INST 5220: Communication in Online Learning Communities
Educational Technology
Dept of Career & Technology Education
College of Education
University of Central Missouri

Spring 2009
(Jan 13 – May 8)

COURSE SYLLABUS

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Teaching Assistant: Ms. Rachel Thompson
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Skype: rachel.yvonne

Communication
There are several modes of communication for this course. If you have general questions about the course, there is a designated area in Blackboard. Questions posted here enable the entire class to read the question and the response. Additionally, I check my email regularly so feel free to contact me via email at with any questions. Other means of contact may include phone, instant message, and office visits. I will usually respond within 24 hours (excluding weekends).

Class meeting times
This course is entirely online using Blackboard course management software. Course access is located at: http://courses.ucmo.edu

Description of the course
Students examine theoretical and practical aspects of communication and collaboration focusing on online communication and its affects on online learning communities. This is a three credit hour course.
Purpose of the course
Language theory and computer mediated communication (CMC) research will be used to promote understanding of the affordances and obstacles of communicating in online learning communities. This research is applied to online communication in K-12 settings, workplace training, and higher education settings.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
Belief Statement
The Central educator is a competent, caring, reflective practitioner committed to the premise that all can learn.

Mission
As a cornerstone of the institution for over 130 years, the University of Central Missouri's Teacher Education Program develops teachers and other school professionals who are well grounded in theory, display competence in content knowledge and instructional strategies, and possess the dispositions to ensure success for all learners. The Teacher Education Program prepares individuals as professional educators for an ever-changing, culturally diverse population. Faculty and candidates provide support and service to schools in meeting their present and future challenges by developing communities that learn through research and scholarly activities. Educator preparation is a campus-wide responsibility, a commitment that reflects the honor and worth of serving a vital profession.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE
Upon the completion of this course the student will be able to:
1. Describe characteristics of online communities
2. Evaluate structural elements of online communities
3. Present instances of problems that have occurred in online communities
4. Build a sense of community in an online environment
5. Apply principles of CMC to instructional situations
6. Recognize and create opportunities to enhance instruction using CMC
7. Analyze communication breakdowns in CMC
8. Recognize challenges to online teaching and learning
9. Diagnose difficulties individual students encounter during online instruction
10. Solve problems that occur when teaching online
11. Evaluate communication in online learning communities

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
The teaching method will require students to use the online classroom provided in Blackboard. The majority of course interaction will take place over this medium. It is expected that students will login a few times each week in order to stay informed and participate in class discussions. Furthermore, students are expected to check their student email regularly. Standard rules of conduct for netiquette are expected.
As a graduate level course, students are expected to fully participate in all online activities. For example, if a discussion board question is assigned at the beginning of the week. Students are expected to post a response prior to the discussion question due date. If students only log in and post their response to questions on the date that the discussion is due, it hinders the ability of other students to read postings and thoughtfully respond. This is unacceptable. Discussions should take place throughout the entire week. Additionally, in the discussion board, students are responsible for posting their response to a particular question and responding to at least 2 of their classmates.

When posting on the discussion board, comments should be thoughtful and substantive. While an occasional “Nice job” or “I agree” is always appreciated, your post should offer substantive commentary and provide an opportunity to further the conversation. Discussions may take many forms including reflective, affirmative (with examples), clarification questions, challenge (friendly challenges among colleagues), etc. Keep in mind the relationship between quality and quantity of posts.

Assignments must be word processed, spell checked, and adhere to APA guidelines (double spaced, 12 pt font Times Roman, 1” margins, citations in APA format). Documents shared with classmates should always be in a compatible format so that everyone in the class can view them: Microsoft Word 1997-2003 (.doc or .rtf), PowerPoint (.ppt), html, or Acrobat (.pdf). If you do not have Microsoft Office consider OpenOffice as an alternative (openoffice.org). Please do not save Word documents as .docx as many students do not yet have the latest version. Finally, name all of your assignments in the following manner – LastName.Project. For example, if I were turning in an article review assignment in Microsoft Word it would have the following name: kerr.articlerewv. Or, if I were turning in a concept map assignment, it would have the following name: kerr.conceptmap. Always use your last name, the assignment, and do not put any spaces in the naming of your files.

Technology
Students will need a web browser with Internet access, Microsoft Office or compatible, Adobe Reader, and occasionally other plug-ins when visiting web sites. You may also consider purchasing a webcam, microphone, and headset.

Evaluation of the course
Grades will be figured using the standard scale.
100-90% = A  89-80% = B  79-70% =C  69-60%=D  59% and below=F

Instructor created rubrics will be used to evaluate subjective assignments. Feedback will usually be provided via Blackboard discussion boards, from the instructor and from other students. Occasionally, the instructor may need to email students for additional feedback. Up-to-date grades can be found through Blackboard within Tools | Check Grade. The student will always have the option to ask for additional feedback if desired.

