

# Syllabus

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## Description

This [module](#) is also available as a concatenated page, suitable for printing or saving as a PDF for offline viewing.

### **MET CS688**

#### **Web Analytics and Mining**

The Web Analytics and Mining course covers the following areas:

- Web analytics, where data are collected to examine user interaction with a web site. We use Google Analytics as a tool to collect the data and help us analyze it.
- Text mining, which covers the analysis of text including content extraction, string matching, clustering, classification, and recommendation systems.
- Web mining, which studies how web crawlers process and index the content of web sites, how search works, and how results are ranked.
- Practical application domains, which employ the above techniques with social media and online data repositories.

In this course, we will use the R language to do these activities. Please note that use of the R language is required in this class.

## Prerequisites

CS544 (Foundations of Analytics) or CS555 (Data Analysis and Visualization) or equivalent background.

### Technical Notes

The table of contents expands and contracts (+/- sign) and may conceal some pages. To avoid missing content pages, you are advised to use the next/previous page icons in the top right corner of the learning modules.

This course requires you to access files such as word documents, PDFs, and/or media files. These files may open in your browser or be downloaded as files, depending on the settings of your browser.

## Learning Objectives

By successfully completing this course, you will be able to describe and perform/use:

- Web analytics, including metrics, key performance indicators, referrers and visitors, how to identify important pages, and web site visibility.
- Web analytics tools, including using and collecting data with Google Analytics, dimensions and segmentation, flow visualization and navigating reports.
- Text mining, including preprocessing and content extraction, searching and fuzzy string matching, clustering text, classification, categorization, and tagging, and question answering systems.
- Web mining using web crawlers and indexing, searching, precision and recall, and ranking.
- Applications for mining the social web such as Twitter and Reddit.
- Accessing online data repositories, for example, sports, gaming, and weather data.

## Instructor

### Michael Joner, PhD



Boston University  
Metropolitan College  
Computer Science Department

(513) 328-9115 (send a text  
message first before calling)

[mjoner@bu.edu](mailto:mjoner@bu.edu)

Dr. Michael Joner received a Ph.D. in Statistics from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2007. He is a group head in the Data and Modeling Sciences division at Procter & Gamble and a part-time instructor in Computer Science at Boston University Metropolitan College.

Dr. Joner's research areas are in manufacturing and consumer understanding. His work includes control charts and detection of rare events, ensuring adequate process performance in meeting customer and regulatory specifications, and translating consumer needs into objective measurements. He is a past chair of the Statistics Division of the American Society for Quality.

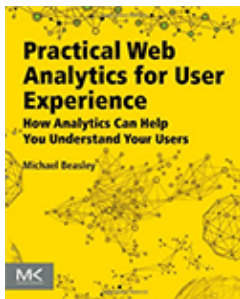
## Materials

### Recommended Books

There are **no required course textbooks** for this class. The lectures will provide you with the necessary information. There will be no reading assignments from the recommended books.

Beasley, M. (2013). *Practical web analytics for user experience: How Analytics can help you understand your users*. Morgan Kaufmann. ISBN 9780124046191.

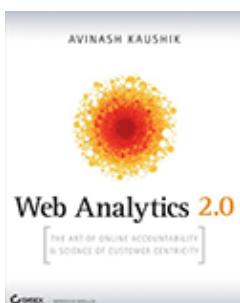
This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).



Ingersoll, G. S., Morton, T. S., & Farris, A. L. (2013). *Taming text: How to find, organize, and manipulate it*. Manning Publications. ISBN 9781933988382.



This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).



Kaushik, A. (2010). *Web analytics 2.0: The art of online accountability & science of customer centricity*. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley. ISBN 9780470529393.

This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).



Russell, M. A. (2013). *Mining the social web* (2nd ed.). O'Reilly. ISBN 9781449367619.

This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).

