

EC&I 831: Social Media & Open Education
Faculty of Education - University of Regina

Fall Semester 2014: Section 397
Online Course - Synchronous Sessions Tuesdays at 7pm
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1.0 Course Description and Objectives

1.1 Course Description

In the last few years, the world of educational technology has changed significantly. Many new tools that allow for easy communication and collaboration (e.g., Web 2.0 tools, free & open source software) have emerged and we are witnessing unique educational and social events. Blogging has become a worldwide phenomenon. Collaborative websites such as Wikipedia have emerged to challenge our assumptions and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and the processes of knowledge creation. Video-sharing sites like Youtube have changed the way individuals share their voices and experiences, and sites like these have become outlets for political, cultural, and educational conversations.

In light of these shifts in culture, this course provides an immersive experience where students gain a theoretical and practical understanding of social media for teaching, learning, and professional development. Blogs, wikis, microblogging, RSS, social bookmarking, social curation, and media sharing will be explored. The course also focuses on changing views of knowledge, emerging literacies, and the development of personal learning networks.

The course has an integral online component. This includes two key components. First, all of the classes will be facilitated online via webconferencing. You can participate in these from home (or wherever you have access to a computer & Internet). Second, there is an expectation that course interaction will occur outside of scheduled class times in our virtual community, student blogs, and other social networking services. Your instructors will provide more information about these interactions.

1.2 Course Objectives

Throughout this course, students will:

- better understand the historical role technology and media have played in educational and social change;
- become knowledgeable of social learning tools for teaching, facilitating learning, professional development, and designing educational environments;
- become familiar with the wealth of open educational resources (OERs), MOOCs, learning-related content, and media available for teaching and learning;
- become knowledgeable of relevant educational theories and philosophies that inform teaching and learning in the digital age;
- better understand the many social, ethical, political, cultural, and administrative issues often associated with technology and media in education and society;
- become critical consumers *and* producers of digital media and information; and
- build sustainable, personal learning environments and networks.

2.0 Resource Materials

There is no required text for this course. During the course, a variety of materials will be accessed and/or made available online. There will be no additional materials charge. We will do our best to create a paperless classroom environment.

The majority of resources for this course will come from online sources. You will be introduced to many top educational leaders through their blogs and social networking/curation spaces. They will, in turn, expose you to many resources found across the Internet. In the end, *people* will be your most important resources, a concept much more powerful than any one textbook on any given subject.

3.0 Special Announcements

3.1 Special Needs

Any student with a disability, injury, or illness who feels they may need academic accommodation should discuss this with the course instructor after contacting the Centre for Student Accessibility, located in Riddell Centre 251, phone 306-585-4631, e-mail accessibility@uregina.ca.

3.2 Attendance and Punctuality

Regular and punctual attendance is expected (university policy) at all times. It is especially important in the Faculty of Education because courses are often based on participation and

experiential learning rather than lecture. As well, group activities and assignments are often negatively affected by the absence of students.

Students who miss a class are responsible for all material covered during that class as well as any assignments given or submitted. Please e-mail me, phone, or tell me in person if you are going to be absent or late.

4.0 Proposed Assignments

4.1 Networked Professional Learning (35%)

One of the main goals of the course is to have students participate in networked learning environments and critically, and continually, reflect upon those experiences. In practice, this means students utilize a number of social tools (e.g., blogs, wikis, microblogging platforms), read widely from a number of traditional (e.g., academic journals) and non-traditional sources (e.g., educational blogs, Twitter), and connect with other educators who are already ‘connected.’ Through these interactions, students will develop a ‘[personal learning network](#).’ Assessment for the achievement of this course goal will consist of three key aspects: a course blog, participation on Twitter, and contributions to the Google Plus community.

1. Course Blog: A blog will be used to describe and reflect upon your course experiences. This blog will also act as an important communication tool between you, your classmates, your instructor, and the wider educational community.

