

Nova Southeastern University
Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences

Course Syllabus

MCTE 661 Online Learning Environments (3 credits)

2009 Winter Term, January 5, 2009 - March 27, 2009, Online Format

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Class Location and Format: Online using WebCT tools. Please note that some files and information resources are posted on my OLE Study Area website. Course Internet address: <http://www.scis.nova.edu/~laurie/index.html>. The course requires asynchronous communication using the discussion forums in WebCT for class discussion. No live chat sessions will be scheduled.

Office hours: Students are encouraged to use electronic mail to communicate with the professor. Responses generally are provided within 24 hours during working days (maybe less if you send me a message during daytime hours). Phone conversations should be planned in advance – establish an appointment via email with the professor.

Course Description:

The course explores research trends in the area of online learning. Student will explore the requirements needed for successful online learning and teaching. Topics investigated may include the process of teaching and learning in an OLE, evaluating effective courseware and online communications technologies, integration of technologies into OLEs, working with online classroom dynamics, addressing the needs of the online student, making the transition to online teaching, promoting the development of an online learning community, comparing Learning Management Systems (LMSs), and investigating emerging trends in e-learning and e-training in industry settings.

Required Textbooks and Readings:

1. Rovai, A.P., Ponton, M.K., & Baker, J.D. (2008). *Distance learning in higher education: A programmatic approach to planning, design, instruction, evaluation, and accreditation*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press. ISBN: 9780807748787, hardcover.

2. Spector, J. M. (2007). *Finding your online voice: Stories told by experienced online educators*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. ISBN: 978085862287, paperback.
3. Selected articles available online: See the Course Guide for the complete assigned article reading list.

Important! See the Course Schedule for specific reading assignments throughout the term.

Learning Objectives:

The student will focus on issues related to online learning environments and will:

1. Identify the emerging role of Online Learning Environments (OLEs).
2. Define and distinguish an online learning environment and an online learning community.
3. Describe the research trends in online and blended learning.
4. Evaluate the process of teaching and learning in an OLE.
5. Identify the needs of online students and teachers.
6. Investigate emerging trends in e-learning and e-training in industry settings.
7. Discuss the differences between asynchronous and synchronous learning methods.
8. Examine how a community of practice (CoP) can be used in OLEs.
9. Examine how effective practices in social networking can be used in distributed learning environments.
10. Examine the evolution and current trends in developing OLEs, including learning management systems design.
11. Identify and state a problem for a research paper that captures the essence of the trouble in the problem environment.
12. Identify key research literature that supports the stated problem and research questions of the research paper.
13. Synthesize the research literature effectively in the research paper.

Major Course Themes and Course Topics (summary):

Overview/Future of Online Learning Environments
Development of Online Learning Environments
Teaching and Learning in Online Learning Environments
Interacting in Online Learning Environments
Social Networking in Online Learning Environments
Research/Innovation in Online Learning Environments
Evaluation of Online Learning Environments

Instruction Methods and Tools:

Students will use WebCT for MCTE 661 coursework. No email attachment of assignments will be accepted, unless pre-approved by the professor. Students will use the Student Forums in WebCT throughout the term to contribute to asynchronous online class discussions. Students will use the NSU Electronic Library to search for scholarly sources.

MCTE 661 Course Requirements:

Course Activities: Students will conduct independent literature research and produce scholarly projects. In addition, students will contribute to the asynchronous discussion forums in WebCT throughout the term. Contributions will count as points towards the class participation grade. See the section on Student Forums in the addendum Course Guide for instructions/expectations on contributing to the online conference discussions.

In addition to the required asynchronous contributions in Forums, the major course requirements will consist of three assignments.

Instead of the typical midterm and final examinations, three assignments are required that will enable the student to synthesize the major issues and relevant research currently being examined in the area of online learning environments.