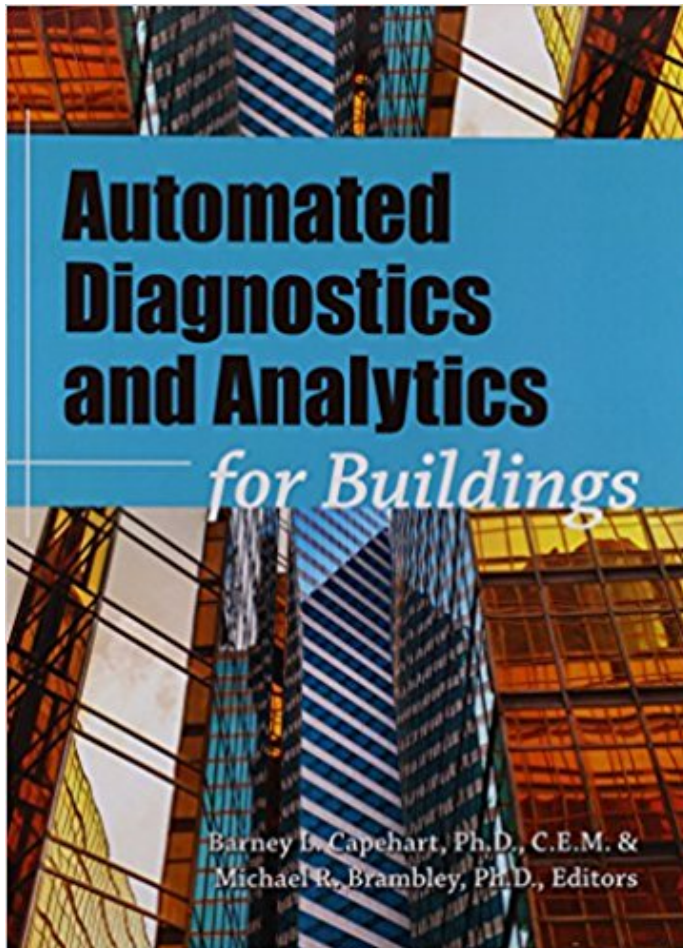


Seif El-Nasr, M., Drachen, A., & Canossa, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Game analytics: Maximizing the value of player data*. Springer. ISBN 9781447147695.

This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).

Barney L. Capehart, Ph.D., C.E.M., Michael R. Brambley, Ph.D. (2014) *Automated Diagnostics and Analytics for Buildings*. Fairmont Press. ISBN: 9781498706117.

This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).



Few S. (2009). *Now You See It: Simple Visualization Techniques for Quantitative Analysis*. Analytics Press. ISBN: 9780970601988.

This book can be purchased from [Barnes and Noble at Boston University](#).

## MathJax

Variables, formulae, and equations in this course are rendered using [MathJax](#).

### Adding Fractions

Adding fractions:  $\frac{a}{b} \pm \frac{c}{d} = \frac{ad \pm cb}{bd}$ , often this is easy to remember.  $a, b, c, d$  do not have to be the following:

To enable its features in your browser, right-click (or ctrl-click on a single-mouse-button Mac) on a variable or equation to see your MathJax settings.

MathJax can be used with the [MathPlayer](#) plugin for Internet Explorer, which converts math to speech and highlights the math as it is spoken.

## Boston University Library Information

Boston University has created a set of videos to help orient you to the online resources at your disposal. An introduction to the series is below:

met\_ode\_library\_14\_sp1\_00\_intro video cannot be displayed here

All of the videos in the series are available on the [Online Library Resources](#) page, which is also accessible from the Campus Bookmarks section of your Online Campus Dashboard. Please feel free to make use of them.

As Boston University students, you have full access to the BU Library. From any computer, you can gain access to anything at the library that is electronically formatted. To connect to the library, use the link <http://www.bu.edu/library>. You may use the library's content whether you are connected through your online course or not, by confirming your status as a BU community member using your Kerberos password.

Once in the library system, you can use the links under “Resources” and “Collections” to find databases, eJournals, and eBooks, as well as search the library by subject. Some other useful links follow:

Go to [Collections](#) to access eBooks and eJournals directly.

If you have questions about library resources, go to [Ask a Librarian](#) to email the library or use the live-chat feature.

To locate course eReserves, go to [Reserves](#).

