

Course Syllabus

Title: EDIT 772: Introduction to Web 2.0 / Social Software Tools (2 units)

Course date/duration: meets 2/25/08 to 5/2/08 and is taught via the Internet

Instructor Information

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Office: Prince William campus, OB231

Office hours: Monday, 6-7pm and by appointment.

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to explore examples of a pattern of emerging technology use commonly referred to as Web 2.0. The course focuses, from an e-learning perspective, on the pedagogical applications and implications of a particular group of social software tools that facilitate web-based social interaction, content generation, and resource aggregation.

Examples of social software include content, media, or collaboration management frameworks such as blogs, wikis, Flickr, YouTube, RSS feed readers, and iTunes, relationship management frameworks such as Facebook, Ning, and MySpace, and distributed classification frameworks (or social bookmarking services), such as del.icio.us and Blackboard Scholar. Students will also be introduced to broader patterns of Web 2.0 technologies, such as, rich Internet applications, mash-ups (APIs), mobile devices, virtual worlds and much more.

The course goals bridge three broad areas: to provide an engaging overview of cutting-edge social technologies, to identify and evaluate best educational practices for using these technologies, and to investigate the role of these technologies for e-learning. Social software has the potential to transform instructional practices and to support the creation of highly constructivist learning communities. Throughout the course students will learn about and evaluate best practices for using social software tools to meet different instructional and training goals. For the final project, students will create a personal or collaborative learning environment that integrates a selection of these tools.

The Edit 772 course learning environment incorporates many of the social software tools under study in the course and involves high levels of student knowledge construction. We will be learning about and using software tools that are freely available on the Web or as Open Source software which has the advantage of learning to use software that is readily available to you in your work place or schools.

A critical approach to the effectiveness of social software for learning is warranted. During this course, we will (individually and collectively) address some of the following questions:

- What is 'social' about social software?
- What aspects of learning stand to gain or suffer as a result of our use of and reliance on social software?
- What are the pedagogical implications of social software for education?
- Can social software be an effective tool for individual as well as group productivity?
- What general principles can we identify for designing social software? How would we apply those principles in the design of a particular social software application?
- What general principles can we identify for evaluating social software? How would we use those principles to measure the effectiveness of a particular social software application?

Nature of Course Delivery

To meet various goals, this course blends synchronous web conferences with online asynchronous learning approaches. We will try to meet once in the beginning and at the end of the course in a live conference system that supports audio and text communication.

Textbooks/Recommended Reading:

We will use the class Web site as an electronic textbook. Selected web readings and resources will be provided.

Learner Outcomes

Course goals: As a result of this course, participants will be able to:

- understand the evolution and affordances of Internet/Web-based social learning tools.
- set-up, configure, and share networked learning resources and perform basic Web publishing and social networking operations.
- evaluate the instructional implications of e-Learning organized around social software tools and services.
- identify current Web 2.0 and social technologies and future trends impacting K-12, higher education, business, government and military settings.
- gain fluency evaluating the reliability and validity of content resources attached to key social software tools.
- develop skills in evaluating social software tools and technologies to support and enhance instructional applications and strategies used in the development of personal or collaborative learning environments.

Course Requirements

There are three main requirements for this course:

1. *7 Exercises Sets* – students will receive 35 points for completing the small individual and group exercises that accompany almost every module of the course. A list of the exercises and their grade value will be posted on the course site. Most of the exercises are designed to guide your exploration of the different social software tools by directing you to set up an initial account, personalize it, configure the tool for collaborative work, and complete prescribed tasks.
2. *4 Discussions* are planned for the course. I am planning to have the discussions take place in the BlackBoard CE6 system. New topics or modules are introduced each Tuesday and you will have several days to complete readings, explore tools, and get to understand the topic before discussing it. **Discussions will normally take place from Thursday through midnight Monday.** Students are expected to participate fully. Participation via electronic discussions is assessed by both quality and quantity of interactions.
3. *1 Final Individual Project* – students will develop a prototype Social Software-based Learning Environment based on a documented design process. A design document is a description of the process used to develop instruction and includes a description of the problem, the need to be met, the content and format of instruction, and the summary of the evaluation. The particular requirements and parameters for developing the SSLE prototype will be detailed elsewhere. This assignment includes an evaluation of a class peer's SSLE.

Participation in the course through discussions is mandatory as these shared experiences are important parts of the course. **Expect to be online approximately 1-2 hours each day or 10-12 hours per week.** The class schedule may change as the course progresses; changes will be posted on the course's Homepage under **Announcements**.

