ED 6302 –Educational Technology: Key Issues and Debates
Course Outline

What's the course about?

Since the advent of the radio, educational technologies have been offered as an instant and seemingly magical solution to many instructional woes. This course begins from the premise that, rather than unquestioningly seeking to integrate leading edge trends and technologies into their instruction, educators and instructional designers should deconstruct and critique this kind of rhetoric, in order to gain a better sense of the hype and the realities of educational technology. There is no doubt that emerging technologies offer new possibilities for teaching and learning, but integrating these innovations into the curriculum should begin with a careful examination of how the use of technology relates to educational ends. As Neil Postman says, the first question we should ask of any technology is, "What is the problem for which this technology is a solution?"

The purpose of this course is to give you the opportunities and strategies to consider various educational technologies and the discourses about them, to reflect—via presentations, discussions, and activities centred around a selection of readings—upon how these technologies might be applied in various classroom environments and curricula, to consider how technologies construct knowledge, to consider generally the implications of using technology in the delivery of instruction, and to explore the ways in which technology use shapes teachers, learners, pedagogical practices, and even the fundamental meanings of education, learning, and schooling.

Please note: You do not have to be a computer whiz in order to participate in this course, but you do have to be willing to explore new ideas, reflect, share insights, and ask questions!

What are the course goals?

I want this course to offer you opportunities to:

- appreciate that "technology" is not just as an instructional tool but also a cultural phenomenon that amplifies certain values, practices, and ways of thinking and being
- learn about the history of educational technology, and appreciate how the values and ideologies of the past are manifested in contemporary technologies
- explore the various roles, functions, and implications of technology in education
- analyze educational technologies, not merely in instrumental terms (how they can be used to meet learning objectives), but in terms of their underlying assumptions and values
- read the discourses of educational technology critically, with an appreciation of the ways those discourses both reflect and construct society's understandings of the appropriate instructional use of computers
- identify the social value systems that support the use of technology in teaching and learning
- reflect upon and discuss the teacher's/instructional designer's roles and responsibilities with respect to the instructional use of technology

What textbooks will I need for the course?

There is no textbook. All assigned readings (as well as supplementary, optional information), will be accessible online, through the D2L module for the course. (You'll find the assigned readings in both the Links to Library Resources on the home page and the individual folders for each class.)

What are the assignments and evaluation criteria?

There is no mark for attendance and participation in this course. However, as in any graduate course, you are expected to attend all classes punctually, to complete assigned readings, and be well-prepared to participate in discussions and learning activities. If you must miss a class, please discuss it with me well in advance. *Please note that missing more than three classes without a medical or other valid reason will result in a failing grade for the course.*

1. Three Mini-Assignments – 15%
Throughout the course, I will post in D2L "mini-assignments" related to the topics covered in class. Each of these small assignments (<u>no more than one double-spaced page</u>) is worth up to 5%. You can choose to do *any three* of them throughout the term, for a maximum of 15% of your mark.

<u>Evaluation Criteria for Mini-Assignments</u>
- *Clarity*—Is the paper clearly written and error-free?
- *Depth*—Is there evidence that you have thought deeply and have brought some of the ideas and understandings explored in class to bear on your reflections, where appropriate?
- *Critical thinking*— Is your argument sound? Is it well-supported by facts and examples? Does the paper deal not just with instrumental (how-to) issues but larger implications and key (perhaps hidden) assumptions?

2. Choose Option A or B – 30% (Due Oct. 15) – 7 double-spaced pages <u>maximum</u>

A. Article Critique

Choose *one* of the articles in the Articles to Critique folder in D2L (or select an article of your own, making sure that it offers adequate substance for reflection). Then write a critical review/analysis of the article, using the ideas we've explored in class to assess and critique its main arguments, underlying premises, and the language in which the arguments are constructed. Are the arguments sound and conclusions warranted? What are the author's unstated values and beliefs with respect to technology and educational technology? Remember to critique not only what is said but what is omitted. (Make sure to identify the article you're critiquing and, if it's one of your own choosing, submit the article, or a link to it, with your paper.)

<u>Evaluation Criteria for Article Critique</u>
- *Clarity*—Is the paper clearly written and error-free?
- *Depth*—Is there evidence that you have thought deeply and have brought some of the ideas and understandings explored in class to bear on your critique, where appropriate?
- *Critical thinking*— Does your paper deal with critical rather than instrumental (how-to) issues? Does it critically examine the premises and theoretical constructs underlying the main arguments and identify key assumptions (including those embedded in the language with which the arguments are constructed)?