Please note that you are not to post attachments of the required or other readings in the water cooler or other areas of the course, as it is an infringement on copyright laws and department policy. All students have access to the library system and will need to develop research skills that include how to find articles through library systems and databases.

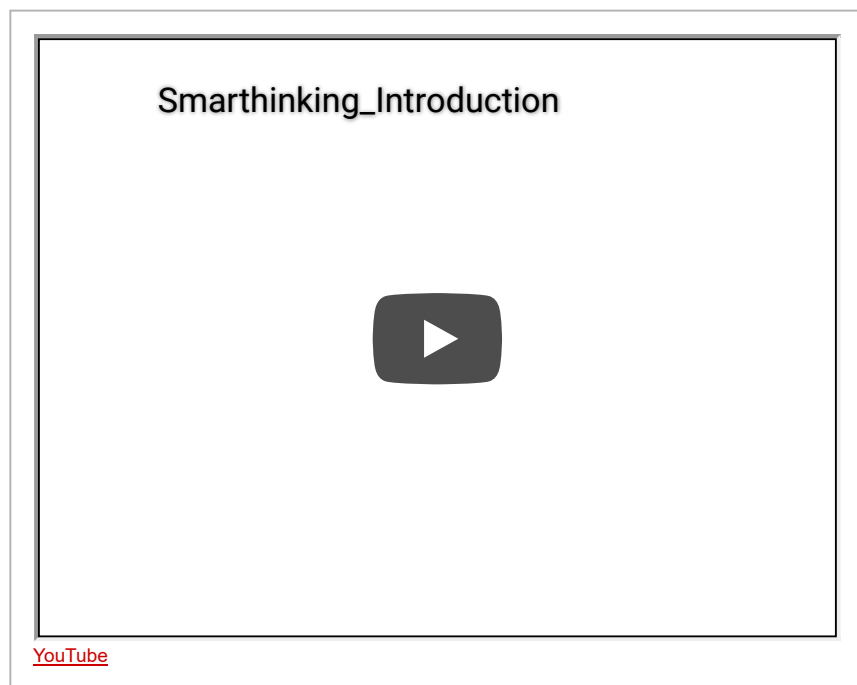
## Free Tutoring Service



Free online tutoring with Smarthinking is available to BU online students for the duration of their courses. The tutors do not rewrite assignments, but instead teach students how to improve their skills in the following areas: writing, math, sciences, business, ESL, and

Word/Excel/PowerPoint.

You can log in directly to Smarthinking from Online Campus by using the link in the left-hand navigation menu of your course.



Please Note

SmarterThinking may be used only for current Boston University online courses and career services. Use of this service for purposes other than current coursework or career services may result in deactivation of your SmarterThinking account.

## Grading Information

### Grading Structure and Distribution

The course grade will be based on active discussion participation (10%), assignments (25%), term project (25%), and final exam (40%). Assignments are expected to be submitted by their respective due dates.

For the assignments and discussions due on Tuesdays at 6am, up to one assignment and one discussion may be submitted as late as Friday at 6am with no penalty. If a second assignment or a second discussion is submitted late, there will be a 5% per day penalty (5% if submitted by Wednesday at 6am, 10% if submitted by Thursday at 6am, and 15% if submitted by Friday at 6am). Work submitted after Friday at 6am will receive no credit. If you believe you have a true emergency and require a deviation from this policy, contact the professor to make alternative arrangements. This will likely involve you receiving a different assignment from the rest of the class.

Overall Grading Percentages	
Discussion participation	10%
Assignments and Module 6 Quiz	25%
Term project	25%
Final Exam	40%

The conversion to a letter grade is based on the following distribution:

100–93.00	A
92.99–90.00	A–
89.99–87.00	B+
86.99–83.00	B
82.99–80.00	B–
79.99–77.00	C+

76.99–73.00	C
72.99–70.00	C–
69.99–60.00	D
Below 60.00	F

## Discussions

The discussion grading rubric below is the guide we use to evaluate your discussion contributions.