Assignment #1: Research Proposal. Due date is: **Sunday, February 1, 2009.**

Assignment #2: Journal article reviews. Due date is: **Sunday, February 22, 2009.**

Assignment #3: Research Final Paper. Due date is: **Sunday, March 15, 2009.**

IMPORTANT: Specific instructions for completing these assignments are contained in the addendum Course Guide. Assignments must be submitted according to the due dates specified in this syllabus. Late assignments must be **pre-approved** by the professor and will likely result in point reduction. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRE OUTSIDE LITERATURE RESEARCH AND ACTIVITY.** Assignments must be submitted online through the assignment submission box in WebCT. Do not email or fax assignments.

Grading Scale and Criteria:

| | | |
|----|-------|----------------|
| A | | 192-200 points |
| A- | | 186-191 points |
| B+ | | 180-185 points |
| B | | 174-179 points |
| B- | | 168-173 points |
| C+ | | 162-167 points |
| C | | 156-161 points |
| F | | 0-155 points |

Grading Criteria For the 661 course:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Assignment #1 Research Proposal | 15 points |
| Assignment #2 Article Reviews | 50 points |
| Assignment #3 Research Final Paper | 100 points |
| Class Participation (Student Forums) | 35 points |
| | ----- |
| | 200 points total |

School and University Policies and Procedures:

Students must comply with the policies published in the school's *Graduate Catalog* and the *NSU Student Handbook*, some of which are included or referenced below. The catalog is at http://www.scis.nova.edu/NSS/pdf_documents/Catalog.pdf. The handbook is at <http://www.nova.edu/cwis/studentaffairs/forms/ustudenthandbook.pdf>.

1. Standards of Academic Integrity For the university-wide policy on academic standards, see the section Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility in the *NSU Student Handbook*. Also see the section Student Misconduct in the GSCIS catalog.

Each student is responsible for maintaining academic integrity and intellectual honesty in his or her academic work. It is the policy of the school that each student must:

- Submit his or her own work, not that of another person
- Not falsify data or records (including admission materials and academic work)
- Not engage in cheating (e.g., giving or receiving help during examinations; acquiring and/or transmitting test questions prior to an examination; and using unauthorized materials, such as notes, during an examination)
- Not receive or give aid on assigned work that requires independent effort
- Properly credit the words or ideas of others according to accepted standards for professional publications (see *Crediting the Words or Ideas of Others*)
- Not use or consult paper writing services, software coding services, or similar services for the purpose of obtaining assistance in the preparation of materials to be submitted for course assignments or for theses or dissertations
- Not commit plagiarism (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (1996) defines plagiarism as "stealing or passing off ideas or words of another as one's own" and "the use of a created production without crediting the source.") (see *Crediting the Words or Ideas of Others* below)

Crediting the Words or Ideas of Others

When using the exact words of another, quotation marks must be used for short quotations (fewer than 40 words), and block quotation style must be used for longer quotations. In either case, a proper citation must also be provided. The *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition*, (2001, pp. 117 and 292) contains standards and examples on quotation methods.

When paraphrasing (summarizing, or rewriting) the words or ideas of another, a proper citation must be provided. (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Fifth Edition* (2001) contains standards and examples on citation methods (pp. 207–214) and reference lists (pp. 215–281)). The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993) defines paraphrase as “An expression in other words, usually fuller and clearer, of the sense of a written or spoken passage or text...Express the meaning (of a word, phrase, passage, or work) in other words, usually with the object of clarification...” Changing word order, deleting words, or substituting synonyms is not acceptable paraphrasing—it is plagiarism, even when properly cited. Rather than make changes of this nature, the source should be quoted as written.

Addendum by this professor: Additional requirement for this course -- overuse of direct quotes will not be acceptable in papers for this course. Direct quotes should be used sparingly, if only necessary. Points will be reduced in papers where excessive direct quoting is used. It is better instead to paraphrase and properly cite the work.

Original Work

Assignments, exams, projects, papers, theses, dissertations, etc., must be the original work of the student. Original work may include the thoughts and words of another author but such thoughts or words must be identified utilizing quotation marks or indentation and must properly identify the source (see the previous section *Crediting the Words or Ideas of Others*). At all times, students are expected to comply with the school’s accepted citation practice and policy.