- Each student is expected to join and create accounts on multiple free, web-based social software tools specified by the instructor to complete assignments and learning activities.
- Students understand that portions of their work will be take place on the open web and that their statements and other artifacts may be publicly discovered.
- Each student is expected to complete all readings and class exercises and contribute to in-depth asynchronous threaded and synchronous discussions as assigned by the instructor or as part of a class team's lesson.
- To enable individualization of the course to the needs of each student, special arrangements on requirements and assignments may be negotiated in writing with the instructor. Revised assignments typically involve direct, extensive involvement in some project related to research or evaluation of a network-based educational experience that makes use of social software tools.
- Students missing the due date for an assignment or exercise must make immediate arrangements with the instructor to fulfill that requirement before the next class.

Assessment and Grading

Introduction:

The design document and SSLE and discussions will be evaluated by the instructor using the rubrics (to be provided).

Requirements:

- Exercises = 35 points
- Discussions = 20 points
- Design Document = 20 points
- Personal/Collaborative Learning Environment = 20 points
- Peer Reviews = 5 points

Grading scheme:

A = 94-100; A - = 90-93; B+ = 86-89; B = 83-85; B- = 80-82; C = 70-79; F = 69 and below

College of Education and Human Development Statement of Expectations

Introduction: All students must abide by the following:

- Students are expected to exhibit [Professional Behavior and Dispositions](#).
- Students must follow the guidelines of the [University Honor Code](#).
- Students must agree to abide by the university policy for [Responsible Use of Computing](#).
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the [GMU Disability Resource Center \(DRC\)](#) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester. Call 703-993-2474.

EDIT772 Class Schedule (The following estimates the starting dates for some major topics.)

Dates	Topics & Readings	Discussion 20%	Exercises 35%	SSLE Design Document 45%
2/26 Week 1	UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF WEB 2.0 & SOCIAL SOFTWARE MODULE 1: Course overview and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social Software vs. Web 2.0 ○ History of Social Software (and Internet) 	Personal Intros	Synchronous class meeting via Adobe Connect Course Introduction and lecture Setup basic course collaboration tools	
3/4 Week 2	MODULE 2: Affordances of Social Software for Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Computer-Mediated Communication and Collaboration Tools for E-learning ○ Social Software-based Learning Environments (SSLE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CMS vs. SSLE ▪ Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) ○ Open Educational Resources (OER) 	Disc.1: Theory	Ex#1 (5) – write a review or concept map of an educational SSLE	
3/11 Week 3	UNIT 2: EXPLORING SOCIAL SOFTWARE TOOLS MODULE 3: Applications and Implications of Blogs and Wikis for E-Learning		Ex#2 (5) – configure blog & wiki for social networking (SN)	<u>Design Document 1 – Idea (5)</u>
3/18 Week 4	MODULE 4: Applications and Implications of RSS for E-Learning	Disc. 2 Tools 1	Ex#3 (5) -- setup & config. Bloglines for managing RSS feeds & SN	
3/25 Week 5	MODULE 5: Applications and Implications of Social Bookmarking, Tagging, and Folksonomy for E-Learning		Ex#4 (5) -- configure del.icio.us for SN	<u>Design Doc 2 – Audience / Content (5)</u>
4/1 Week 6	MODULE 6: Applications and Implications of Social Media and Podcasting for E-Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flickr, YouTube, iTunes, WikiMedia, Slideshare, Scribd, Skype 	Disc. 3: Tools 2	Ex#5 (5) – configure Social Media appl. for SN	
4/8 Week 7	UNIT 3: CREATING SOCIAL SOFTWARE-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (small pieces loosely joined) MODULE 7: PLE: Portals Pages and Social Networking Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ELGG, Blog, Wiki, PageFlakes, iGoogle, Flock ○ Facebook, MySpace, Ning, Epsilon 		Ex#6 (5) – setup & config. portal page in PageFlakes	<u>Design Doc 3 – Format (5)</u>
4/15 Week 8	MODULE 8: PLE: RSS Advanced, Mashups & Widgets	Disc. 4: PLEs	Ex#7 (5) – create mashup or advanced widgetry	<u>Design Doc 4 – Evaluate and Refine (5)</u> <u>SSLE prototype due (20)</u>
4/22 Week 9	MODULE 9: Emerging Web 2.0 Tools and Technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Readings and work on final projects 			<u>Project Peer Reviews Due (5)</u>
4/29 to 5/2 Week 10	Final Class: Synchronous class meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PLE demonstrations 			<u>Final Design Doc & Final SSLE Due – total= 20</u>