
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**Innovations in Distance Learning**
EDIT 611 201

Instructor: Dr. Shahron Williams van Rooij
Class Date/Time/Location: Course meets online via Blackboard
08/25/2008 – 12/06/2008

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will explore the latest innovations in e-learning technologies and environments as well as the theoretical issues central to e-learning. The course will cover online learning environments including, but not limited to, online learning communities, communication and sharing tools, content creation tools, and communities of practice. Hands-on activities with these technologies focus on planning, implementation, and evaluation. Students will research and present various emerging e-learning applications and how new approaches to learning can be integrated into today's K-12 and postsecondary education and training environments. Issues of target audience, design, and usability will also be addressed. Students will also work in teams to design and implement e-Learning modules using one or more of the tools explored during the course.

ENTRY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The content of this course assumes a basic knowledge of the principles and best practices of Instructional Design. To be successful in this course, students should have either taken EDIT 705 (Instructional Design) or have work experience that includes the basics of Instructional Design. Students should also possess basic computer skills (e.g., Internet search skills, MS Office).

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

This course will be delivered online using an **asynchronous** (not "real time") format via the Blackboard course management system, with selected synchronous ("real time") sessions via Adobe Connect. The course will utilize a combination of readings, lectures, hands-on experiences, research activities, threaded discussions, reflections and projects to help participants understand the strengths and limitations of current e-learning technologies, as well as the likely evolution of e-learning.

To participate in this course, students will need the following resources:

- Internet access (Mozilla Firefox , Netscape Communicator or older versions of Internet Explorer (anything **prior** to version 7.0 works well with Blackboard)
- GMU e-mail account
- Blackboard account (go to <http://courses.gmu.edu> to review system requirements for running Blackboard from your home or workplace)

- Headset microphone to use the Voice-over IP (VoIP) in Adobe Connect

Students will be given authorization to access to the course by the instructor. To access the course, go to the Blackboard login page at <http://courses.gmu.edu>. Your GMU e-mail user name is also your Blackboard ID and your GMU e-mail password is also your Blackboard password.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Differentiate among the terms e-learning, distance learning, distance education, distributed learning, blended/hybrid learning, and synchronous vs. asynchronous learning.
- Describe current leading edge programs in e-learning in K-12 settings, postsecondary education, corporate and government training environments.
- Discuss the ways in which teaching and learning across barriers of distance and time are similar to – and different from – face-to-face instruction.
- Demonstrate proficiency in using various commercial and open source interactive media (wikis, blogs, synchronous multi-user environments, groupware, and interactive presentation media), instructional delivery management systems and applications.
- Apply effective instructional design for various interactive media, instructional frameworks and applications.
- Experience how each medium for interacting across distance shapes the cognitive, affective and social dimensions of learning and indicate the range of individual responses to these media.
- Describe methods for evaluating the effectiveness of e-learning approaches.
- Discuss the various roles of the e-learning professional organizations and their respective audiences/memberships.
- Communicate how innovations such as Internet2 and mobile applications, as well as advances in multi-user virtual environments, computer-supported collaborative learning, and online communities are shaping the evolution of e-learning.
- Construct e-Learning modules
 - **Note:** Students who have already taken **EDIT 526** should make sure that the e-Learning modules comply with Section 508 accessibility requirements and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. Compliance is **optional** for **all other** students.

COURSE WEEK

Because online courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will “start” on **Monday, August 25**, which is the first day of fall session, and “finish” on **Saturday, December 6**, the last day for fall session.

WORKLOAD

Student success in this course is priority one. We have a great deal to cover in a relatively short period of time, so please keep on track. The scope and intensity of this course is such that playing “catch up” will prove to be extremely challenging. Expect to log in to

this course **at least four times a week** to read announcements, participate in the discussions, and work on course materials. **Our most successful students log in *daily for about an hour per day on average***. If there is anything you don't understand, or if work or personal challenges threaten to derail your progress, please drop me a note as quickly as possible or call me, and we'll talk.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

1. Technology Program and Profession Standards (ISTE NETS)

Within the Instructional Design and Development (ID&D) track, this course adheres to the following National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) established by the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) under the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The complete list of NETS standards is available at http://cnets.iste.org/teachers/t_stands.html.

