

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education
Innovations in Distance Learning (3.3.0)
EDIT 611 Syllabus
Spring 2005**

Instructor: Dr. Kay R. McCarron

Class Date and Time: Section 001 - Mondays, 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.

Class Location: Commerce II, 101

Contact Information and Campus Hours:

Office Location: Commerce II 107B **Telephone:** (703) 993-4177

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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Description: Students will explore the latest innovations in e-learning technologies and environments as well as the theoretical issues central to distance education. The course will cover online distance learning environments including, but not limited to online learning communities and communities of practice. Hands-on activities with these technologies focus on planning, implementation, and evaluation. Students discuss emerging applications in distance learning and how new approaches to learning can be integrated into today's K-12 classrooms and training environments.

Student Outcomes:

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

1. Describe current leading-edge programs in distance education in K-12 settings, higher education and corporate training environments.
2. Discuss the ways in which learning and teaching across barriers of distance and time are similar to – and different from – face-to-face instruction.
3. Demonstrate proficiency in using various interactive media (asynchronous threaded discussion sites, synchronous multi-user virtual environments, groupware, interactive presentational media, and videoconferencing), instructional delivery management systems and applications.
4. Apply effective instructional design for various interactive media, instructional frameworks and applications.
5. 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.
6. Describe methods for evaluating the effectiveness of distance education approaches.
7. Communicate how innovations such as the Web, multi-user virtual environments, computer-supported collaborative learning, telementoring and online communities are

- shaping the evolution of distance education and distributed learning.
8. Construct models for applying accessibility in distance education.

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).

I. TECHNOLOGY OPERATIONS AND CONCEPTS.

Teachers demonstrate a sound understanding of technology operations and concepts.
Teachers:

- B. demonstrate continual growth in technology knowledge and skills to stay abreast of current and emerging technologies.

II. PLANNING AND DESIGNING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND EXPERIENCES.

Teachers plan and design effective learning environments and experiences supported by technology. Teachers:

- B. apply current research on teaching and learning with technology when planning learning environments and experiences.
- C. identify and locate technology resources and evaluate them for accuracy and suitability.

III. TEACHING, LEARNING, AND THE CURRICULUM.

Teachers implement curriculum plans, that include methods and strategies for applying technology to maximize student learning.
Teachers:

- C. apply technology to develop students' higher order skills and creativity.

V. PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE.

Teachers use technology to enhance their productivity and professional practice. Teachers:

- B. continually evaluate and reflect on professional practice to make informed decisions regarding the use of technology in support of student learning.
- C. apply technology to increase productivity
- D. use technology to communicate and collaborate with peers, parents, and the larger community in order to nurture student learning.

VI. SOCIAL, ETHICAL, LEGAL, AND HUMAN ISSUES.

Teachers understand the social, ethical, legal, and human issues surrounding the use of technology in PK-12 schools and apply those principles in practice. Teachers:

- A. model and teach legal and ethical practice related to technology use.

D. promote safe and healthy use of technology resources.

Nature of Course Delivery: This course will utilize a combination of lectures, hands-on experiences, media, field trips, reflections, discussions and projects to help participants understand the strengths and limits of current technologies for distance learning, as well as the likely evolution of distributed learning.

Texts and Readings:

Dabbagh, N. & Bannan-Ritland, B. (2005). [*Online learning: Concepts, strategies, and application*](#). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Clark, R. C. & Mayer, R. E. (2003). [*e-Learning and the science of instruction*](#). San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) (2003) [*Distance learning \(dl\) guidelines: What works in distance learning*](#).

Crichton, M. (1999). [*Timeline*](#). New York. Alfred A Knopf.

Online articles, distributed learning tools and supplementary readings provided by instructor. These reading assignments will be periodically updated on the course Web site.

Required readings have been selected to enhance both the understanding and application of distance learning technologies introduced in this course. Students are expected to share reactions through participation in online discussions as well as in the classroom. Students may also be required to research additional articles and present those articles to the class.

