

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Information Systems  
with effect from Semester A 2018 / 2019**

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**Part I Course Overview**

**Course Title:** Search Engine Optimization

**Course Code:** IS4340

**Course Duration:** One Semester (13 weeks)

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** B4

**Proposed Area:**  
*(for GE courses only)*

Arts and Humanities  
 Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations  
 Science and Technology

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Medium of Assessment:** English

**Prerequisites:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Precursors:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Equivalent Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

**Exclusive Courses:**  
*(Course Code and Title)* Nil

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

(A 150-word description about the course)

Search engines like Google and Baidu are part of our daily life today. Search engine optimization (SEO) is playing an important role for any business and government services to be discovered and used on the Internet. Upon completion of this course, you will be able to optimize web pages and their contents for higher ranking. Search engine optimization algorithms will be discussed via practical examples in the class. Students can thus build a career in online content development and optimization, including optimizing for specific audiences, conducting search-focused website audits, and aligning SEO with company strategies. Students will also apply the knowledge and skills learned in the class to optimize company websites in the real world.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs <sup>#</sup>	Weighting* (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	Classify and exemplify different tactics of search engine optimization and how they can be used in business and other organizations.	20%	✓		
2.	Demonstrate the attitude and ability to discover search engine optimization practice skills and mechanisms to evaluate, adapt and measure the search engine result pages (SERP) for the achievement of personal and/or organizational search results.	30%	✓	✓	
3.	Work effectively as a team to design effective search keywords, phrases, tags and landing pages to optimize the online presence and searchable results of websites.	30%		✓	✓
4.	Demonstrate the attitude and ability to discover business situations concerning the impact and challenges brought about by search engine optimization for business purposes.	20%	✓	✓	
		100%			

\* If weighting is assigned to CILOs, they should add up to 100%.

<sup>#</sup> Please specify the alignment of CILOs to the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning outcomes (PILOs) in Section A of Annex.

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(TLAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.				Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	
TLA1. Lecture	History, concepts and applications of search engine optimization in the context of business activities such as search engine result pages, keywords design and classification and tags management are explained. Lectures will be in different formats, e.g., classroom lecture, interview and panel discussion.	✓	✓	✓	✓	Seminar: 3 Hours/Week
TLA2. Tutorial	Tutorial exercises related to search engine optimization and their application for business problems will be given. Course participants analyse the requirements for successful application of search engine optimization and identify appropriate strategy and tactics of search engine optimization.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
TLA3. Practical	Students will design search keywords, phrases, tags and landing strategy for business problems and will set up conversion goals for online business.		✓	✓	✓	
TLA4. Case Analysis	Students will be required to critically analyze written or multimedia cases demonstrating successful and less successful application of search engine optimization. Students then will formulate critical response and offer best practice management suggestions.		✓		✓	
TLA5. Online Discussion	Students will use online media such as discussion forums, text chatroom, video chatroom, weblogs, or wikis to self-reflect on their learning and share their insights with classmates. They can also use this medium for Q&A with an online tutor.	✓	✓	✓	✓	

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.				Weighting*	Remarks
	1	2	3	4		
Continuous Assessment: <u>60%</u>						
<b>AT1. Tutorial Exercises and Online Discussion:</b> Each weekly learning unit contains exercises, small group discussions, self-reflection, or student presentations/demonstrations to assess students' understanding of the chosen topics and their abilities to apply their skills. It also includes online comments with which students report key learning, self-reflection, and related concepts found online.	✓	✓	✓	✓	20%	

<b>AT2. Individual Assignment:</b> An individual assignment which lets students analyze a business problem and develop a solution related to the use of search engine optimization in business and organizational practice.		✓		✓	20%	
<b>AT3. Group Project:</b> A group project, which includes a project report and video presentation, will be allocated to let students demonstrate their ability of search engine optimization design and application.		✓	✓	✓	20%	
Examination: 40% (duration: one 2-hour exam)						
<b>AT4. Examination:</b> An examination to examine the students' ongoing learning and understanding of the subject matter.	✓	✓		✓	40%	
					100%	

\* The weightings should add up to 100%.

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Assessment Task (AT)	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
AT1. Tutorial Exercises and Online Discussion	Ability to classify and exemplify different tactics of search engine optimization and how they can be used in business and other organizations.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Capability to discover search engine optimization practice skills and mechanisms to evaluate, adapt and measure the search engine result page (SERP) for the achievement of personal and/or organizational search results.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Ability to work effectively as a team to design effective search keywords, phrases, tags and landing pages to optimize the online presence and searchable results of websites.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Capability to discover business situations concerning the impact and challenges brought about by search engine optimization for business purposes.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

AT2. Individual Assignment	Capability to discover search engine optimization practice skills and mechanisms to evaluate, adapt and measure the search engine result page (SERP) for the achievement of personal and/or organizational search results.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Capability to discover business situations concerning the impact and challenges brought about by search engine optimization for business purposes.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT3. Group Project	Capability to discover search engine optimization practice skills and mechanisms to evaluate, adapt and measure the search engine result page (SERP) for the achievement of personal and/or organizational search results.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Ability to work effectively as a team to design effective search keywords, phrases, tags and landing pages to optimize the online presence and searchable results of websites.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Capability to discover business situations concerning the impact and challenges brought about by search engine optimization for business purposes.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT4. Examination	Ability to classify and exemplify different tactics of search engine optimization and how they can be used in business and other organizations.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
	Capability to discover search engine optimization practice skills and mechanisms to evaluate, adapt and measure the search engine result page (SERP) for the achievement of personal and/or organizational search results.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

	Capability to discover business situations concerning the impact and challenges brought about by search engine optimization for business purposes.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
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**Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

**1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

Search Engine Optimization (SEO); Off-page SEO; On-page SEO; Keywords; Search behavior; SEO and social media; Mobile-friendly SEO; Metrics for SEO Success.

**2. Reading List**

**2.1 Compulsory Readings**

*(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)*

1.	<u>The Art of SEO Mastering Search Engine Optimization</u> , 3/e, Eric Enge, Stephan Spencer, Jessie Stricchiola, ISBN-13: 978-1491948965, O Reilly, 2015.
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**2.2 Additional Readings**

*(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)*

1.	Adam Clarke, <u>SEO 2016 Learn Search Engine Optimization With Smart Internet Marketing Strategies: Learn SEO with smart internet marketing strategies</u> , ISBN-13: 978-1515345671, Digital Book Guru.
2.	Jason McDonald, SEO Fitness Workbook: 2016 Edition: <u>The Seven Steps to Search Engine Optimization Success on Google</u> , JM Internet Group, 2016.