- Technology Operations and Concepts (IA & IB)
- Planning and Designing Learning Environments and Experiences (IIB & IIC)
- Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum (IIIC)
- Productivity and Professional Practice (VB, VC & VD)
- Social, Ethical, Legal and Human Issues (VIA & VID)

2. Curriculum and Candidate Competencies (AECT)

This course adheres to the standards for curriculum and candidate competency in the area of educational communications and instructional technologies (ECIT) of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT). The standards are intended to accompany NCATE's Standards, Procedures, and Policies for the Accreditation of Professional Education Units, and to address Standard 1 of the NCATE standards. The complete list of ECIT standards is available at <http://www.aect-members.org/standards/initstand.html>.

1. Design (1.1 – 1.4)
2. Development (2.3 & 2.4)
3. Utilization (3.1)
4. Evaluation (5.1)

3. Other Professional Standards and Guidelines

The ASTD Certification Institute has published standards that focus on evaluating the instructional design and usability factors of asynchronous Web-based and multimedia courseware for corporate and government training at http://www.astd.org/ASTD/marketplace/ecc/ecc_home

TEXTS AND READINGS

Required:

The following texts have been selected to provide students with a solid foundation for evaluating and applying the e-learning technologies covered in this course. Students will be expected to share their reactions to the readings through participation in the discussion threads posted on Blackboard.

1. Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., and Zvacek, S. (2008). *Teaching and learning at a Distance: Foundations of distance education*, 4th edition, New York: Pearson Education, Inc., ISBN-10: 0-13-513776-4.
2. Palloff, R. and Pratt, K. (2005). *Collaborating online: Learning together in community*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, ISBN 0-7879-7614-8.

Recommended Readings:

The following texts offer real-world e-learning best practices and applications from academe, industry, and government and are good assets for the e-learning practitioner.

- Aldrich, C. (2005). *Learning by doing: A comprehensive guide to simulations, computer games, and pedagogy in e-learning and other educational experiences*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.
- Clark, R. and Mayer, R. (2003). *e-Learning and the science of instruction*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Garrison, D.R. and Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st Century: A framework for research and practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Oosterhof, A., Conrad, R.M. and Ely, D.P. (2008). *Assessing learners online*. Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

General Information

- All assignments are due by **11:59 PM EDT** of the date indicated in each week's assignments published in the **COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS** section of this Syllabus. Due dates are also posted in the **LEARNING MODULES** section and on the **CALENDAR** section of the Blackboard course site.
- **Grades for assignments date-stamped in Blackboard after the due date will be reduced by 10% for each day that the assignment is late. No late submissions will be accepted after the course end-date.** Early submissions are always welcome!
- Please adhere to the assignment submission instructions listed in the **LEARNING MODULES** section. **Only assignments submitted as indicated will be graded; incorrect submissions will result in a grade of zero for those assignments.**

Class Participation and Threaded Discussions

- There is a weekly discussion question (DQ) posted by the instructor.
- Each week you are expected to contribute to the class discussion in a meaningful way. Your comments should add significantly to the discussion by suggesting other solutions, pointing out problems, even totally disagreeing. Make sure you substantiate your comments with reasons and whenever possible, relate your own "real world" experiences to the subject matter of the class. **It is a required part of**

your grade that you actively participate in these discussions. I will evaluate your input based on the **quality** of your responses, whether your responses were **timely** and met the deadline, and the ability of your comments to **motivate** others in a collaborative effort.

- To learn how your discussion responses are evaluated, please consult the *Grading Rubrics* posted in the **LEARNING MODULES** section of the Blackboard course site.
- Due dates for your initial reply and responses to other students are listed in the **COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS** section of this Syllabus, the **LEARNING MODULES** section of Blackboard and on the electronic **CALENDAR** in Blackboard.
- Please check your responses for grammar, spelling and tone prior to posting.
- Our discussion goal is to be **collaborative**, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be easily misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others not take them as personal attacks. **Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words.** I will do my best to do the same. Remember, you're not competing with each other for grades, but sharing information and learning from one another.

