

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**  
**Instructional Design & Development**  
EDIT772: Learning in Virtual Worlds (2 graduate credit hours)  
Summer 2012  
B Session (June 4 – July 26)

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Name: Dr. Karen Cooper

Email: [kcoope12@gmu.edu](mailto:kcoope12@gmu.edu)

Phone: 407-902-9545

Virtual Office hours (in-world): Monday evenings 6:30-7:30pm and by appointment via phone, email, or Blackboard.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Virtual Worlds feature autonomous, animated online communities in an experientially rich, immersive setting with benefits for education, training, and research as well as individual and social use. This course examines the terminology, skills, culture, and strategies that promote expertise and successful instruction in virtual worlds. Students use a hands-on approach to experience virtual world concepts and constructs, develop virtual world skills, explore virtual educational designs, investigate the risks and benefits of 3D immersive environments, and identify pedagogically grounded strategies for enhancing instructional value and effectiveness.

**PREREQUISITES:**

Students are asked to have a basic familiarity with virtual worlds. Prior to class, they will need to download the Second Life virtual world client (available from <http://secondlife.com>), and have created an avatar. Prior to class, students will also be requested to log in to Second Life at least once. Students with any questions or concerns should contact the professor prior to the first class. The first office hour will be held June 4, 2012, as an opportunity to students to receive help in downloading the client, obtaining an avatar, and logging in.

**COURSE MEETING DATES:**

**(Thursday) June 7, 2012 through (Thursday) July 24, 2012**

Each of the seven week class sessions will be held in-world in the virtual world of Second Life from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. The instructor will be in-world beginning 6:00pm

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

The skills and competencies required to design and instruct in a virtual world will be acquired through a blend of in-world discussions, online supplemental reading materials, and online and in-world investigation of videos, podcasts, journal articles, and virtual builds and establishments. There are seven required synchronous class meetings, as well as an expected two to four hours each week reading, investigating, and preparing for the next in-world class.

**Class meetings are structured as follows:**

The first part will be the virtual field trip.

The second part of each class will be devoted to mini-lectures on key topics, demonstrations, class exercises, and discussions.

The third part will be open discussion.

The final part of each class time will be wrap-up and assignments for the following week.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

1. Laptop or desktop computer with the following system requirements:  
<http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/>
2. Broadband Internet access. Wired connection is preferable over wireless connection.
3. Headset with microphone or quality speakers and microphone. Headset strongly preferred.
4. The Second Life client application downloaded and installed\*.
5. A Second Life avatar\*. It is recommended although not required that a people avatar be selected vs. an animal, robot or vehicle avatar. This helps to foster believability in an educational setting (we will be discussing further in Week 4).
6. Successful login to Second Life Orientation (default location at initial login)\*.

\* Complete Getting-Started information is available at <http://secondlife.com> or <https://join.secondlife.com/>

## TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

Kapp, Karl M., O'Driscoll, Tony (2010). *Learning in 3D*, San Francisco, CA: Wiley.  
ISBN 978-0-470-50473-4

Second Life client (version 2.0 or later); Second Life avatar.

## LEARNER OUTCOMES / COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to enable students to:

1. Conceptualize, design, and instruct a virtual world educational course.
2. Develop virtual world skills in navigation, camera controls, inventory management, 3D object manipulation, content sharing and communication.
3. Evaluate a virtual world culture and the effect it has on education, research and social practices in a global environment.
4. Identify and critically evaluate the strategy and tactics needed to plan, conduct and leverage virtual education and training, collaboration, research, and virtual seminars.
5. Understand best practices for designing instruction in a virtual world.
6. Examine the human element within virtual worlds including the benefits and consequences of virtual identity, authentication, engagement, experience and perception, as well as social filters and barriers.
7. Research the relevant literature in the field and investigate the current best practices as documented in the literature.

## INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The course will emphasize a critical thinking approach to education. A critical thinking approach assumes that the student and not the instructor create knowledge. Students must actively question and reflect on the material, vice passively absorb it. Therefore, classes will use a discussion format with extensive student involvement.

The class activities will also engage the students to actively create new knowledge through direct experience. The student must think critically, not just memorize facts. Active participation and cooperation is expected during class time, with online discussions and in-world activities.

## PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

### Professional Foundations

- Apply current research and theory to the practice of instructional design.
- Apply fundamental research skills to instructional design projects.

### Planning and Analysis

- Design a lesson plan or class.

Select and use a variety of techniques for determining instructional content.  
Analyze the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their use in an instructional environment.

### **Design and Development**

Select, modify, or create a design and development model appropriate for a given project.  
Develop instructional materials.  
Evaluate and assess instruction and its impact.

### **GMU POLICIES AND RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

- a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].

### **PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### **CORE VALUES COMMITMENT**

The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

On time attendance in class is mandatory as discussions, virtual field trips, and hands-on activities are important parts of the course.

Each student is expected to complete all readings and prior homework assignments, and participate in class discussions, as well as and contribute to asynchronous threaded discussions as assigned by the instructor.

Students who must miss a class are responsible for notifying the instructor (in advance) and for completing any assignments, readings, etc.