At the very minimum, your blog should show evidence of:

- weekly, scholarly reflections/responses of course activities, readings, multimedia artefacts, and presentations;
- frequent reading and analysis of key educational articles, media, and/or blog posts from other educational bloggers;
- interaction with other community members through pingbacks; commenting, and descriptions of interactions;
- sharing and review of discovered resources and/or tools; and,
- thoughtful, critical reflection of the use of technology (through ongoing experimentation) in your personal or professional context.

It is also important to note that blogs highlight unique affordances that distinguish them from paper and other non-digital media. Students should adopt the appropriate use of hyperlinks, pingbacks, video/audio embeds, commenting, and other such unique features.

You should write approximately 1-2 blog posts per week (based on a 13 week class).

2. Participation on Twitter: Students will be required to develop and maintain a professional Twitter account for this course. Students will be expected to use this Twitter account to begin to establish connections to other professionals in the field of education in order to expand their personal learning networks.

Your Twitter account should show evidence of:

- a professional photo and biography
- engagement with educational and other appropriate hashtags
- evidence of course-related reading and resource sharing
- presentation of a consistent professional identity that may include appropriate personal interactions
- evidence of networking and engagement with other educators and content experts

3. Contributions to the Google Plus community: Students are expected to join the course Google Plus community. This space will provide a semi-private space for student interactions and resource-sharing.

Your participation in the Google Plus community should show evidence of:

- sharing of course-related articles and resources
- evidence of deeper discussion related to course topics
- evidence of leadership for peer-supported learning (e.g. posting responses to student questions via text, video responses, screencasts, etc.)

4.2 Summary of Learning (30%)

Students will produce an artefact (e.g., narrative, slide deck, audio, video, concept map, other visual, etc.) that summarizes the learning experience in EC&I 831. The artefact should reference significant course experiences (e.g., reflections, assessments, readings, presenters, networking, experimentation, etc.) that contributed to the greater understanding of educational technology and media. Students will present these artefacts, or make them available to others, for the last day of the course.

4.3 Major Digital Project (35%)

Option A: Students will develop a major Internet-based project with a focus on integrating technologies learned throughout the course. This assignment is developmental, and thought should be given to this project early in the course. Examples of past projects and possibilities will be given by your instructor.

Possible examples may include:

- A comprehensive, online unit or resource used to support a unit of curriculum.
- A multimedia project (e.g., videos, audio, animation) that directly supports or augments teaching or learning (curriculum related, or not)
- A ‘teacher’s website’ that supports multiple areas of content or interest.
- A educational vlogging or podcast series.
- Planning, implementation, and reflections on the use of educational technologies in your learning environment.

In addition to the final product, students should include regular and consistent documentation of their progress (i.e. through blog posts or video logs).

Option B: Based on the idea that individuals are now more able to learn and share online, you will choose something significant that you would like to learn, and you will share your progress openly in an online space. The ‘something’ might be an instrument, a language, a sport or almost anything that requires more than a few hours of effort. Students should be prepared to spend 50-100 hours on this project. Students will be evaluated based on their regular and consistent documentation of the learning (e.g. frequent posts, video updates, etc.), including a before and after assessment.

Recommended parameters:

- The targeted skill should be something that is complex to learn, worth learning, and of great interest to you.
- Online sources must be used to learn the skill (e.g., videos, text resources, podcasts, etc.), but local, face-to-face resources (e.g., community members) should be sought where possible to supplement the learning.

Option C: Students will register for and participate fully in a MOOC. Then, through a series of blog posts or vlogs, students will share their experiences of learning in this type of course, including benefits and challenges of the MOOC course format. Some potentially relevant MOOCs being offered this semester include: [Connected Courses](#), [OLCMOOC](#), and [Open Knowledge](#). However, students may also participate in a MOOC that is unrelated to the content

of this course.

Some questions to explore:

- How would you describe was experience in the MOOC?
- Do you find this open format beneficial?
- What were the challenges and benefits?
- How might you leverage existing MOOCs or MOOC-inspired pedagogy in the learning environments that you develop for students?
- What did you learn? (content, pedagogy, other)

There is no final examination for EC&I 831.

5.0 University Policies

5.1 Attendance, Evaluation, Discipline, and Appeals

5.2 Summary of University and Faculty of Education Academic Regulations & Reminders