Team Projects

The class will be divided into teams of 3-4 people for two of the assignments required for this course. If there are particular individuals with whom you would like to work, please send me a note via the **Blackboard course e-Mail**. If you have no preferences, I will assign you to teams based on current/planned career goals and knowledge of instructional design processes.

Each team will be assigned a **private** area on the Blackboard **DISCUSSIONS** section that is accessible only to the team members and the instructor. You will use your private area to document plans and activities for your team projects. **I will monitor but not actually participate in your private team discussions unless requested (problems, lack of participation, etc.) by the group members.** **Note:** If your team meets using the Blackboard synchronous **Chat** tool, the Adobe Connect videoconferencing tool, face-to-face, or via teleconferencing, minutes of those meetings must be posted to your private area in the Blackboard **DISCUSSION** section.

Please try to keep your team work well balanced and collaborative. The same rules of online etiquette outlined in the *Class Participation and Threaded Discussions* section of this Syllabus also apply to your private team discussions.

Deliverables

There are **four (4)** deliverables required for successful completion of this course, with the due dates, assignment details and grading rubrics all on our Blackboard course site as well as in this Syllabus.

1. Completion of one (1) of the following research and presentation assignments (Individual Project):

A. Evaluate e-learning courses

- Select three (3) publicly accessible online courses from the list of offerings on the Education Portal at http://education-portal.com/articles/Universities_with_the_Best_Free_Online_Courses.html
- Compare and contrast the courses to determine how effectively each meets the needs and expectations of the learners.
- Analyze the extent to which the courses are based on the ideas and principles in the texts and required readings of this class, and how the courses can be improved.
- Prepare a short review (circa. 2-3 pages, single spaced) of these courses for posting in the **ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX** on the Blackboard course web site, **along with** a 10-minute PowerPoint® presentation that includes either Speaker's Notes or an audio narrative, on the courses. When preparing your review and slides, please include what you learned about the online educational experience.

Note: When uploading to the ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX, make sure to attach **all** your files **before** clicking SUBMIT.

OR

B. Evaluate informal learning environments (ILE's)

- Research and compare three (3) similar online informal learning environments (museums, professional associations, for example) that have implemented education programming or professional development modules.
- Prepare a short review (circa 2-3 pages, single spaced) comparing/contrasting these three examples of a similar type of ILE for posting in the **ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX** on the Blackboard course web site, along with a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation that includes either Speaker's Notes or an audio narrative.

Example: <http://www.nga.gov/>

2. Experience an interactive learning environment (Team Project):

- Teams will select an interactive environment (with instructor approval) from one of the following categories:
 - a. Wikis (Example: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>)
 - b. Blogs (Example: <http://clive-shepherd.blogspot.com/>)
 - c. Multi-user virtual environments (MUVES)
(Example: <http://secondlife.com/>)

- d. Instructional delivery systems
(Example: <http://moodle.org/sites/>)
 - e. Presentation and rapid e-learning media
(Example:
<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/~w3bio315/restricted/anim.htm>)
- Teams will explore the environment and understand its capabilities to create relevant learning experiences for the participant.
 - Teams will then prepare **and** present their reactions to this experience (including the characteristics of the environment and its culture, relevant learning experiences, examples of interaction within the environment, descriptions of the members, etc.) via a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation in Adobe Connect that includes a demonstration of the environment itself. Your slides must also be uploaded to the **ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX** on the Blackboard course web site.

