

CT 918: Developing and Teaching an Online Course
Fall 2011
Syllabus

Instructors

Don Vescio (Worcester State College)

- Email: dvescio@worcester.edu (I respond to all email within one working day and, most of the time, sooner.)
- Office Telephone: 508.929.8444 (Leave a message; I return all calls within one working day.)
- Office Hours: M,W, 7:15 – 8 PM (online via email and chat) and by appointment

Tom Thibodeau (New England Institute of Technology)

- Email: tthibodeau@neit.edu
- Office Telephone: 401-739-500 (Leave a message; I return all calls within one working day.)
- Office Hours: T,R, 7:15 – 8 PM (online via email and chat) and by appointment

Course Dates: September 12, 2011 – October 28, 2011

Course Location: Virtual – it's all online!

Course Times: All course interaction, excepting one simple assignment, will be conducted asynchronously – this means you can work at times most convenient for you.

Course Week: The course week runs Wednesday through Tuesday.

Required Texts: All readings will be available online.

Course Description: This course will provide an introduction to the theory and practice of online course design and pedagogical practices. Participants will learn how to:

- develop content for online presentation;
- establish dynamic online collaborative student communities;
- assess and test student performance in online learning environments; and
- leverage the functionality of common learning management systems (e.g., Blackboard) and content management systems (e.g., Microsoft's SharePoint) to achieve rich and interactive online course experiences.

This course is appropriate for anyone who is interested in teaching completely online or who wishes to augment a traditional face-to-face course with online interaction. Participants will be expected:

- to be able to send and receive email messages and attachments;
- browse websites; and
- have consistent access to a reliable internet connection.

All course material will be presented online in an asynchronous fashion, with the exception of *one* simple synchronous exercise.

Time Commitment

- Assume approximately two-three hours/week of active work in the course
- All but one activity will take place in an asynchronous fashion – in other words, you will be able to participate in most activities at a time convenient for you.
- There will be multiple scheduled opportunities to participate in the synchronous activities.

Participation Expectations

- Participation is demonstrated through regular and thoughtful interaction in discussion board and email activities
- Daily participation in the course is much more preferable than batching activity on the day that an assignment is due.

- Discussion board posts should demonstrate some engagement in the discourse:
 - **Really Bad:** "Ditto"
 - **Not So Good:** "Great thought, Jim!"
 - **Much Better:** "Jim, I thought that your analysis of the no significant difference debate missed an important point, that technology-based pedagogies assume a certain level of economic resources. While I agree with you in that technology-based pedagogies..."

Due Dates and Disaster Recovery

- Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be completed by 11.59 P.M. of the published due dates.
- Plan ahead and make local copies in Word or another format of all materials submitted or posted online in the event of systems failure.
- If you encounter specific hardware or network problems that prohibit you from completing an assignment on time, contact me immediately via telephone, email, or fax.
- If you experience recurrent technical problems that prohibit you from completing multiples assignments, you may be asked to re-enroll into the course at a future date.

Technology Expectations

- Regular access to a PC or laptop
- Broadband internet connection
- Ability to send and receive email and email attachments
- MS Office *or* OpenOffice (see <http://www.openoffice.org>) applications
- Adobe's Acrobat PDF reader (available free from <http://www.adobe.com>)
- Simple computer microphone

Texts/Content/Assignments

- There are no textbooks to purchase for this course (given the rapid pace of technology change, most traditional print-based texts are out of date prior to their distribution)
- All required readings will be available online.
- At the beginning of each week, we will provide you with an audio summary of the topics that we will explore.
- We will post each week's assignments by 8.00 P.M., Wednesday evenings.

Course Topics

Week One: Working Online

- Introduction to Online Learning Management Systems
- Online Instructional Design: Overview of Best Practices
- Discussion Boards

Week Two: Building Community

- Moderating Online Discussion
- Blogging
- Building Online Community

Week Three: Communication

- Technology-based Response Strategies
- Podcasting
- Community Knowledge Formation

Week Four: Learning Online

- Mechanics of Online Information Acquisition
- Assignment Design
- Academic Honesty

Week Five: Online Assessment

- Assessing Student Performance
- Online Testing Theory and Practice
- Online Content and Copyright

Week Six: Putting Theory into Practice

- Presentation Formats
- Online Course Portfolio Due
 - Sample syllabus
 - Representative assignments
 - Representative transactional activities
 - Representative tests and assessments

Evaluation

1. Regular and thoughtful participation in online discussion: 20%¹
2. Blog/Online Journaling: 10%²
3. Annotated Bibliography: 20%³
4. Online Course Portfolio: 40%⁴
5. Self-assessment of Teaching Practices: 10%⁵

¹See **Participation Expectations**, above

²A blog is a type of online journal; you'll make two to three entries per week on topics of interest to you. The entries can be short, very informal, and even point to other online resources, such as video, etc.

³Your annotated bibliography should focus on content, approaches, and strategies appropriate for teaching a course within your specific discipline online.

⁴The following items to constitute your teaching portfolio:

- Full Course Syllabus
- Representative Assignments (first three weeks of the semester/session would be ideal)
- Representative Transactional Activities (really a subset of above; discussion boards, email, chat--if used, etc.)
- Representative tests/assessments
- ~750-1000 word self-assessment: what are your pedagogical values and how will they translate into an online learning environment
- Annotated Bibliography (a listing of web-based resources that would be of use to faculty who wish to teach online within your specific discipline; there is no specific number of items required for this component)

⁵This is a 750-1000 word self-assessment of your pedagogical values and how they might be realized in an online learning environment.

Instructor Biography - Don Vescio

Currently, I am the Chief Information Officer at Worcester State University. I have been an administrator at Worcester State for seven years; prior to this, I was a faculty member of Worcester State's Department of Language and Literature. As you probably can sense, my professional background and interests are eclectic: my graduate training focused on critical theory, information design, and postmodern literacies; I run a consultancy (now in its thirteenth year) that provides information architecture and design services for application developers in the finance and investment sectors; and I continue to teach a wide range of literature and theory courses on at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

I grew up in a small town on Lake Ontario, spent time in Fairbanks, AK after high school, and lived in most of the New England states. I now reside in Grafton, MA, with my wife, Elaine (also an online teacher at WSC), and my three daughters: Maggie (16), Gabriella (7), and Chloe (2). Both my wife and I are competitive cyclists (we met many years ago through a local western New York racing club) and I've competed regionally and nationally for more years than I care to admit. Finally, I'm a passionate amateur astronomer who enjoys the night sky with my three daughters-but not my wife (who cannot understand our fascination with little white dots in the sky).

Instructor Biography - Tom Thibodeau

I am an Assistant Provost at New England Institute of Technology and the Director of the Center for Distributed Learning. My responsibilities include faculty development, the use of academic computing resources, online resources (especially Blackboard) and a variety of administrative tasks. I started at New England Tech 20 years ago as an adjunct faculty member and progressed to an associate professor in video production. Along the way, I helped create and chaired a new Multimedia and Internet communications program. I also have twenty years of experience in the video production industry as a videographer and online editor.

I live in Seekonk, Ma. But have spent a lot of time in Worcester as that is my wife Kathy's hometown. I have three children: Katie, a seventh grade English teacher who has three kids; Lindie, a marketing consultant who just completed an Interior Design program and got married and Jeremy, who is an architect working for a firm in Washington. We all love animals and all have at least one cat or dog. My son Jeremy got us all involved in the Cheetah Conservation Fund when he was 8 and we were known for a while as the "Cheetah Family" and have been on the Discovery Channel's "Animal Rescuers" program....(that's a real long story).