Work is not original when it has been submitted previously by the author or by anyone else for academic credit. Work is not original when it has been copied or partially copied from any other source, including another student, unless such copying is acknowledged by the person submitting the work for credit at the time the work is being submitted, or unless copying, sharing, or joint authorship is an express part of the assignment. Exams and tests are original work when no unauthorized aid is given, received, or used before or during the course of the examination, reexamination, and/or remediation.

2. Writing Skills

Students must demonstrate proficiency in the use of the English language. Grammatical errors, spelling errors, and writing that fails to express ideas clearly will affect their grades and the completion of their academic programs. The faculty will not provide remedial help concerning grammatical errors or other writing difficulties. It is the student’s responsibility to proofread and edit his or her work which, in both form and content, should be letter-perfect. Work that is not properly edited will be rejected. It is university policy that students must submit their own work, not that of another person. Consequently, they should refrain from using outside editors to redo their work.

3. Disabilities and ADA

NSU complies with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). The university's detailed policy on disabilities is contained in the NSU *Student Handbook*. Student requests for accommodation based on ADA will be considered on an individual basis. Students with disabilities should discuss their needs with their academic advisors before the commencement of classes if possible.

4. Communication by Email

Students must use their NSU email accounts when sending email to faculty and staff and must clearly identify their names and other appropriate information, e.g., course or program. When communicating with students via email, faculty and staff members will send mail only to NSU email accounts using NSU-recognized usernames. Students who forward their NSU-generated email to other email accounts do so at their own risk. GSCIS uses various course management tools that use private internal email systems. Students enrolled in courses using these tools should check both the private internal email system and NSU's regular email system. NSU offers students web-based email access. Students are encouraged to check their NSU email account daily.

5. The Temporary Grade of Incomplete (I)

The temporary grade of Incomplete (I) will be granted only in cases of extreme hardship. Students do not have a right to an incomplete, which may be granted only when there is evidence of just cause. A student desiring an incomplete must submit a written appeal to the course professor at least two weeks prior to the end of the term. In the appeal, the student must: (1) provide a rationale; (2) demonstrate that he/she has been making a sincere effort to complete the assignments during the term; and (3) explain how all the possibilities to complete the assignments on time have been exhausted. Should the course professor agree, an *incomplete contract* will be prepared by the student and signed by both student and professor. The *incomplete contract* must contain a description of the work to be completed and a timetable. The completion period should be the shortest possible. In no case may the completion date extend beyond 30 days from the last day of the term for master's courses or beyond 60 days from the last day of the term for doctoral courses. The *incomplete contract* will accompany the submission of the professor's final grade roster to the program office. The program office will monitor each *incomplete contract*. If a change-of-grade form is not submitted by the scheduled completion date, the grade will be changed automatically from I to F. No student may graduate with an I on his or her record.

Addendum by the professor: *Incompletes will NOT be granted for MCTE 661.*

6. Grade Policy Regarding Withdrawals

Course withdrawal requests must be submitted to the program office in writing by the student. Requests for withdrawal must be received by the program office by the calendar midpoint of the course (see dates in the academic calendar in the catalog and program brochures or at: http://www.scis.nova.edu/NSS/pdf_documents/AcadCal.pdf). Withdrawals sent by email must be sent from the student's assigned NSU email account. Requests for withdrawal received after 11:59 p.m. EST on the withdrawal deadline date will not be accepted. Failure to attend class or participate in course activities will not automatically drop or withdraw a student from the class or the university. Students who have not withdrawn by the withdrawal deadline will receive letter grades that reflect their performance in the course. When a withdrawal request is approved, the transcript will show a grade of W (*Withdrawn*) for the course. *Students with four withdrawals will be dismissed from the program.* Depending on the date of withdrawal, the student may be eligible for a partial refund (see the appropriate catalog section Refund Policy Regarding Withdrawals).

7. Acceptable Use of Computing Resources

Students must comply with the university's *Policy on Acceptable Use of Computing Resources* (see *NSU Student Handbook*).

8. Academic Progress, Grade Requirements, and Academic Standing

Students must be familiar with the school's policies which are contained in its catalog.