Course Requirements: There will be 3 class projects that are required for successful completion of this class. Each project/ paper will count 25% of your total Final Grade. Class participation in daily/ weekly assignments will determine the final 25% of your grade.

A. Students will be expected to complete ONE of the following research and presentation assignments (Team project or individual projects with approval of instructor):

1. Research and Report on a Current Online University or Distance Education Program (Team project)

- Select an existing online academic, corporate, government, military or commercial distance education program or virtual college/ university.
- Interact with the site to determine how effectively the program meets the needs and expectations of learners
- Analyze the extent to which the program is based on the ideas and principles in the texts and required readings, specifically addressing as many of the following as possible:
 - Course management system
 - Specific course/ degrees offered
 - Accreditation
 - Faculty profiles
 - Interface design
 - Support
 - Technologies incorporated (audio, video, interactivity, groupware, etc.)

- Collaboration Models
- Pedagogy/ theoretical models
- Accessibility for students with disabilities
- Other
- Prepare and give a 20 minute class presentation on the program.

OR

**2. Experience an Educational Multi-User Learning Environment (MUVE)
(Team or individual project)**

- Participate in at least 5 one-hour learning experiences conducted in a MUVE. Some examples of a MUVE include TappedIn and Stargazer.
- Prepare and present your reactions to this experience (including the characteristics of the MUVE and its culture, your learning experiences, your interaction within the community, the community members, etc.) in class with a 20 minute class presentation.

OR

3. Evaluating Distributed Learning Vendors (Team or individual project)

- Research and compare 3 vendors who specialize in similar distance educational software, such as asynchronous discussion tools or groupware.
- Evaluate and demonstrate their products in class with a 20 minute class presentation.

B. Students will be expected to complete ONE of the following Final Projects (Team projects with approval of instructor):

1. Online Mini-Course/ Training Learning Module(Team Project)

Each student is expected to complete an assignment in which he or she prepares and teaches a distance lesson using an online course delivery system or virtual environment. Teams of approximately four students each will be created. Each team must:

- Topic. Choose a unique topic from the list below. The instructor must approve each team topic.
 - a) Gender and distance education
 - b) MOOs (Multi-User Domain Object Oriented), MUDs (Multi-User Dimension or Dungeon), and MUVEs (Multi-User Virtual Environments) [Note: those choosing the MUVE experience in Assignment A CANNOT choose this topic.]
 - c) Online communities of practice
 - d) Ethical issues in distance education
 - e) Distance education and life-long learning
 - f) Distance learning in the social sciences and humanities
 - g) Distance education in science and mathematics
 - h) Distance education and cultural issues
 - i) Web accessibility issues
 - j) Distance education in the K-12 arena
 - k) Distance education and informal learning networks (e.g., museums)

- l) Distance training in the corporate environment
 - m) Evaluating online learning
 - n) Virtual Reality/ simulations in distance learning
 - o) Other (with instructor's approval)
- Preparation Research. Each team must research [both using library and web resources - and (if possible) experientially] the chosen topic. The resources collected by the team become the resources for the team's use of an online course management system to teach the other members of the class about its findings and must be posted online.
 - Practice Online Course. Each team must, on the team's online site or in a virtual environment:
 - i. Design, develop and implement a mini-course syllabus (deadline: the date for the class to experience your distance learning lesson)
 - ii. Implement and monitor an asynchronous discussion
 - iii. Create and facilitate one synchronous online discussion
 - iv. Assess the work of student participants, including participation
 - v. Post students' grades/ evaluations
 - Each team will have up to 3 days to present the Mini-Course/ Training Module to the class.

OR

2. Create an Online Community of Practice (Special Team Project) using the general topic, preparation and course design described under assignment B1.

C. Reflections/ Reactions to Real and Virtual Class Experiences and Readings (Weblog).

Each student must create a **reflective Webblog** that will be used throughout the semester to document and reflect upon the learning experiences introduced in class, reading assignments, course projects including a discussion of the experience of teaching the distance learning module or creating an online community of practice.