Criteria	65–69	70–79	80–89	90–94	95–100
<b>Participation (15%)</b>	Very limited participation	Participation generally lacks frequency or relevance	Reasonably useful relevant participation during the discussion period	Frequently relevant and consistent participation throughout the discussion period	Continually relevant and consistent participation throughout the discussion period
<b>Community (15%)</b>	Mostly indifferent to discussion	Little effort to keep discussions going or provide help	Reasonable effort to respond thoughtfully, provide help, and/or keep discussions going	Often responds thoughtfully in a way that frequently keeps discussions going and provides help	Continually responds thoughtfully in a way that consistently keeps discussions going and provides help
<b>Content (60%)</b>	No useful, on-topic, or interesting information, ideas, or analysis	Hardly any useful, on-topic, or interesting information, ideas, or analysis	Reasonably useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas, and/or analysis	Frequently useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas, and analysis	Exceptionally useful, on-topic, and interesting information, ideas, and analysis
<b>Reflection and Synthesis (10%)</b>	No significant effort to clarify, summarize, or synthesize topics raised in discussions			Contributes to group's effort to clarify, summarize, or synthesize topics raised in discussions	Leads group's effort to clarify, summarize, or synthesize topics raised in discussions

## Assignments and Quiz



Assignments are expected to be submitted by their respective due dates. Late submissions carry the penalties described above. There are specific submission instructions at the end of each homework assignment designed to help you produce readable reports that focus on the most important information and leaving the details for an appendix. Facilitators can deduct up to 20% if you don't follow the submission instructions. If you are uncertain about your submission, please ask your facilitator.

Due dates will be indicated for each assignment in the assignments section of the course and in the Study Guide. If, for any reason, you are unable to meet any assignment deadline, contact the professor and your facilitator. All times mentioned in the course (unless otherwise specified) are in Eastern Time. Extensions may be granted for assignments, though only under mitigating circumstances. No credit can be given for homework assignments submitted after homework solutions are reviewed.

In Module 6, your assignment is shorter (only 50 points), but you will also have a 5-question multiple choice quiz called Module 6 Quiz (also 50 points). Thus in Module 6 you still have 100 points that will count toward your assignment grade.

- Where to access all assignments and Module 6 Quiz: Assignments section in the left-side course menu.

## Term Project

In the term project you will be able to choose one of several projects and apply the principles in this course to data that you choose (within the parameters of the project). Some of the projects will help reinforce concepts from earlier in the course; some of the projects will help you see how the different modules (for example Module 3 and Module 5) relate to each other; and some of the projects will require you to discover and implement material beyond what is presented in the modules. Again, you will be allowed to choose the project that you will do for the class. Check out the [term project direction](#).

## Final Exam

There will be a proctored Final Exam in this course.

The final exam will be three hours long and will be comprised of multiple-choice and multiple-answer questions, and a coding section.

Detailed instructions regarding your proctored exam will be forthcoming from the Assessment Administrator. You will be responsible for scheduling your own appointment.

## Study Guide

### Module 1 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: Discussion 1 postings end Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 AM ET

Assignments: Assignment 1 due Tuesday, March 24 at 6:00 AM ET

Live • Tuesday, March 17 at 9:00 – 10:15

Classroom: PM ET

- Thursday, March 19 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Module 2 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: Discussion 2 postings end Tuesday, March 31 at 6:00 AM ET

Assignments: Assignment 2 due Tuesday, March 31 at 6:00 AM ET

Live • Tuesday, March 24 at 9:00 – 10:15

Classroom: PM ET

- Thursday, March 26 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Module 3 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: Discussion 3 postings end Tuesday, April 7 at 6:00 AM ET

Assignments: Assignment 3 due Tuesday, April 7 at 6:00 AM ET

Live • Tuesday, March 31 at 9:00 – 10:15

Classroom: PM ET

- Thursday, April 2 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Module 4 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: Discussion 4 postings end Tuesday, April 14 at 6:00 AM ET

Assignments: Assignment 4 due Tuesday, April 14 at 6:00 AM ET

Live • Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM

Classroom: ET

- Thursday, April 14 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Module 5 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: Discussion 5 postings end Tuesday, April 21 at 6:00 AM ET

Assignments: Assignment 5 due Tuesday, April 21 at 6:00 AM ET

Live Classroom:

- Tuesday, April 14 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET
- Thursday, April 16 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Module 6 Study Guide and Deliverables

Readings: Lecture material

Discussions: No Discussion.