9. Student Research Involving Human Subjects

Students must be familiar with the university's policy (see paragraph in catalog).

10. Responsibility for Payment of Tuition and Fees

Once registered, students are personally responsible for the payment of their tuition and fees. Returned checks, cancelled credit cards, employer or agency refusal to pay, ineligibility for financial aid, and other reasons for non-payment may result in a direct bill to the student, and/or referral to a collection agency.

Payment and refund policies are based on the view that a student registering for a class is reserving a place in that class and that tuition and fees cover the opportunity to secure that place in the class. Since no other person can purchase that place, the student is responsible for the tuition and fees associated with it. Simply not attending does not constitute a reason for non-payment.

11. Miscellaneous rules: (1) A student may neither do additional work nor repeat work to raise their grade. (2) Extensive literature research is required for all work in this course. (3) Adhere to all deadlines – late arrivals will likely result in point reduction. (4) To receive full class participation points for MCTE 661, every student must make steady contributions to the online Student Forums in order to keep a healthy communication going throughout the term. (5) No work from another course may be used in MCTE 661. (6) There will be no incompletes given for MCTE 661.

Bibliography/Recommended Texts:

A comprehensive OLE Resources List is posted on the course website.

Aldrich, C. (2005). *Learning by doing: A comprehensive guide to simulations, computer games, and pedagogy in e-learning and other educational experiences*. NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Anderson, J. (2007). *E-schooling: Global messages from a small island*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Anderson, T.D., & Elloumi, F. (Eds.). (2004). *Theory and practice of online learning*. Athabasca University. Available online: http://cde.athabascau.ca/online_book/.

Bach, S., Haynes, P., & Smith, J.L. (2006). *Online learning and teaching in higher education*. UK: Open University Press.

Bersin, J. (2004). *The blended learning book: Best practices, proven methodologies, and lessons learned*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishers.

Bonk, C. J., & Zhang, K. (2008). *Empowering online learning: 100+ activities for reading, reflecting, displaying, and doing*. San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass.

Bonk, C., & Graham, C. (2005). *Handbook of blended learning: Global perspectives, local designs*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer Publishing.

Bramble, W., & Panda, S. (2008). *Economics of distance and online learning: Theory, practice, and research*. London: Routledge.

Breivik, P.S., & Gee, E.G. (2006). *Higher education in the Internet age: Libraries creating a strategic edge*. ACE/Praeger Series on Higher Education. Praeger Publishers.

Carliner, S., & Shank, P. (2008). *The e-learning handbook: Past, promises, present challenges*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Comeaux, P. (Ed.). (2004). *Assessing online learning*. NY: Anker Publishing.

Dabbah, N., & Bannan-Ritland, B. (2005). *Online learning: Concepts, strategies, and application*. Upper Saddle New Jersey: Pearson Merrill.

