with the instructor information about the online community that might be the target of their final project. Students will be able to change their minds about what community their strategy will focus on if they later decide to – just as long as your final project is submitted by the deadline!

◆ *July 21 week four topic: **Facilitation, Boundaries & Safety***

Students will have a series of readings and some case studies about:

- Personal stories online.
- More about moderation and facilitation.
- Codes of conduct (why, how to create such collaboratively).
- Safety (various scenarios to consider)
- Dealing with conflict.
- Dealing with harassment.
- Misinformation and critics.

Students will also have several online community tasks to complete, building on the tasks completed in the third lesson.

◆ *July 28 week five topic: **YouTube & Video Live Chat As Community***

Students will view a short video by the instructor on this topic and then to engage in several practical tasks related to YouTube and, as always, answering a series of questions on the class Moodle discussion board and responding to the observations of fellow students. Students will NOT be required to make any videos themselves.

Students will also be asked to check in regarding their work on their final project.

◆ *August 4 week six topics:*

**a) Supporting & Training the Online Community Manager(s)**

Resources to train new online community managers and the importance of supporting people in this role.

**b) Copyright**

We will review the importance of respecting copyright (comics, Creative Commons, archive.org etc.), via a selection of short readings, including a comic, and how to encourage a community to respect such.

**c) Communities to consider - or ignore?**

We will explore some other community platforms that are not mainstream/well known. Students will be asked to join one of these communities, if they are not on such already, and answer a series of questions about the experience. Students will choose from a list or can choose another

platform to write about (even a gaming community, like Minecraft). This will include TikTok, SnapChat, MeWe, NextDoor, Quora, Second Life, Discord, Spice, Flickr, GitHub, etc. We'll talk about why these have not become mainstream and if they could, and when to consider or ignore a community as part of a community networking strategy.

◆ *August 11 week seven topic: **Demonstrating the value of your online community/communities.***

Using online communities as a part of program management & assessment.

- Defining and evaluating success of online communities.
- Continuous improvement of online community activities.
- Framing & reporting success for others (the board, funders, senior staff, participants, etc.).

Students will be asked to evaluate TechSoup, WorldPulse and a subreddit or LinkedIn group of their choice, or another online community of their choice (a Facebook group, a weekly tweetchat, etc.) - that's three online communities total – regarding a series of principles that have been detailed throughout this course, such as community *engagement* (engagement versus information-sharing), inclusion, stated mission, level of engagement, “success”, etc. They will share their evaluations either via the class Moodle or via a Google Shared Drive.

◆ *August 18 week eight topic: **Final project discussion.***

The instructor plans on having one or two synchronous sessions in the final week of classes, so that **all** students have the opportunity to ask questions live about the Final project. Students should be working on the final project throughout the course, spending the last week finalizing the final products, which are due August 25.

◆ August 25 end of course, final project due.

## Academic Policies

### Course Schedule

Courses are divided into weeks. Each week starts on Wednesday and ends on Tuesday. Accommodations for assignment submission will be made for holidays falling on specific dates.

### Forum Participation

It is expected that students will participate in 100% of the discussion forums.

For full credit on the Gratz Moodle-based class forum, you should expect to write well-constructed, original paragraphs, altogether a minimum 150-300 word initial responses for each assignment. Write thoughtful, original responses as prompted by the questions using personal ideas, insights and opinions.

Responses to other students must be substantive. They generally do one of the following:

- a) poses a question based on the original posting
- b) politely refutes/challenges the original posting
- or c) offers another example to enhance the original posting

Postings and responses that fall short of content and substance will not receive the full credit. These responses will be due by Tuesday, 11:59 PM for each week to be considered on time.

## Late Work

Any assignment, except for the final project, can be submitted up to two-weeks late, but must still meet the assignment requirements for full credit. If an assignment is submitted late, please notify the instructor that the assignment has been completed and submitted. Please be clear about what the assignment is that you are submitting late.

Assignments will not be accepted later than two weeks after their due date.

## Add/Drop

Students may drop a course within eight days after the start of the course.

### *Withdraw from a Course*

Students who wish to drop a class after the drop/add period has ended must contact their academic advisor.

### *Withdrawal from the College*

Students wishing to withdraw from Gratz College must notify their academic advisor.

Students who withdraw from courses later than the Withdrawal deadline will receive an “F” for the course.

## Incompletes

Under emergency/special circumstances, students who have completed 50% of the course work may petition for an incomplete grade.

If granted an Incomplete, students will have 16 weeks to complete their course work. Beyond that deadline, students must petition in writing to their academic advisor for a further extension. Faculty will no longer be authorized to grant individual extensions beyond the deadline. If no written request is given, students who do not complete their Incompletes by the deadline will receive an F.

## Academic Integrity

As a student in this course (and at this college) you are expected to maintain high degrees of professionalism, commitment to active learning and participation in this class. Academic dishonesty is included within this expectation.

Academic dishonesty includes such things as cheating, inventing false information or citations, plagiarism and helping someone else commit an act of academic dishonesty. It usually involves an attempt by a student to show possession of a level of knowledge or skill that he/she does not possess.

Course instructors have the initial responsibility for detecting and dealing with academic dishonesty. Instructors who believe that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred are obligated to discuss the matter with the student(s) involved. Instructors should possess reasonable evidence of academic dishonesty. However, if circumstances prevent consultation with student(s), instructors may take whatever action (subject to student appeal) they deem appropriate.

Instructors who are convinced by the evidence that a student is guilty of academic dishonesty shall assign an appropriate academic penalty. If the instructors believe that the academic dishonesty reflects on the student's academic performance or the academic integrity in a course, the student's grade should be adversely affected. Suggested guidelines for appropriate actions are: an oral reprimand in cases where there is reasonable doubt that the student knew his/her action constituted academic dishonesty; a failing grade on the particular paper, project or examination where the act of dishonesty was unpremeditated, or where there were significant mitigating circumstances; a failing grade in the course where the dishonesty was premeditated or planned. The instructors will file incident reports with the Dean. These reports shall include a description of the alleged incident of academic dishonesty, any relevant documentation, and any recommendations for action that he/she deems appropriate.

Student may appeal any actions taken on charges of academic dishonesty to the "Academic Appeals Board." The Academic Appeals Board shall consist of faculty and at least one student. Individuals may not participate as members of the Academic Appeals Board if they are participants in an appeal. The decision of the Academic Appeals Board will be forwarded to the President of Gratz College, whose decision is final.

## Gratz College Grading

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Performance</b>
A	93-100%	Excellent Work
A-	90-92%	Nearly Excellent Work
B+	87-89%	Very Good Work
B	83-86%	Good Work
B-	80-82%	Mostly Good Work
C+	77-79%	Above Average Work

C	73-76%	Average Work
C-	70-72%	Mostly Average Work
D+	67-69%	Below Average Work
D	60-66%	Poor Work
F	0-59%	Failing Work

For more detailed academic policy information students are encouraged to visit the Gratz College academic catalog.

Once the Moodle section for this course is open students should review any posted materials for more detailed information on this course.

This syllabus is subject to change without notice.