Assignments:

- Assignment 6 and Quiz 6 due Tuesday, April 28 at 6:00 AM ET
- Term Project Written Report due Tuesday, April 28 at 6:00 AM ET
- Term Project Oral Presentation scheduled between April 28 and May 1

Live Classroom:

- Tuesday, April 21 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET
- Thursday, April 23 at 9:00 – 10:15 PM ET

## Final Exam Details

The Final Exam is a proctored exam available from **April 29 at 6:00 AM ET to May 2 at 11:59 PM ET.**

The Computer Science department requires that all final exams be administered using an online proctoring service called Examity that you will access via your course in Blackboard. Detailed instructions regarding your proctored exam will be forthcoming from the Assessment Administrator. You will be responsible for scheduling your own appointment within the defined exam window.

The Final Exam is accessible only during the final exam period. You can access it from the Assessments section of the course. Your proctor will enter the password to start the exam.

Final Exam Duration: three hours.

It is an open-book exam and any printed materials including electronic versions of textbooks and lecture module PDFs are allowed. This includes the blackboard course content.

## Academic Conduct Policy

Please visit Metropolitan College's website for the full text of the department's [Academic Conduct Code](#).

### A Definition of Plagiarism

“The academic counterpart of the bank embezzler and of the manufacturer who mislabels products is the plagiarist: the student or scholar who leads readers to believe that what they are reading is the original work of the writer when it is not. If it could be assumed that the distinction between plagiarism and honest use of sources is perfectly clear in everyone’s mind, there would be no need for the explanation that follows; merely the warning with which this definition concludes would be enough. But it is apparent that sometimes people of goodwill draw the suspicion of guilt upon themselves (and, indeed, are guilty) simply because they are not aware of the illegitimacy of certain kinds of “borrowing” and of the procedures for correct identification of materials other than those gained through independent research and reflection.”

“The spectrum is a wide one. At one end there is a word-for-word copying of another’s writing without enclosing the copied passage in quotation marks and identifying it in a footnote, both of which are necessary. (This includes, of course, the copying of all or any part of another student’s paper.) It hardly seems possible that anyone of college age or more could do that without clear intent to deceive. At the other end there is the almost casual slipping in of a particularly apt term which one has come across in reading and which so aptly expresses one’s opinion that one is tempted to make it personal property.”

“Between these poles there are degrees and degrees, but they may be roughly placed in two groups. Close to outright and blatant deceit-but more the result, perhaps, of laziness than of bad intent-is the patching together of random jottings made in the course of reading, generally without careful identification of their source, and then woven into the text, so that the result is a mosaic of other people’s ideas and words, the writer’s sole contribution being the cement to hold the pieces together. Indicative of more effort and, for that reason, somewhat closer to honest, though still dishonest, is the paraphrase, and abbreviated (and often skillfully prepared) restatement of someone else’s analysis or conclusion, without acknowledgment that another person’s text has been the basis for the recapitulation.”

The paragraphs above are from H. Martin and R. Ohmann, *The Logic and Rhetoric of Exposition, Revised Edition*. Copyright 1963, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

## Academic Conduct Code

### I. Philosophy of Discipline

The objective of Boston University in enforcing academic rules is to promote a community atmosphere in which learning can best take place. Such an atmosphere can be maintained only so long as every student believes that his or her academic competence is being judged fairly and that he or she will not be put at a disadvantage because of someone else's dishonesty. Penalties should be carefully determined so as to be no more and no less than required to maintain the desired atmosphere. In defining violations of this code, the intent is to protect the integrity of the educational process.

### II. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic accomplishments, or impedes other students' opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work. Knowingly allowing others to represent your work as their own is as serious an offense as submitting another's work as your own.