Duffy, T.M., & Kirkley, J.R. (Eds.). (2004). *Learner-centered theory and practice in distance education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Finkelstein, J.E. (2006). *Learning in real time: Synchronous teaching and learning online*. (Online teaching and Learning Series (OTL)). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Gardenfors, P., & Johansson, P. (2005). *Cognition, education, and communication technology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Garrison, D.R., & Anderson, T. (2003). *E-learning in the 21st century: A framework for research and practice*. NY: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Graesser, A.C., Gernsbacher, M.A., & Goldman, S.R. (Eds.) (2003). *Handbook of discourse processes*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hampel, R., & Lamy, M-N. (2007). *Online communication in language learning and teaching*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Henderson, G. (2007). *Excellence in college teaching and learning: Classroom and online instruction*. Charles C. Thomas Publishing.
- Hiltz, S.R., & Goldman, R. (2005). *Learning together online: Research on asynchronous learning networks*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Johnson, K., & Magusin, E. (2005). *Exploring the digital library: A guide for online teaching and learning (OTL Series)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Koschmann, T., Suthers, D.D., & Chan, T-W. (Eds.). (2005). *Computer supported collaborative learning 2005. The next ten years!* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Koumi, J. (2006). *Designing educational video and multimedia for open and distance learning*. The Open and Flexible Learning Series. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Lathrop, A., & Foss, K.E. (2005). *Guiding students from cheating and plagiarism to honesty and integrity*. Libraries Unlimited.
- Levine, S.J. (2005). *Making distance education work: Understanding learning and learners at a distance*. Lulu Press.
- MacDonald, J. (2006). *Blended learning and online tutoring: A good practice guide*. Ashgate Publishing.
- Mason, R., & Rennie, F. (2008). *E-learning and social networking handbook. Resources for higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Moore, M.G., & Anderson, W.G. (Eds.). (2003). *Handbook of distance education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- O'Donnell, A.M., Hmelo-Silver, C.E., & Erkens, G. (Eds.). (2005). *Collaborative learning, reasoning, and technology*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- O'Neil, H.F., & Perez, R.S. (Eds.). (2006). *Web-based learning: Theory, research, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Richardson, W. (2008). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful tools for the classrooms*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Rovai, A.P., Ponton, M.K., & Baker, J.D. (2008). *Distance learning in higher education. A programmatic approach to planning, design, instruction, evaluation, and accreditation*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Schram, T.H. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research*. Upper Saddle, NJ: Pearson Publishing.
- Seale, J. (2006). *E-learning and disability in higher education*. London: Routledge.
- Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Albright, M., & Zvacek, S. (2005). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education*. 3rd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Smith, R. (2007). *Conquering the content: A step-by-step guide to Web-based course development*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Spector, J.M. (2007). *Finding your online voice: Stories told by experienced online educators*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Weller, M. (2007). *Virtual learning environments: using, choosing, and developing your VLE*. London: Routledge.
- Wood, A.F., & Smith, M.J. (2005, Second Edition). *Online communication: Linking technology, identity, and culture*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Early works for historical reference:

- Harasim, L., Hiltz, S.R., Teles, L., & Turoff, M. (1995). *Learning networks: A field guide to teaching and learning online*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Hiltz, S.R. (1994). *The virtual classroom: Learning without limits*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Mason, R., & Kaye, A. (Eds.). (1989). *Mindweave: Communication, computers, and distance education*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press.

Course Activity Schedule

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Topic/Activity</u> | <u>Reading Tasks</u> |
|-------------|---|--|
| 1, 2 | Introduction, Concepts Online Learning (Forums: We begin Class Bios and a Practice Theme | Rovai: Chapter 1 Spector: Chapters 1 & 3 Articles: (2) |
| 3 | Online Learning Environments, Learning Communities, Communities of Practice (CoP) <u>Student Forums/Discussion Groups: Formal start and continues throughout the term</u> | Rovai: Chapters 3 & 5 Articles (3) |
| 4 | Interaction, Asynchronous and Synchronous Communication | Rovai: Chapter 7 Spector: Chapters 6 & 8 Articles (2) |
| 5 | Learner and Teacher Needs & Requirements <u>Assignment #1 Due on February 1, 2009</u> | Rovai Chapter 2 Spector: Chapters 2 & 7 Article: (1) |
| 6 | Administrative Issues | Rovai: Chapters 4, 9 Article: (1) |
| 7 | Group and Team Learning and Blended Learning | Spector: Chapter 9 Articles: (2) |
| 8 | Best Practices in Online Teaching and Learning <u>Assignment #2 Due on February 22, 2009</u> | Spector: Chapters 4 & 5 Articles: (2) |
| 9 | Evaluation | Rovai: Chapters 6, 8, 10 Spector: Chapter 10 Articles: (2) |
| 10 | Social Networking | Articles: (4) |
| 11 | New Directions/Future Research <u>Assignment #3 Due on March 15, 2009</u> | Rovai: Chapter 11 Spector: Chapter 11 |
| 12 | Wrap Up | |

Note: This reading schedule is only a guide to help you read the text and articles in an organized way. You may read ahead or read several chapters concurrently. Our online discussions will include many themes, but may not necessarily follow the order of the reading schedule. **Reminder:** articles are available online through NSU's Electronic Library. See the Course Guide for full citations of these articles.