GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
Instructional Design and Technology
EDIT 772 DL1: Learning in Virtual Worlds (2 graduate credit hours)
Fall 2014
(October 13 – December 15)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Name: Dr. Karen Cooper
Email: kcoope12@gmu.edu
Phone: 407-902-9545
Virtual Office hours (in-world): Day or evenings by appointment via phone, email, or web.
Class times: Monday evenings, October 13 through December 15, 2014 from 6:30-8:00pm.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION
Provides basic knowledge of available applications and platforms for creating contextually based learning environments such as immersive virtual worlds, simulated worlds, alternate reality games, and massive multiplayer online role-playing games for e-learning.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Virtual Worlds feature autonomous, animated online communities in an experientially rich, immersive setting with benefits for education, training, and research as well as individual and social use. This course examines the terminology, skills, culture, and strategies that promote expertise and successful instruction in virtual worlds. Students use a hands-on approach to experience virtual world concepts and constructs, develop virtual world skills, explore virtual educational designs, investigate the risks and benefits of 3D immersive environments, and identify pedagogically grounded strategies for enhancing instructional value and effectiveness.

PREREQUISITES
This is a technology-rich course. Basic computer skills including downloading, installation and general use of software is necessary, along with the ability to configure and use speakers and a microphone.
A basic understanding of learning theory and instructional design is needed as this class focuses on '*Learning* in Virtual Worlds'. No computer programming or 3D building experience is necessary.
While no virtual world prior experience is needed, in order to successfully interact and participate in the class, please refer to and be prepared (!) in accordance with the **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS** section below.

** It is a fun class too(!) but it is important that you prepare prior to class. If a student is either not prepared or has technical difficulties, the class will not be able to stop because of one student – this is not fair! If a student has difficulty participating, they will lose participation credit for that class, and be required to follow-up with a classmate for material missed.

COURSE MEETING DATES
(Monday) October 13, 2014 through (Monday) December 8 (or 15), 2014
Each of the class sessions will be held in-world in the virtual world of Second Life from 6:30pm to 8:00pm. The instructor will be in-world beginning 6:00pm.
This is an 8 week course. The first week, Week 0, on October 13 is optional. It is an opportunity for students to login, meet, test their hardware, and headsets/audio. Class

official begins Week 1, on October 20th. Students will be expected to be prepared and have their hardware and software tested prior.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY
The skills and competencies required to design and instruct in a virtual world will be acquired through a blend of in-world discussions, online supplemental reading materials, and online and in-world investigation of videos, podcasts, journal articles, and virtual builds and establishments. There are eight required synchronous class meetings, as well as an expected two to four hours each week reading, investigating, and preparing for the next in-world class.

Class meetings are structured as follows:
The first part will be the virtual field trip. We will meet at a different location each week and begin by discussing aspects/designs/elements of the location.
The second part will be devoted to discussion on key topics, demonstrations, class exercises, and discussions.
The third part will be open discussion – this will be learner driven (!)
The final part of each class time will be wrap-up and assignments for the following week.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS
This is a technology-rich course. It is a fun class too(!) but it is important that you prepare prior to our first class.   In order to successfully interact with media and participate in the synchronous portions of the course you will need access to the following:
1. Students shall be ready for the first class with speakers and microphone that have been tested. A headset with microphone is strongly preferred. Headsets can be purchased for about $20-30. If a headset is not an option, external or built-in speakers and microphone may work as a substitute.
2. Access to a broadband internet connection (DSL, Cable, T1, T3)*. Wired connection is strongly preferable over wireless connection.
3. A computer system that meets the recommended system requirements found here: http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/
    NOTE: NETBOOKS are usually inadequate to run the software we will be using. Check the system requirements and contact the instructor if you have questions.
4. The Second Life client application downloaded and installed**. Administrator rights on the computer are needed to install and run the program.
5. A Second Life avatar**. It is strongly recommended that a people avatar be selected (vs. an animal, robot or vehicle avatar). This helps to foster believability in an educational setting (we will be discussing further in class!).
6. Successful login to Second Life and completion of the Second Life Orientation (default location at initial login)**.

* It is also very important for you to have a high-speed internet connection for optimal performance. While wi-fi is sufficient if the signal is strong enough, a hard wire (cable) connection is preferred. An aircard (including mi-fi's) usually cannot sustain the bandwidth requirements for optimal participation.

** Complete Getting-Started information is available at http://secondlife.com or https://join.secondlife.com/ Click the 'Join Now for Free' button.

Students with any questions or concerns should contact the professor prior to class. The first office hour (optional) will be held in-world prior to class on October 13, 2014 from 6:00-7:00pm, as an opportunity to students to receive additional help.

TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS
Kapp, Karl M., O'Driscoll, Tony (2010). *Learning in 3D,* San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
ISBN 978-0-470-50473-4
Second Life client (version 3.0 or later); Second Life avatar.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS
You will learn to navigate, build, and evaluate virtual worlds and design to their practical, applied and instructional potential.

Your terminal objective is to demonstrate how and when to recommend a virtual world to any audience with qualified value relating to effectiveness, quality, cost, and performance.

EXPECTATIONS:
Course Week: Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.

Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which include viewing of all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students are expected to seek assistance if they are struggling with technical components of the course.

Technical Issues: Students should expect that they could experience some technical difficulties at some point in the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Advising: If you would like to schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues, we can meet via telephone or web conference. Send me an email to schedule your one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

Netiquette: Our goal is to be collaborative, not combative. Experience shows that even an innocent remark in the online environment can be misconstrued. I suggest that you always re-read your responses carefully before you post them to encourage others from taking them as personal attacks. Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic with your words. I will do the same. Remember, you are not competing with each other but sharing information and learning from one another as well as from the instructor.

LEARNER OUTCOMES / COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to enable students to:
1. Conceptualize, design, and instruct a virtual world educational course.
2. Develop virtual world skills in navigation, camera controls, inventory management, 3D object manipulation, content sharing and communication.
3. Evaluate a virtual world culture and the effect it has on education, research and social practices in a global environment.
4. Identify and critically evaluate the strategy and tactics needed to plan, conduct and leverage virtual education and training, collaboration, research, and virtual seminars.
5. Demonstrate best practices for designing instruction in a virtual world.
6. Locate educational content, content experts and communities of practice in 3D virtual spaces.
7. Examine the human element within virtual worlds including the benefits and

consequences of virtual identity, authentication, engagement, experience and perception, as well as social filters and barriers.

8.   Identify and discuss the social, interpersonal, cultural, instructional, technical implications of virtual worlds.

9.   Research the relevant literature in the field and investigate the current best practices as documented in the literature.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The course will emphasize a critical thinking approach to education. A critical thinking approach assumes that the student and not the instructor create knowledge. Students must actively question and reflect on the material, vice passively absorb it. Therefore, classes will use a discussion format with extensive student involvement.

The class activities will also engage the students to actively create new knowledge through direct experience. The student must think critically, not just memorize facts. Active participation and cooperation is expected during class time, with online discussions and in-world activities.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction (ibstpi)

Professional Foundations

Apply current research and theory to the practice of instructional design.
Apply fundamental research skills to instructional design projects.

Planning and Analysis

Design a lesson plan or class.
Select and use a variety of techniques for determining instructional content.
Analyze the characteristics of existing and emerging technologies and their use in an instructional environment.

Design and Development

Select, modify, and create a design and development model appropriate for a given project.
Develop instructional materials.
Evaluate and assess instruction and its impact.

GMU POLICIES AND RESOURES FOR STUDENTS

a. Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/].

b. Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/].

c. Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

d. The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See http://caps.gmu.edu/].

e. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See http://ods.gmu.edu/].

f. Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
g. The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/].
h. For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, Graduate School of Education, please visit our website [See http://gse.gmu.edu/]

PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS
Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT
The College of Education & Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles. http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/

COURSE EXPECTATIONS
On time attendance in class is mandatory as discussions, virtual field trips, and hands-on activities are important parts of the course.

Each student is expected to complete all readings and prior homework assignments, and participate in class discussions, as well as and contribute to asynchronous threaded discussions as assigned by the instructor.

Students who must miss a class are responsible for notifying the instructor in advance, and for completing any assignments, readings, etc. Students' in-world participation grade is based on the best seven out of eight weekly participation grades. This accommodates students missing one class as long as prior notice is received. Students without giving prior notice will receive a 0 for class participation for that week that will be factored into their grade.

The class schedule may change as the course progresses – this is a dynamic class with a learner-centric approach. Changes will be posted on the course Blackboard site under **Announcements.** The instructor will respond to student questions/requests within 48 hours.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
1. Portfolio/Blog of weekly assignments and course activity
2. In-world class discussions
3. Online discussions
4. Matching Game
5. Final Project - Lesson Plan, Project Plan, or Story Board

1. Portfolio of weekly assignments – Throughout the course, students will develop an online, learning and growth portfolio. This portfolio will be on Blackboard in the Blog section, and should reflect an understanding of virtual worlds as an instructional media delivery platform option. The portfolio will consist of original work, references, papers, slurls, urls, lesson plan, videos, examples, ideas.
2. In-world class discussions – dynamic, real-time discussion of topic and concepts. Constructive, insightful, thought-provoking and reflective contributions to the discussion.
3. Online discussions – posted on Blackboard. Constructive, insightful, thought-provoking and reflective contributions to the question(s) posted. Constructive, insightful, thought-provoking and reflective contributions to your classmates' posts.