Late work will be marked down one letter grade unless prior arrangements are made. Each week thereafter that the assignment is not turned in, it will be reduced an additional
letter grade. No late work will be accepted beyond three weeks after an assignment is due. Assignments must be submitted early if you know you will be unavailable when something is due. It is to your benefit to submit assignments earlier in the week rather than at the last minute in case technical problems or other difficulties arise. Incomplete grades for the course will NOT be issued upon request.

Note: if Blackboard is down and it prevents you from posting assignments, please post as soon as possible after the system is back up. Blackboard failures, while rare, are possible and you will not lose points if your assignment is late for that reason.

Early Alert
As part of the College of Education commitment to building a positive, student-centered learning community that supports the success of every student, the faculty member instructing this course participates in the UCM Early Alert Program.

ADA
Students with documented disabilities who are seeking academic accommodations should contact the Office of Accessibility Services, Union 222, (Voice and TTY) 660-543-4421.

Academic Honesty
Honesty in all endeavors is essential to the function of society. Honesty in the classroom among students and between students and faculty is a matter that should concern everyone in the University Community. Please see the Central Student Handbook for the complete policy, student responsibilities, and procedures for enforcement http://www.ucmo.edu/x71440.xml

Get help @ your library!
You may access your library account, the online catalog, and electronic databases from James C. Kirkpatrick Library’s website at http://library.ucmo.edu. For research assistance, you may contact the Reference Desk:

Phone: 543-4154   Email: reference@libserv.ucmo.edu
AIM: JCKLReference

Mailing list
Each student is expected to subscribe to the listserv maintained by the department. Important information may be missed by students who are not subscribed.

For more information see http://www.ucmo.edu/x100422.xml

Textbooks for the course
There are 2 required textbooks for this course:

Videoconferencing, audioconferencing, and computer--mediated communication.
Santa Monica, CA: RAND.

Recommended
Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington: American Psychological
Association.
The APA text is needed throughout the program for formatting papers in all courses.

Textbooks can be purchased from the University Store, in person or via a distance and
then shipped to you (1.800.330.7698 or http://www.ucmbookstore.com).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Overview of Major Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 13 – 18</td>
<td>Course Intro</td>
<td>Ning account set up and reply to at least 3 classmates account. Due: 1/18 and 1/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 19 - 25</td>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>Holiday: Martin Luther King – Monday Jan 19 Assigned reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 26 – Feb 1</td>
<td>Literature/Asynchronous</td>
<td>Read: Wainfan &amp; Davis, Ch 1-2; Conrad &amp; Donaldson, Ch 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 2 – 8</td>
<td>Literature/Asynchronous</td>
<td>Read: Wainfan &amp; Davis, Ch 3 - 4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 9 – 15</td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>Read: Conrad &amp; Donaldson, Ch 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 16 – 22</td>
<td>Synchronous</td>
<td>Due: Structured Group Chat by 2/22</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 22 – Mar 1</td>
<td>Second Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 2 – 8</td>
<td>Second Life</td>
<td>Due: Second Life Assignment 3/22</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 9 – 15</td>
<td>Web 2.0</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 16 – 22</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mar 23 – 29</td>
<td>Designing Instruction/Collaboration</td>
<td>Student Led Discussions: Conrad &amp; Donaldson, Ch 4, 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar 30 – Apr 5</td>
<td>Designing Instruction/</td>
<td>Student Led Discussions: Conrad &amp; Donaldson, Ch 7, 8</td>
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The course calendar serves as a guide. However, there may be modifications to the calendar as deemed necessary by the instructor. Always check your assignments within the Blackboard course site.

**Course Projects (Total possible points = 1000)**

**Assignment and Point Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
<th>Points Obtained</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online Activities and Participation</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Ning Account Setup/Introduction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Synchronous: Chat</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Synchronous: Second Life</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Student Led Discussions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Adobe Connect/Skype</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Asynchronous: One way - Design of Training Materials (NCATE)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Course Reflection</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
<td></td>
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ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Online Activities and Participation (200 points)
There will be online discussions and activities throughout the semester. This will include the general Discussion Board and Group Discussions, with some variation depending on the size of the class. With each activity you are expected to respond to the initial questions as well as interact with at least two classmates in a discussion. Grading is based on the frequency and regularity of logins (2-3 times per week is standard), on time completion of all discussion board activities (posting throughout the week vs. initial post on the due date, the quantity of post (answer assigned questions and respond to at least 2 classmates), and depth of online discussions.