### III. Violations of this Code

Violations of this code comprise attempts to be dishonest or deceptive in the performance of academic work in or out of the classroom, alterations of academic records, alterations of official data on paper or electronic resumes, or unauthorized collaboration with another student or students. Violations include, but are not limited to:

- A. **Cheating on examination.** Any attempt by a student to alter his or her performance on an examination in violation of that examination's stated or commonly understood ground rules.
- B. **Plagiarism.** Representing the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. Plagiarism can consist of acts of commission-appropriating the words or ideas of another-or omission failing to acknowledge/document/credit the source or creator of words or ideas (see below for a detailed definition of plagiarism). It also includes colluding with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution, using audio or video footage that comes from another source (including work done by another student) without permission and acknowledgement of that source.
- C. **Misrepresentation or falsification of data** presented for surveys, experiments, reports, etc., which includes but is not limited to: citing authors that do not exist; citing interviews that never took place, or field work that was not completed.
- D. **Theft of an examination.** Stealing or otherwise discovering and/or making known to others the contents of an examination that has not yet been administered.
- E. **Unauthorized communication during examinations.** Any unauthorized communication may be considered prima facie evidence of cheating.
- F. **Knowingly allowing another student to represent your work as his or her own.** This includes providing a copy of your paper or laboratory report to another student without the explicit permission of the instructor(s).

- G. **Forgery, alteration, or knowing misuse of graded examinations, quizzes, grade lists, or official records of documents**, including but not limited to transcripts from any institution, letters of recommendation, degree certificates, examinations, quizzes, or other work after submission.
- H. **Theft or destruction of examinations or papers** after submission.
- I. **Submitting the same work in more than one course** without the consent of instructors.
- J. **Altering or destroying another student's work or records**, altering records of any kind, removing materials from libraries or offices without consent, or in any way interfering with the work of others so as to impede their academic performance.
- K. **Violation of the rules governing teamwork**. Unless the instructor of a course otherwise specifically provides instructions to the contrary, the following rules apply to teamwork: 1. No team member shall intentionally restrict or inhibit another team member's access to team meetings, team work-in-progress, or other team activities without the express authorization of the instructor. 2. All team members shall be held responsible for the content of all teamwork submitted for evaluation as if each team member had individually submitted the entire work product of their team as their own work.
- L. **Failure to sit in a specifically assigned seat during examinations**.
- M. **Conduct in a professional field assignment that violates the policies and regulations of the host school or agency**.
- N. **Conduct in violation of public law occurring outside the University that directly affects the academic and professional status of the student, after civil authorities have imposed sanctions**.
- O. **Attempting improperly to influence the award of any credit, grade, or honor**.
- P. **Intentionally making false statements to the Academic Conduct Committee or intentionally presenting false information to the Committee**.
- Q. **Failure to comply with the sanctions imposed under the authority of this code**.

## Important Message on Final Exams

Dear Boston University Computer Science Online Student,

As part of our ongoing efforts to maintain the high academic standard of all Boston University programs, including our online MSCIS degree program, the Computer Science Department at Boston University's Metropolitan College requires that each of the online courses includes a proctored final examination.

By requiring proctored finals, we are ensuring the excellence and fairness of our program. The final exam is administered online.

Specific information regarding final-exam scheduling will be provided approximately two weeks into the course. This early notification is being given so that you will have enough time to plan for where you will take the final exam.

I know that you recognize the value of your Boston University degree and that you will support the efforts of the University to maintain the highest standards in our online degree program.

Thank you very much for your support with this important issue.

Regards,

Professor Lou Chitkushev, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
Boston University Metropolitan College

## Who's Who: Roles and Responsibilities

You will meet many BU people in this course and program. Some of these people you will meet online, and some you will communicate with by email and telephone. There are many people behind the scenes, too, including instructional designers, faculty who assist with course preparation, and video and animation specialists.

### People in Your Online Course in Addition to Your Fellow Students

**Your Facilitator.** Our classes are divided into small groups, and each group has its own facilitator. We carefully select and train our facilitators for their expertise in the subject matter and their excellence in teaching. Your facilitator is responsible for stimulating discussions in pedagogically useful areas, for answering your questions, and for grading homework assignments, discussions, term projects, and any manually graded quiz or final-exam questions. If you ask your facilitator a question by email, you should get a response within 24 hours, and usually faster. If you need a question answered urgently, post your question to one of the urgent help topics, where everyone can see it and answer it.