These reflections may include: (1) a brief synopsis of the experience/ reading and the most salient information learned; (2) the relationship between this experience/ reading with prior life experiences (3) future applications of the technology (4) how the experience/ literature is applicable to current teaching/ training models.

The final Weblog (based on the collaborative experiences during the final project) should: (a) describe the research and direct experience of the topic, (b) report on the team's experience with items i - v (under section 3 above) or instructions for the CoP and (c) the team's collaborative experiences during the group process in developing the module or Web site. In effect, this reflection will serve to describe the lessons learned by the team members during the process of completing the final project.

D. Participation

Participation in class, both face-to-face and distant, and via electronic discussions is assessed by both quality and quantity of interactions.

Participation Assessment:

Students will receive a full 25 participation points by actively participating in EDIT 611 and all course activities, assignments, fieldtrips and projects. Students are expected to participate fully in all classroom experiences (both real and virtual). Active participation will include both the asynchronous and synchronous discussions throughout each part of the course.

Evaluation:

This course is graded on an A, A-, B+, B, B-, C and F basis. Grades will be based on completion of course requirements and on the scope, quality and creativity of the assignments as specified in the assignment rubrics. An incomplete in the course will be given only under unusually extenuating circumstances.

- Attendance and participation in class sessions – whether face-to-face or virtual – is mandatory, as discussions and shared experiences are important parts of the course. Each student must participate in the distance learning experience developed by their classmates (see below). The class schedule may change as the course progresses; changes will be posted on the course Blackboard site (Announcements feature).
- Each student is expected to complete all readings and class exercises and contribute to in-depth asynchronous threaded and synchronous discussions as assigned by the instructor or as part of a class team's lesson.
- Each student (as part of a small team) is expected to design and offer a mini-course using an online delivery system or collaborative software approved by the instructor.
- Obtaining and regularly using a computer account with access to the Internet is required. GMU makes such accounts available for free to its students.
- To enable individualization of the course to the needs of each student, special arrangements on requirements and assignments may be negotiated in writing with the instructor. Revised assignments typically involve direct, extensive involvement in some project engaged in the design, development, evaluation or implementation of a distance education experience.
- Students missing the due date for an assignment must make immediate arrangements with the instructor to fulfill that requirement before the next class. Points will be deducted based on the number of days the assignment is late.

Required Assignments and Values:

- A. Choice of Research Topic and Class Presentation (25%) (Individual or Team Project)
- B. Choice of Distance Learning Module or Online Community of Practice (25%) (Team Project)
- C. Reflection Blog (25%) (Individual Project)
- D. Individual Participation (25%)

Grading Scale:

A 93 - 100
A- 90 - 92
B+ 88 - 89
B 83 - 87
B- 80 - 82
C 70 - 79
F Below 70

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	In Class Activity	Out of Class Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome 	
Jan. 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Course Format and Blackboard • Discuss Syllabus and Schedule • Workshop: Weblogs, Collaboration Tools, Discussion Boards (Asynchronous Medium) 	
<hr/>		
2	<p>F2F CLASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Photos/ Group Photo • Review Project/ Participation Rubrics • Presentation: Online Teaching and Learning: What We Have Experienced in the Past, Current Trends and Future Possibilities • Collaboration Tools Workshop: Introduction to Synchronous discussion techniques • TappedIn Experience • Discuss teams, teamwork and topics for Assignment A and special projects 	<p>1. Participate in the Blackboard (Bb) Discussion Board to get to know each other by responding to questions you have in common.</p> <p>2. Required Readings Texts: <i>e-Learning</i>, Introduction and Chapters 1-3 <i>Online Learning</i>, Chapter 1 <i>See possible additional assignments in the syllabus</i></p> <p>3. Begin to choose your topics for Assignment A.</p>
Jan. 31		
<hr/>		
3	<p>F2F CLASS</p>	
Feb. 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: The Online Learner: How do people learn in a virtual environment? 	<p>1. Required Readings Texts:</p>