Two attendance / participation grades will be provided, covering the first (100 points) and the second (100 points) halves of the semester. This will allow students to adjust their activities as the semester progresses. (Standards: 5.3)

Grading Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Target 200 - 161</th>
<th>Acceptable 160 - 141</th>
<th>Unacceptable 140 – 0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity of discussion posts</td>
<td>Posts new thread and two replies to other messages throughout the week</td>
<td>Posts a single message per board assignment at least three days before the due date.</td>
<td>Post a single message at the end of the week, or does not post weekly on the discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of discussion posts</td>
<td>Ties together readings, concepts, experiences, and other posts, contributing to an in depth discussion</td>
<td>Posts touch on readings and experience</td>
<td>Short and uninformative posts that do not add to the discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blackboard logins</td>
<td>Logs in at least 2 or 3 times per week</td>
<td>Logs in only 1 time per week</td>
<td>Logs in less than once per week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Posts are clear and easy to follow</td>
<td>Posts are readable and can be understood</td>
<td>Difficult to understand the point of the messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200 - 161</td>
<td>Target</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160 – 141</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140 – 0</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>C or below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ning Account Setup/Introduction (100 points)
This course will use Ning, an online social networking tool. During the first week, students are required to set up a Ning account and create a profile on our course page. Additionally, students are to post an introduction, introducing themselves to their classmates. Next, identify 3 classmates with whom you have similarities or differences. Finally, post a brief reply (2-3 sentences) to the 3 identified persons discussing your similarities or differences. Post your responses within our course ning site. You may use this site to connect with your peers throughout the semester. You must have your account profile set up by January 18 and you should have responded to 3 peers by January 20.

Synchronous: Structured Group Chat (100 points):
Students will participate in a group text chat. Use the course wiki (under Assignments on Blackboard) to find common times when everyone is available. The purpose is to utilize the chat features to see how it works. Each student should participate. See Collaboration under your Group Discussion Board.

Synchronous: Second Life (100 points):
Students will meet in Second Life (SL) to discuss plans for SL assignment. Using the course wiki (under Assignments on Blackboard), choose one SL orientation session. After, the orientation, you will engage in a group or individual assignment in SL. Send me your avatar name by March 1, 2009 so that I can teleport you to our orientation location. You will complete an individual or group project within SL.

Asynchronous: Two way - Lead Discussion (100 points):
Students will sign up for a specific week of the semester covering certain chapters from the textbook, and then lead an asynchronous discussion on Blackboard. Students should be prepared to post initial questions, and then follow through that discussion for the week by posting follow up questions and comments as necessary.

Adobe Connect/Skype (100 points):
Using the course wiki (under Assignments on Blackboard), choose one Adobe Connect session. You will be provided a link to Adobe Connect. We will discuss your individual project (training materials) over this medium. After we have utilized Adobe connect, you will write a 2-3 page paper describing the instructional implications of the technology. If students are unable to join in any of the Adobe Connect sessions, please schedule a Skype session with me to discuss your project. Similarly, you will write a brief reflective essay over the instructional implications of this technology.

Asynchronous: One way Design of Training Materials (200 points)
Students will prepare training materials that could be utilized in a real world online setting. Additionally, materials could be geared toward K-12 school staff, higher education, business, or industry. Assume that this professional development online workshop would take the place of a traditional face-to-face workshop. You may utilize any combination of asynchronous (e.g., Word Documents, PowerPoint, PDF, html, podcast) you want to provide these materials. Topics may cover anything related to technology and education. The point is partially the content, but largely on using these tools to design the delivery of instruction, and utilizing a proper instructional design model.
Do not go overboard with this assignment. The primary focus will be on the instructional materials you produce. However, some basic instructional design processes as described below will help guide this process. Keep these sections brief. For example, you may end up with at least two documents: a couple pages total for the pages below, and the actual instructional materials.

Be sure that the following are woven into your design:

- Learner and context analysis – Description of the students and their needs
- Task analysis – Sequencing of instructional tasks and overview of instructional event
- Learning objectives – What the student should get out of this instruction
- Strategies – Method of instruction, i.e. description of how the material is being presented
- Instructional materials – Actual presentation/documentation materials (PowerPoint or other)
- Evaluation – Survey, test, or other form that you would use to determine successful learning if this were actually taught

Course Reflection (100 points):
Summative assessment: Students will complete a 4-5 page reflective essay as a self-evaluation of the semester. Include in this essay brief, yet specific connections to the AECT standards (design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation). Consider how the class benefited you and how you will apply this knowledge in the future. Complete details on the domains and sub-domains can be found under AECT Standards from the AECT SPA website at http://ncate.org/public/programStandards.asp?ch=4#AECT  (Standards: All)
Recommended Readings


Organization Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 52, 96-123.