3. Create an online learning/training module (Team Project):

- Each team must choose a **single** topic (with instructor approval). Samples of topics include (but are **not limited** to):
 - Gender and e-learning
 - Ethical issues in e-learning
 - e-Learning and cultural issues
 - Web accessibility issues
 - e-Learning in the corporate environment
 - e-learning and life-long learning
 - Virtual reality simulations in e-learning
 - e-Learning in the K-12 arena
 - e-Learning in the higher education environment
 - e-Learning in the government sector
 - Copyright and intellectual property issues
- **Research and collect relevant literature and resources.** The resources collected by the team become the foundation for the team's choice of a specific design approach and the e-learning technology selected to implement the learning/training module.
- **Design and implement the learning/training module.** Each team will be assigned a timeframe in which an online presentation discussion of their **"live", working** e-learning/training module will take place via Adobe Connect. Your module. Your module must also be uploaded to the **ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX** on the Blackboard course web site.
- **Examples** of e-learning/training modules created in **previous** EDIT611 classes are posted in the **LEARNING MODULE** section of the Blackboard course site.

4. Reflect on the team experience (Individual Paper):

- Examine the processes and procedures you and your team members used for deliverables 2 and 3.

- Prepare a brief (1-3 pages, single spaced) paper comparing and contrasting your experiences during the two team projects and post it to the **ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX** on the Blackboard course web site.

ASSESSMENT

General Information

The evaluation of student performance is related to the student’s demonstration of the course outcomes. All work is evaluated on its relevance to the specific assignment, comprehensiveness of information presented, specificity of application, clarity of communication, and the analytical skills utilized. The grading rubrics for each of the course deliverables is posted to the **LEARNING MODULES** section on the Blackboard course site.

Team projects receive **two (2)** grades: One for the **project itself** based on the criteria set down in the grading rubrics and one for each team member’s **individual** contribution to the project and the project process. **As such, scores for individual contributions may differ from the project grades.**

Deliverables, class participation and grade values

Deliverable	Total Number of Possible Points
Research and presentation assignment (individual project)	135
Interactive learning environment (team project)	150
Learning/training module (team project)	225
Reflections paper (individual project)	100
Weekly class participation	140
Total:	750

Grading scale

The following scale is based on student performance out of a total of 750 possible points. Decimal percentage values $\geq .5$ will be rounded up (e.g., 92.5% will be rounded up to 93%); decimal percentage values $< .5$ will be rounded down (e.g., 92.4% will be rounded down to 92%).

Letter Grade	Total Points Earned	Total Course Grade (%)
A	698-750	93%-100%
A-	675-697	90%-92%
B+	660-674	88%-89%
B	623-659	83%-87%
B-	600-622	80%-82%
C	525-599	70%-79%
F	< 525	< 70%

Great care is given to evaluating student performance based on the requirements documented in the grading rubrics for each assignment. As such, grades are not negotiable. In the event that, following discussions with the instructor, a student feels that his/her grade is unfair, the grade may be appealed using the university’s appeal process described at <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor56>.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

WEEK	START DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR THE WEEK	CLASS SITE ACTIVITIES
1	Aug. 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post student bios by Wednesday, Aug. 27 • Optional: Attach your photo to your bio • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. View the presentation <i>Online Learning, Lifelong Learning</i> and respond to the Week 1 DQ in the DISCUSSIONS section of Blackboard (Bb) by Aug. 28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • System technical check & troubleshooting • Introduction to course format, syllabus, schedule, course site organization • Review participation, project and research paper rubrics • Participate in Week 1 discussions • Form teams for team projects (assignments 2 & 3)
2	Sept. 2 (Monday, Sept. 1 is the Labor Day Holiday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simonson, Smaldino et al., Introduction, Part I, Chapters 1-2 2. Paloff & Pratt, Chapters 1-2 • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 2 DQ by Sept. 4 2. Submit your team member and topic preferences for deliverable #2 via course e-mail by Sept. 7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 2 discussions • Post your availability for an Adobe Connect orientation to the <i>Connect Scheduling</i> discussion thread • Discuss teams, team work and topics for team projects (deliverables 2 and 3)

