# Designing a Lecture Course on Wikipedia and Wiki Technologies

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Photo: Grigor Gatchev, Wikimedia Commons

#### Introduction

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- Bulgarian Wikipedia:
  - Established in December 2003
  - Language speakers: ~ 9.1 mln people
  - #34 by number of articles (119 000+)
  - #21 by speakers per article (76.50)
  - #27 by edits per article (28.76)
  - #12 by sample of articles
- University wikiprojects in BG WP:
  - Organized as of Fall 2007/2008
  - In 3 Bulgarian universities
  - In 5 different subjects



Map: NuclearVacuum Wikimedia Common

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• Title: "Wikipedia and Wiki Technologies" (elective)

NB! This is the first university lecture course in Bulgaria especially devoted to studying Wikipedia and wikis.

- Lecturer: Vassia Atanassova (User:Spiritia)
- Duration: The 3 trimesters of the 2011/2012 academic year, 10 weeks per trimester, 4 hours per week
- Students: Open to all students in Maths and Computer science, 2-4 grade, 30 students per trimester



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 Host institution: Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"





Map: Petko Yotov, Wikimedia Commons Logo: © Plovdiv University Photo: Vassia Atanassova, Wikimedia Commons

# Designing the lecture course

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- Theoretical pedagogic foundations from the book "Design of a University Lecture Course" by Dr. Roumiana Peytcheva-Forsyth (in Bulgarian)
- Studying a number of research papers on the role of wikis in education
- Research of existing syllabi, mainly
  - http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Wikipedia/syllabi
  - "Using Wikipedia as a teaching tool: Sample syllabus"
- Public consultation with other editors from BG WP
- Our own experience ©



## Goals and objectives

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- Goals of the course:
  - To build an in-depth understanding of the philosophy and technology of wikis, and especially of Wikimedia.
  - To promote contribution and positive attitude to Wikimedia within a promising target group.
  - To present the opportunities of applying wiki technology in other contexts, relevant to the students.
- Objectives:
  - To discuss contemporary problems and trends within Wikimedian community.
  - To facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills
    needed for more efficient use of wikis and Wikipedia

# Expected competences

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#### Knowledge:

- the key principles and policies of Wikipedia,
- the main rules for editing and organizing the Wikipedia content,
- the specifics of the free content, free software and free licenses used over the Internet,
- the criteria of notability of subjects in Wikipedia articles
- the criteria of text and multimedia encyclopedic content.



# Expected competences

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#### Skills:

- to freely navigate and use all functionalities of wikis,
- to adequately use and cite Wikipedia as a source of information in the rest of their studies and work,
- to critically evaluate their sources of information,
- to express themselves in an encyclopedic style,
- to create, edit, format wiki pages, use texts, tables, multimedia, templates, etc.,
- to install, configure and administrate a wiki website.



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#### Topic #1: Introduction

- Encyclopedias definition, overview, history of worldwide and Bulgarian encyclopedias.
- Wikipedia as an encyclopedia and a voluntary community. Philosophy and technology of wiki. History of Wikipedia. Sister projects of the Wikimedia Foundation.



- Navigation. Elements from the interface, namespaces, search, recent changes.
- Account registration. Preferences. Personal user space.

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- Topic #2: Edit mode and wiki mark-up
  - Editable namespaces.
  - Read mode and edit mode, menus, page history, watchlist. Minor edit, edit summary, preview, show changes.
  - Sections, bold, italic, indent, bulleted and enumerated list, table of contents box. Links, categories, interwikis.
  - Citing sources.
  - Moving and redirecting pages.



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#### Topic #3: Principles of writing in Wikipedia

- Verifiability, Neutral point of view, no original research, biographies of living people.
- Notability criteria.
- Specifics of the encyclopedia style of writing:
  - content structuring,
  - admissible verb tenses,
  - no temporary expressions,
  - impersonal expression,
  - no peacock and weasel words,

- punctuation,
- stay on topic,
- provide context,
- make omissions explicit.



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- Topic #4: Copyright and legal issues
  - Copyright issues. Free software and free licenses. Public domain, fair use, freedom of panorama.



- Wikimedia licensing policy for texts and multimedia.
- Terms of use and terms of contribution.
- Translations from other Wikipedias and external sources





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#### Topic #5: Wiki etiquette and psychology

- Communication and interaction.
  Assume good faith, Civility,
  Consensus, Conflict resolution.
- Psychology of the wiki community.
  Inclusionism, deletionism,
  immediatism, eventualism, etc.
- Article / user talk pages, Village Pump.

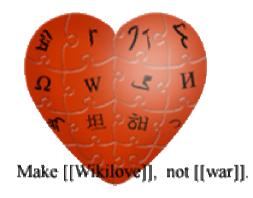


Illustration: Barracocco, Wikimedia Commons

Guest lecturer: A fellow wikipedian sharing experience with privacy issues, and vandals, trolls and spammers.

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- Topic #6: Multimedia
  - Criteria for encyclopedic illustration
  - Policies in Wikimedia Commons.
    Licensing (again ☺).
  - Creation and sharing of multimedia.
    EXIF data.



Extensive hands-on practice. Visit of a museum and/or a public event and taking photos to illustrate articles in Wikipedia.



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- Topic #7: Organization of the information.
  - Organization of the information in categories, lists and templates. Wikiprojects and portals.
  - Types of templates, types of parameters.
    Transclusion and substitution. Parser functions.
  - Special pages and logs.
  - MediaWiki namespace. Translation and localization of interface messages.



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- Topic #8: User groups and rights
  - Main user groups: Anonymous users, autoconfirmed editors, administrators, bureaucrats, bots.
  - Main administrative rights:
    Protection, blocking, deletion.
  - Other user groups and rights.







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Topic #9: Wikis beyond Wikipedia

- Wikimedia sister projects.
- Applications of wiki websites in business and education.
- Wikia.com.
- MediaWiki and other wiki distributions.

- Topic #10: Installation
  - Installation of a MediaWiki website.
  - Configuration with selected extensions





#### Conclusion

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• The lecture course is elective, so we expect that it will be mostly attended by interested and motivated listeners.

 This academic experience will be a chance for Bulgarian Wikipedia to get an invaluable feedback from users, as well as turn these into fresh and well trained contributors.



#### Conclusion

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 Related publicity activities can draw positive attention from the academic circles and media.

 After the full academic year we will share the results and the good practices with the members of the Wikimedia Outreach.





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# Thank you for your attention!

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