

Nova Southeastern University  
Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences

**Course Syllabus**

**DCTE 730 Online Learning Environments (4 credits)**

2009 Fall Term, August 24, 2009 – December 13, 2009 Cluster Format

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**Instructor:** Laurie P. Dringus, Ph.D., Professor  
Graduate School of Computer and Information Sciences  
Nova Southeastern University  
Carl DeSantis Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor (Office 4073)  
3301 College Avenue  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314  
E-mail: [laurie@nsu.nova.edu](mailto:laurie@nsu.nova.edu)  
Office: (954) 262-2073, Fax (954) 262-3915

**Class Location and Format:** Cluster (August 28-30, 2009; October 23-25, 2009) and online

**Course Web Site:** Most course activity is managed through WebCT, except for email exchange. Additional information resources are available from the professor's OLE Study Area website at <http://www.scis.nova.edu/~laurie/index.html>

**Course Description:**

This course covers theory and practice involving online learning systems and online communication processes. It explores models of online learning environments (OLEs) as viable alternatives or supplements to traditional campus or building-based learning. Students will investigate the theoretical, conceptual, instructional, and technical frameworks of implementing and using OLEs in pursuit of lifelong learning. Relevant issues include the technology infrastructure, program development and administration, and most significantly, the Internet as cyberschool.

**Required Textbooks: None.** See "Recent Texts/Bibliography". It is highly recommended that you purchase at least one book from year 2008 or 2009. This could be used as a source for assignments.

**Learning Objectives/Outcomes:**

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

- Research the theoretical, conceptual, and instructional frameworks
- Identify current trends in OLE research
- Synthesize the OLE research literature effectively
- Define and describe online learning environments and identify essential elements that comprise OLEs
- Explore various design considerations for building effective OLEs
- Examine asynchronous and synchronous communication models
- Analyze resources
- Consider the human-computer interaction requirements of learners and mentors
- Evaluate assessment issues such as the student, content, and OLE
- Discuss issues and trends in online learning using online discussion tools
- In online discussions, highlight progressively higher level ideas and share literature sources
- Write effective exploratory papers related to specific issues in OLE research
- Determine major issues of importance for future research.

**Instruction Methods and Tools:**

Students will use WebCT, NSU's official online course management system, to submit DCTE 730 and DCTE 830 coursework. WebCT will be used for our online asynchronous discussions, course announcements, and for assignment submissions. Please note: WebCT email **will not** be used for course correspondence. Students are required to use their NSU SharkLink email accounts to communicate with the professor. No email attachments of assignment submissions will be accepted.

**Required Course Activities and Assignments:**

*Cluster Activities:* Selected topics will be introduced through lecture and discussions during cluster meetings. Students will have the opportunity to further investigate areas of their own interests in OLEs and the concepts and applications discussed in class. Cluster weekend activities include, but will not necessarily be limited to lectures, class/group discussions, student informal presentations of reviews or papers, all depending on time and resources available. Students are required to attend all cluster meetings.

*Online Course Activities:* Students will contribute to Student Forums, an asynchronous discussion forum in WebCT. We will also use a wiki to build a "work-in-progress" resource on effective practices in online and blended learning. Steady contributions throughout the term will count as points toward the class participation grade. See the section on student forums in the addendum Course Guide for instructions/expectations on contributing to online discussions.

**Core Course Requirements:**

**In addition to required participation in asynchronous discussions and full attendance and participation at cluster meetings, the major core course requirements consist of two assignments.** 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 extensive and independent literature research and activity.**

**Assignment #1:** Exploratory paper #1. A 15-20 page paper on a topic from pre-selected topic areas related to OLEs. Substantial literature integration/synthesis is required. In addition, students will discuss their papers in class in the second cluster meeting. Due date to submit through WebCT is: **Sunday, October 11, 2009.**

**Assignment #2:** Exploratory paper #2. A 15-20 page paper on an evaluative/assessment aspect of OLEs. Substantial literature integration/synthesis is required. In addition, students will present Due date is: **Tuesday, December 1, 2009.**

**Grading Criteria For the DCTE 730 Course:**

Assignment #1	75 points
Assignment #2	90 points
Class Participation (online)	35 points
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	200 points

**Grading Scale for DCTE 730:**

A	.....	195-200 points
A-	.....	189-194 points
B+	.....	183-188 points
B	.....	177-182 points
B-	.....	171-176 points
C+	.....	165-170 points
C	.....	159-164 points
F	.....	0-158 points

### **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](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 DCTE 730.*

## **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](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) Attendance at cluster meetings is mandatory. (3) Extensive literature research outside provided sources given in class is required for all work in this course. (4) Follow carefully the course guide and tips for providing quality submissions in this course. (5) Adhere to all deadlines – late arrivals will likely result in point reduction. (6) To receive full class participation points for DCTE 730, every student must make steady contributions to the Forums throughout the term in order to maintain high quality group communication. (7) There will be no incompletes given for DCTE 730. (8) No work from another course may be used in DCTE 730.

### Recent Texts/Bibliography:

**For background purposes, it is highly recommended that you purchase at least one book that has been published in the year 2008 or 2009. Some recommended titles are contained in this list, but check the various publishers for the most current titles. The professor recommends that you read as much as possible on this topic area, including books and journal articles. A comprehensive list of OLE resources is posted on the professor's OLE Study Area website.**

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/](http://cde.athabascau.ca/online_book/).

Bender, T. (2003). *Discussion-based online teaching to enhance student learning: Theory, practice, and assessment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Bonk, C.J. (2009). *The world is open*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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

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

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

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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.
- Koschmann, T., Suthers, D.D., & Chan, T-W. (Eds.). (2005). *Computer supported collaborative learning 2005. The next ten years!* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- 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.
- Richardson, W. (2009). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful tools for the classrooms*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Rovai, A.P. (2009). *The Internet and higher education: Achieving global reach*. Oxford, UK: Chandos Publishing.
- 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.
- 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.

Yonaitis, R.B. (2007). *Understanding accessibility: A guide to achieving compliance on web sites and intranets*. Nashua, New Hampshire: HiSoftware, Inc.

**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.

Sproull, L., & Kiesler, S. (1991). *Connections: New ways of working in the networked organization*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.