WEEK	START DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR THE WEEK	CLASS SITE ACTIVITIES
3	Sept. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simonson, Smaldino et al., Part I, Chapters 3-4 • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 3 DQ by Sept. 10 2. Submit your team’s topic for the ILE team project (deliverable #2) for instructor approval by Sept. 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 3 discussion • Begin using private team discussion threads • Participate in Adobe Connect Orientation videoconference (Date/Time TBD)
4	Sept. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simonson, Smaldino et al., Part II, Chapters 5-7 2. Paloff & Pratt, Chapters 3-4 • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 4 DQ by Sept. 17 2. Submit individual research paper and presentation (deliverable #1) by Sept. 19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 4 discussions • Continue using team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects • Post your team’s date/time preferences for the ILE team project presentation (deliverable #2) to the designated discussion thread in Bb
5	Sept. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simonson, Smaldino et al., Part II, Chapters 8-10 • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. View the presentation <i>Mashingup Content</i> and respond to Week 5 DQ by Sept. 24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 5 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects
6	Sept. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paloff & Pratt, Part II, sections 6, 8 & 9 • Assignments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 6 DQ by Oct. 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 6 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects

WEEK	START DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR THE WEEK	CLASS SITE ACTIVITIES
7	Oct. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upload your ILE team project presentations (deliverable #2) to the ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX by Oct. 6 2. Respond to the Week 7 DQ by Oct. 8 3. Participate in ILE team project presentations (deliverable #2), date/time TBD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 7 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects • Review the e-Learning/Training Module examples in the Resources area of the LEARNING MODULES section
8	Oct. 14 (Monday, Oct. 13 is the Columbus Day holiday)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Simonson, Smaldino et al., Part III, Chapters 11-13 • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit your team’s topic for the e-Learning/Training Module project (deliverable #3) for instructor approval by Oct. 14 2. Respond to the Week 8 DQ by Oct. 16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 8 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects
9	Oct. 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 9 DQ by Oct. 22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 9 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects
10	Oct. 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to the Week 10 DQ by Oct. 29 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 10 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects

WEEK	START DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE FOR THE WEEK	CLASS SITE ACTIVITIES
11	Nov. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to the Week 11 DQ by Nov. 5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 11 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects
12	Nov. 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to the Week 12 DQ by Nov. 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 12 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects • Select your team's date/time preferences for the e-Learning/Training Module project presentation (deliverable #3) and post it to the designated thread in Bb
13	Nov. 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to Week 13 DQ by Nov. 19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Week 13 discussions • Continue using private team discussion and chat areas to discuss team projects
14	Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Recess	
15	Dec. 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upload your e-Learning/Training Module project presentations (deliverable #3) to the ASSIGNMENT DROPBOX by Dec. 1 2. Participate in e-Learning Module team project presentations (deliverable #3), date/time TBD 3. Submit your Individual Reflections paper (deliverable #4) by Dec. 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course wrap-up

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS:

All students must abide by the following:

Students are expected to exhibit professional behavior and dispositions. See gse.gmu.edu for a listing of these dispositions.

Students must follow the guidelines of the University Honor Code. See http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#TOC_H12 for the full honor code.

Students must agree to abide by the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See <http://mail.gmu.edu> and click on Responsible Use of Computing at the bottom of the screen.

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the GMU Disability Resource Center (DRC) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. See www.gmu.edu/student/drc or call 703-993-2474 to access the DRC.

HONOR CODE

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of George Mason University and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the members of George Mason University, have set for the following code of honor. Any individual who is caught in the act of cheating, attempting to cheat, plagiarizing, or stealing will be brought forth before a council of their peers. In the event that the individual is found guilty, he or she will be punished accordingly. For further information, please refer to the University Catalog or web site at www.gmu.edu.

This syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in the series, programs, or activities of all State and local Governments. Under ADA a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as: learning, working, walking, speaking, hearing, breathing, and/or taking care of oneself. If a student has a disability and needs course adaptations or accommodations because of that disability, it must be established with the faculty, in writing, at the beginning of the semester, so arrangements can be made. Please call the Disability Resource Center for required documentation (703-993-2474).