**Your Professor.** The professor for your course has primary responsibility for the course. If you have any questions that your facilitator doesn't answer quickly and to your satisfaction, then send your professor an email in the course, with a cc to your facilitator so that your facilitator is aware of your question and your professor's response.

**Your Lead Faculty and Student Support Administrator, Jennifer Sullivan.** Jen is here to ensure you have a positive online experience. You will receive emails and announcements from Jen throughout the semester. Jen represents Boston University's university services and works for the Office of Distance Education. She prepares students for milestones such as course launch, final exams, and course evaluations. She is a resource to both students and faculty. For example, Jen can direct your university questions and concerns to the appropriate party. She also handles general questions regarding Online Campus functionality for students, faculty, and facilitators, but she does not provide tech support. She is enrolled in all classes and can be contacted within the course through Online Campus email as it is running. You can also contact her by external email at [jensul@bu.edu](mailto:jensul@bu.edu) or call (617) 358-1978.

### People Not in Your Online Course

Although you will not normally encounter the following people in your online course, they are central to the program. You may receive emails or phone calls from them, and you should feel free to contact them.

**Your Computer Science Department Online Program Coordinator, Peter Mirza.** Peter administers the academic aspects of the program, including admissions and registration. You can ask him questions about the program, registration, course offerings, graduation, or any other program-related topic. He can be reached at [metcsol@bu.edu](mailto:metcsol@bu.edu) or (617) 353-2566.

**Your Computer Science Department Program Manager, Kim Richards.** Kim is responsible for administering most aspects of the Computer Science Department. You can reach Kim at [kimrich@bu.edu](mailto:kimrich@bu.edu) or (617) 353-2566.

**Andrew Gorlin, Academic Advisor.** Reviews requests for transfer credits and waivers. Advises students on which courses to take to meet their career goals .You can reach Andrew at [asgorlin@bu.edu](mailto:asgorlin@bu.edu), or (617)-353-2566.

**Professor Anatoly Temkin, Computer Science Department Chairman.** You can reach Professor Temkin at [temkin@bu.edu](mailto:temkin@bu.edu) or at 617-353-2566.

**Professor Lou T. Chitkushev, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Metropolitan College.** Dr. Chitkushev is responsible for the academic programs of Metropolitan College. Contact Professor Chitkushev with any issues that you feel have not been addressed adequately. The customary issue-escalation sequence after your course facilitator and course faculty is Professor Temkin, and then Professor Chitkushev.

**Professor Tanya Zlateva, Metropolitan College Dean** Dr. Zlateva is responsible for the quality of all the academic programs at Boston University Metropolitan College.

## Disability Services

In accordance with University policy, every effort will be made to accommodate unique and special needs of students with respect to speech, hearing, vision, or other disabilities. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation for a documented disability should contact [Disability & Access Services](#) at (617) 353-3658 or at [access@bu.edu](mailto:access@bu.edu) for review and approval of accommodation requests.

## Netiquette

The Office of Distance Education has produced a netiquette guide to help you understand the potential impact of your communication style.

Before posting to any discussion forum, sending email, or participating in any course or public area, please consider the following:



### Ask Yourself...

- How would I say this in a face-to-face classroom or if writing for a newspaper, public blog, or wiki?
- How would I feel if I were the reader?
- How might my comment impact others?
- Am I being respectful?
- Is this the appropriate area or forum to post what I have to say?

## Writing

When you are writing, please follow these rules:



- **Stay polite and positive in your communications.** You can and should disagree and participate in discussions with vigor; however, when able, be constructive with your comments.
- **Proofread your comments before you post them.** Remember that your comments are permanent.
- **Pay attention to your tone.** Without the benefit of facial expressions and body language, your intended tone or the meaning of the message can be misconstrued.
- **Be thoughtful and remember that classmates' experience levels may vary.** You may want to include background information that is not obvious to all readers.
- **Stay on message.** When adding to existing messages, try to maintain the theme of the comments previously posted. If you want to change the topic, simply start another thread rather than disrupt the current conversation.
- **When appropriate, cite sources.** When referencing the work or opinions of others, make sure to use correct citations.