- Workshop: More Collaboration Tools! Introduction to Groove, WebMeeting and NetMeeting *e-Learning*, Chapters 3, 4, 5
- Class Discussion of Marra/ Jonassen article. *Online Learning*, Chapters 2, 3
- Students will choose Teams/ Topics See Blackboard, Additional Assignments *Use Multiple Interactive Media to Bridge*

Group work: Collaboration on Project 1 (Assignment A)

Handout: R. Marra and D. H. Jonassen

Begin reading: Crichton, M. (2000) *Timeline*

2. Teamwork: Choose final Groups and Blackboard

3. Weblog due

4 Virtual Class

Feb.14

- Learning Styles/ Personality Issues in the Online Learning Environment
- Virtual Workshops in a Community Environment
- The MOO, MUD and MUVE [Immersive Virtual Environments]
- Group work: Collaboration on Project 1 (Assignment A)

1. Required Readings Texts: *e-Learning*

Online Learning, Chapters 4

Continue reading: Crichton, M. (2000)

2. Weblog due

5 Virtual Class

Feb.
21

- Meet Alice
- Exploring Active Worlds
- Presentation: *The Role of Online Communities in Distance Education and the Value of the Constructivist Approach to Learning*

1. Required Readings Texts: *e-Learning*

Online Learning, Chapters 5

Continue reading: Crichton, M. (2000)

2. Weblog due

6

F2F CLASS

Feb.
28

Student presentations: Assignment A

1. **Prepare for Student Presentations**

2. Required Readings

Discussion of final projects

Continue reading: Crichton, M. (2000)

Online Learning, Chapters 6

3. Weblog due

7 Virtual Class

- Mar. 7
- Workshop: *e-Learning* Chapters 6-10
 - Presentation/ Panel Discussion (Guest Speakers): Myriad Methods of Designing Online Courses
 - Discussion: Communities of Practice (CoP's)

1. Required Readings:

Online Learning, Chapters 7

ADL Guidelines: Specific team/stud

Online: See Assignments and Exte

8 SPRING BREAK: MARCH 13 - 20

Mar.
14

Crichton, M. (2000) *Timeline*, comple

9 Virtual Class

- Mar.
21
- Discuss *Timeline* and its relevance to the future of distance learning
 - Using the VIRTUAL FIELD TRIP and the VIRTUAL LAB in Distance Education
 - Group work on final projects
 - Introduction to WebCT
 - Accessibility Issues; How to Level the Playing Field

1. Required Readings Texts: *e-Learnin*

Online Learning, Chapters 8

ADL Guidelines: Specific team/stud

Online: See Assignments and Exter

2. Blogging Assignment: *Timeline*

10 F2F CLASS

- Mar.
28
- The Future of Distance Education: Reusable Learning Objects, SCORM and XML, Open CourseWare

Required Readings:

Online Learning, Chapters 8, 9

- Introduction to the use of the teleconferencing medium
- Ethical Issues in Distance Education

ADL Guidelines: Specific team/student

Online: See Assignments and External

11 Work on Final Projects

Ap. 4

12 Virtual Class

Ap. 11 **Final Projects**

Final Project Schedules Posted on Bla

13 Virtual Class

Ap. 18 **Final Projects**

Final Project Schedules Posted on Bla

Virtual Class

Final Projects

14

Ap. 25

Final Project Schedules Posted on Bla

15 F2F CLASS

May 2 Class discussion on Virtual Experiences
in the Final Projects

Course Evaluation

Peer Evaluations Due by 4:30

Reflection Blogs Final Posting

Final Project Evaluations Due

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 forth 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 Website 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 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).

Students are asked to turn off all cell phones and beepers at the start of each class.

GSE Syllabus Statements of Expectations:

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) expects that all students 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.

Approved March 2004