4. Matching Game – Activity for matching terms with definitions
5. Final Project - final Presentation of Lesson Plan, Project Plan, or Story Board to the class on Instructional design idea using a virtual world. To include a critical analysis, explanation of why, and the affordances thereof.

CLASS SCHEDULE
This 2 graduate credit hour course is designed to be completed in eight weeks. Assignments are clustered in weekly modules. These topics may be subject to change(!)

MODULE 1: Navigation
October 20, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Movement, Communication, Environment settings, Objects and Inventory
Virtual Field Trip, Stories, Examples, Discussion, Assignment

MODULE 2: VW Concepts and Constructs
October 27, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Theory, Definition, Media Delivery Platform
Virtual Field Trip, Stories, Examples, Discussion, Assignment

MODULE 3: Building
November 3, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Internal tools, external resources, Importing/Exporting, Web 2.0 Incorporating, Tools for Measuring, Effective Designing
Virtual Field Trip, Stories, Examples, Discussion, Assignment

MODULE 4: Capabilities, Affordabilities, and Design of the Virtual Space
November 10, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Transcending time and space, filter of safety, distributed creation, crowd sourcing
Virtual Field Trip, Stories, Examples, Discussion, Assignment

MODULE 5: Other Virtual Worlds
November 17, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Taxonomies, prominent options for education and instruction
Virtual Field Trip, Stories, Examples, Discussion, Assignment

MODULE 6: The Human Element
November 24 or December 1, 2014 6:30-8:00pm (we will vote)
The people, the Learner, Identity, Presence, Co Presence, Temporary Suspension of Disbelief Role Play, Fail Safe

MODULE 7: Best Practices in Instructional Design
December 1 or 8, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Empirical Research, Instructional Goals, Best Practices in ISD
Also cover: Region Ratings, Adult content, Lindens

MODULE 8: Presentations
December 8 or 15, 2014 6:30-8:00pm
Presentation of Final Project - Lesson Plan, Project Plan, or Story Board

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC
The **maximum** number of possible points for this class is **200.** The evaluation of your assignments and final project is based on the extent to which you used research, literature and relevant resources as the foundation for the design and implementation of the module.

The criteria below apply to all assignments, each of the in-world class and online discussions (participation), and the final project (lesson plan and storyboard).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS, PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION CRITERIA
1. Portfolio (Class Blog) = 25% (48 points)
2. In-world class discussions = 25% (49 points)
3. Online discussions = 20% (40 points)
4. Matching Game = 5% (13 points)
5. Final Project = 25% (50 points)

GRADING SCALE
    A+ = 97-100; Distinguished
    A   = 94-96; Excellent
    A- = 90-93; Very Good
    B+ = 87-89; Good
    B   = 83-86; Satisfactory
    B- = 80-82; Minimally Satisfactory
    F   = 79 & below, Unsatisfactory at the Graduate Level

Distinguished
- Objectives/learning outcomes are clearly revealed; elected illustrations clearly demonstrate course goals, in 100% of learners' interactions.
- Exemplary use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Exemplary use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Clearly communicated and well-reflected, informed assignments; content is logically and succinctly presented

Excellent
- Objectives/learning outcomes are clearly revealed; elected illustrations demonstrate course goals, in 90% of learners' interactions.
- Excellent use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Excellent use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Clearly communicated and well-reflected, informed assignments; content is logically and succinctly presented

Very Good
- Objectives/learning outcomes are clearly revealed; elected illustrations demonstrate course goals, in 80% of learners' interactions.
- Substantial use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Substantial use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Clearly communicated and well-reflected assignments; content is logically and succinctly presented

Good
- Objectives/learning outcomes are often revealed; elected illustrations demonstrate course goals, in 70% of learners' interactions.
- Appropriate use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Appropriate use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Communicated and reflected assignments; content is generally logical and succinctly presented

Satisfactory

- Objectives/learning outcomes are somewhat revealed; elected illustrations demonstrate course goals, in more than half of learners' interactions.
- Adequate use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Adequate use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Communicated assignments; content is somewhat logical and succinctly presented

Minimally Satisfactory
- Objectives/learning outcomes are barely revealed; elected illustrations demonstrate course goals, in only half of learners' interactions.
- Minimal use of visual and auditory stimuli and activities to create a sense of virtual community
- Minimal use of a variety of tools and technologies
- Completed Assignments; content is barely logical as presented

Unsatisfactory at the Graduate Level
- Objectives/learning outcomes are not clearly revealed
- Minimal/ no use of visual and auditory stimuli to create a   sense of virtual community
- Poor/inappropriate use of tools   and technologies
- Missing, incomplete, or unclear communication of assignments