## Reading

When you are reading your peers' communication, consider the following:

- **Respect people's privacy.** Don't assume that information shared with you is public; your peers may not want personal information shared. Please check with them before sharing their information.
- **Be forgiving of other students' and instructors' mistakes.** There are many reasons for typos and misinterpretations. Be gracious and forgive other's mistakes or privately point them out politely.
- **If a comment upsets or offends you, reread it and/or take some time before responding.**

### Important Note

Don't hesitate to let your instructor or your faculty and student support administrator know if you feel others are inappropriately commenting in any forum.

All Boston University students are required to follow academic and behavioral conduct codes. Failure to comply with these conduct codes may result in disciplinary action.

## Registration Information and Important Dates

[View the drop dates for your course.](#)

[Withdraw or drop your course.](#)

- If you are dropping down to zero credits for a semester, please contact your college or academic department.
- **Nonparticipation in your online course does not constitute a withdrawal from the class.**
- If you are unable to drop yourself on Student Link, please contact your college or academic department.

## Technical Support

### Experiencing Issues with BU Websites or Blackboard?

It may be a system-wide problem. Check the BU Information Services & Technology (IS&T) [news page](#) for announcements.

Boston University technical support is available via email ([ithelp@bu.edu](mailto:ithelp@bu.edu)), the [support form](#), and phone (617-353-4357). Please note that the IT Help Center has multiple locations. All locations can be reached through the previously mentioned methods. For IT Help Center hours of operation, please visit their [contact page](#). For other times, you may still submit a support request via email, phone, or the support form, but your question won't receive a response until the following day. If you aren't calling, it is highly recommended that you submit your support request via the technical-support form, as this provides the IS&T Help Center with the best information in order to resolve your issue as quickly as possible.

Examples of issues you might want to request support for include the following:

- Problems viewing or listening to sound or video files
- Problems accessing internal messages
- Problems viewing or posting comments
- Problems attaching or uploading files for assignments or discussions
- Problems accessing or submitting an assessment

To ensure the fastest possible response, please fill out the online form using the link below:

IT Help Center Support
617-353-4357 or <a href="#">Web</a>
Check your open tickets using <a href="#">BU's ticketing system</a> .

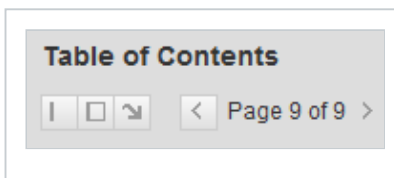
## Navigating Courses

For best results when navigating courses, it is recommended that you use the Mozilla [Firefox](#) browser.

The Table of Contents may contain folders. These folders open and close (+ and – signs) and may conceal some pages. To avoid missing content pages, you are advised to use the next- and previous-page buttons (and icons) in the top-right corner of the learning content.

Please also familiarize yourself with the navigation tools, as shown below; these allow you to show and hide both the Course Menu and the Table of Contents on the left. This will be helpful for freeing up screen space when moving through the weekly lecture materials.

Navigation tools for the Table of Contents are shown in the image below:



Clicking the space between the Course Menu and the Table of Contents allows you to show or hide the Course Menu on the left:



## Web Resources/Browser Plug-Ins

To view certain media elements in this course, you will need to have several browser plug-in applications installed on your computer. See the Course Resources page in the syllabus of each individual course for other specific software requirements.

- Check your computer's compatibility by reviewing Blackboard's [System Requirements](#)
- Check your browser settings with Blackboard's [Connection Test](#)
- Download most recent version of [Adobe Flash Player](#)
- Download most recent version of [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

## How to Clear Your Browser Cache

The IT Help Center recommends that you periodically [clear your browser cache](#) to ensure that you are viewing the most current content, particularly after course or system updates.

This page is also found within the "How to..." section of the [online documentation](#), which contains a list of some of the most common tasks in Blackboard Learn.

**Boston University** Metropolitan College