

## CMPLXSYS 530: Computer Modeling of Complex Systems Winter 2020

### Course time & location

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4pm - 5:30pm  
Weiser 747

### Instructor information

Prof. Marisa Eisenberg (she/her)

Email: [marisae@umich.edu](mailto:marisae@umich.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2pm – 4pm

Office locations:

- 711 Weiser Hall (I will mostly be here for office hours)
- 5166 SPH II (I will send an email to the class if we're meeting here for office hours)

Course website: <https://epimath.github.io/cscs-530-materials/>

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### Course Overview

This course will offer an introduction to using computational approaches to explore and model complex systems. Its primary purpose will be teaching you how to develop and analyze your own agent-based models (ABMs). In the course of pursuing this goal, we will touch on several other subject areas such as networks, cellular automata, basic probability distributions and statistics, a number of topics from computer programming, and a review of important ABM papers. In order to give you the technical skills required to build your own ABM, this course will focus on developing your competency in two programming languages/platforms: NetLogo and Python.

This course will not be focusing on formal mathematical models of complex systems such as equation-based models of dynamical systems or other approaches often focused on in standard engineering and introductory modeling courses. If you expect that the systems in which you are interested might be better captured by such models, definitely take some time to consider if this is the course for you.

The goal of this class is that by the end of the semester, you will have developed and analyzed an ABM of your own that will be useful to you in your future research.

### Prerequisites

Prior coursework in Complex Systems is not required for this course, but hopefully you are coming in with some significant interest in the field. Some prior experience with at least beginner-level programming and basic statistical and math concepts is *strongly* encouraged. Having said that, the usual expectation for this class is that students will be coming in with a wide range of experience in these areas, so we will consequently be starting with the basics and then quickly working up to more advanced material. As such, even if you are coming in with only a bit of background, you should still be able to succeed in this class if you are willing to put in the effort. The payoff for doing so will be leaving this course with both your own ABM and an extremely useful new set of skills!

## Course Components

Class Participation – 20%

Homework/Labs – 40%

Course Project (presentation and term paper) – 40%

## Classroom Expectations/Format

The course will consist of lectures, group discussions, and/or computer laboratory exercises, with approximately 1.5 hours per week spent on lab and 1.5 hours per week spent on lecture and discussion.

## Readings

Readings will consist of selected articles and chapters primarily from the following textbooks:

- *Introduction to the Modeling and Analysis of Complex Systems* by Hiroki Sayama (<http://textbooks.opensuny.org/introduction-to-the-modeling-and-analysis-of-complex-systems/>)
- *Think Complexity* by Allen Downey (<http://greenteapress.com/wp/think-complexity/>)
- *Think Python* by Allen Downey (<http://greenteapress.com/wp/think-python/>)
- *An Introduction to Agent-Based Modeling* by Uri Wilensky and William Rand (digital version available via UMich Library)

Additional readings will be posted on the course website.