Students missing the due date for an assignment or exercise must make immediate arrangements with the instructor to fulfill that requirement before the next class.

The class schedule may change as the course progresses; changes will be posted on the course Blackboard site under **Announcements**. The instructor will respond to student questions/requests within 48 hours.

### **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Online discussions
  2. In-world class discussions
  3. Portfolio of weekly assignments
  4. Lesson Plan and Story Board
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1. Online discussions – posted on Blackboard. Constructive, insightful, thought-provoking and reflective contributions to the question(s) posted.
  2. In-world class discussions – dynamic, real-time discussion of topic, concepts, or build location in discussion. Constructive, insightful, thought-provoking and reflective contributions to the discussion.
  3. Portfolio of weekly assignments – Throughout the course, students will develop an online, learning and growth portfolio. This portfolio will be on Blackboard, and should reflect an understanding of virtual worlds as an instructional media delivery platform option. The portfolio will consist of original work, references, papers, slurls, urls, lesson plan, videos, examples, ideas.
  4. Lesson Plan and Story Board - final Presentation of Lesson Plan and Story Board to the class on Instructional design idea using a virtual world. To include a critical analysis, explanation of why, and the affordances thereof.

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

This 2 graduate credit hour course is designed to be completed in six weeks. Assignments are clustered in weekly modules.

#### **MODULE 1: VW Concepts and Constructs**

June 7, 2012 6:30-8:00pm

Theory, Definition, Media Delivery Platform

Stories, Examples

Virtual Field Trip, Discussion, Assignment

#### **MODULE 2: Navigation**

June 14, 2012 6:30-8:00pm

Movement, Communication, Environment settings, Objects and Inventory

Stories, Examples

Virtual Field Trip, Discussion, Assignment

#### **MODULE 3: Building**

June 21, 2012 6:30-8:00pm

Internal tools, external resources, Importing/Exporting, Web 2.0 Incorporating, Tools for Measuring, Effective Designing

Stories, Examples

Virtual Field Trip, Discussion, Assignment

#### **MODULE 4: The Human Element**

June 28, 2012 6:30-8:00pm

The people, the Learner, Identity, Presence, Temporary Suspension of Disbelief  
Stories, Examples  
Virtual Field Trip, Discussion, Assignment

### **MODULE 5: Best Practices in Instructional Design Best Practices**

July 5 or 12, 2012 6:30-8:00pm  
Empirical Research, Instructional Goals  
Stories, Examples  
Virtual Field Trip, Discussion, Assignment

### **MODULE 6: Other Virtual Worlds**

July 12 or 19, 2012 6:30-8:00pm  
Taxonomies, prominent options for education and instruction  
Stories, examples, Discussion

### **MODULE 6: Presentations**

July 19 or 26, 2012 6:30-8:00pm  
Presentation of Lesson Plan and Storyboard  
Stories, Examples  
Virtual Field Trip, Discussion

### **ASSESSMENT RUBRIC**

The **maximum** number of possible points for this class is **100**. The evaluation of your assignments and storyboard is based on the extent to which you used research, literature and relevant resources as the foundation for the design and implementation of the module. The criteria below apply to all assignments, each of the in-world class and online discussions (participation), and the final project (lesson plan and storyboard).

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA**

1. Online discussions = 20% (should I break this down weekly?)
2. In-world class discussions = 20%
3. Portfolio = 30%
4. Lesson Plan and Story Board = 30% each

### **GRADING SCALE**

A = 94-100;  
A - = 90-93;  
B+ = 86-89;  
B = 83-85;  
B- = 80-82;  
C = 70-79;  
F = 69 & below

### **Excellent**

- Objectives/ learning outcomes are clearly revealed
- Content is presented in a logical progression
- Exemplary use of visual and auditory stimuli to motivate students
- Exemplary use of projects, assignments and/or activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Exemplary use of a variety of current tools and technologies
- Selected illustrations clearly support course goals/ desired outcomes
- Clearly communicated assignments

- Appropriate technical support information

**Good**

- Objectives/ learning outcomes are satisfactorily revealed
- Content is generally presented in a logical progression
- Appropriate use of visual and auditory stimuli to motivate students
- Satisfactory use of projects, assignments and/or activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Satisfactory use of a variety of current tools and technologies
- Selected illustrations support course goals/ desired outcomes satisfactorily
- Assignments communicated satisfactorily
- Appropriate technical support information

**Fair**

- Objectives/ learning outcomes are adequately revealed
- Progression of content not consistent/logical
- Adequate use of visual and auditory stimuli to motivate students
- Adequate use of projects, assignments and/or activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Adequate use of current tools and technologies
- Selected illustrations adequately support course goals/ desired outcomes
- Communication of assignments somewhat unclear
- Appropriate technical support information

**Poor**

- Objectives/ learning outcomes are not clearly revealed
- Content is not presented in a logical progression
- Minimal/poor use of visual and auditory stimuli to motivate students
- Minimal/ no use of projects, assignments/activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Poor/inappropriate use of current tools and technologies/ use of technologies
- Selected illustrations do not support course goals/ desired outcomes
- Unclear communication of assignments
- Inappropriate technical support information