B. Lesson Plan

How could you integrate the ideas and perspectives that we explore in class within a lesson? This assignment challenges you to design a lesson (or a workshop or other instructional experience) that creates an opportunity *not simply to use technology (in fact, the lesson need not involve any actual use of technology) but to open up a critical dialogue about it.* Note that the lesson audience and topic are up to you—e.g., a lesson on neighbourhoods and communities for grade two students, or a lesson on email communication for business professionals. The format of the lesson is also up to you, though your lesson plan should clearly describe the planned instruction, including implementation time, materials and equipment, learning outcomes/objectives, target learners, instructional strategies (what the teacher will do) and activities (what the learners will do), and evaluation (how you will you assess whether or not learning has taken place). Please also include a one- or two-page reflection, providing the rationale for your design decisions.

Evaluation Criteria for Lesson Plan
- *Clarity*—Is the lesson plan clearly written and error-free? Is the lesson plan clearly described and presented, with sufficient detail that it could be understood and used by another teacher?
- *Critical Thinking*—Does the lesson plan include appropriate, effective opportunities for learners to think critically about some aspect of technology—for example, to examine arguments, identify key assumptions, and/or assess implications?
- *Creativity*—Is the lesson plan original? Does it show inventiveness in terms of the use of instructional strategies and resources to help learners think critically about technology and technology use?

3. Research and Pecha-Kucha Presentation – 30% (Due Nov. 12)

First choose a topic related to educational technology. Several possibilities are listed below, but don't let these limit you. Since we are going to try to avoid duplication, please let me know what your topic will be as soon as you've decided. You're asked to research your chosen topic, reflect upon it, present your key ideas in a Pecha-Kucha format, and then lead a brief discussion about it. A Pecha-Kucha is a unique PowerPoint presentation format consisting of 20 slides, for 20 seconds each (6:40). The slides, containing powerful images and no or minimal text, form the background for a well-rehearsed presentation. (We'll talk more about the format in class, and there is also information in the D2L module for this course.) Be creative but please note that I'm not expecting a description or a "how to" guide, but a *critical* presentation in which you recognize and assess (unstated) assumptions, raise questions, and identify implications for instructional design and pedagogy. This may seem like a lot to accomplish in 6 minutes and 40 seconds, but the reality is that the restricted timeframe forces you to be concise and to the point, and to *script and rehearse your presentation carefully*. You should plan to rehearse your presentation once or twice a day for a week prior to Pecha-Kucha Night.

Please note that, due to the condensed timeframe of our Pecha-Kucha Night, we'll run all presentations off of my laptop. Please send your PPT files at least a day before class. Please plan to also submit your script and your list of references.

Possible presentation topics:

- changing teacher roles   - SmartBoards   - the Maker movement
- e-readers & e-reading   - MOOCs   - social networking in education
- media/digital literacy   - learning objects   - mobile learning
- Bring Your Own Technology

Evaluation Criteria for Presentation
- *Clarity*—Does the presentation facilitate your classmates' understanding of and appreciation for the dimensions of the topic with good use of details, examples, and illustrations? Is the presentation well organized? Are the slides clear, making appropriate use of images (and little or not text) to enhance meaning? Is the spoken presentation well-rehearsed and smooth (with no or minimal recourse to a script)?
- *Depth*—Are key issues and debates related to your chosen topic identified and explained? Is there evidence that you have drawn upon a number of appropriate sources (and have critically evaluated those sources) to enrich your understanding?
- *Critical thinking*—Does the presentation deal with critical rather than instrumental (how-to) issues? Are important arguments pro and con identified and evaluated? Are vital questions posed? Are distinctions made between fact and opinion? Are alternative points of view weighed and analyzed, based on evidence? Are conclusions warranted and insightful? Does the presentation provoke your classmates to think about the topic in a new way?

4. Reflection – 25% (Due Dec. 3) – 7 double-spaced pages <u>maximum</u>, or equivalent

Reflect on what technology means to you and what its role is in instruction/instructional design. I'm not expecting a research paper but a thoughtful personal reflection, describing what you see as the proper use of technology in education and considering your roles and responsibilities, as a teacher, instructional designer, etc., with respect to educational technology. This assignment can take whatever form you want. For example, it might be an essay or, less traditionally, it might take the form of an editorial about a school-based technology initiative, a blog entry, or even a Rick Mercer-like rant.

<u>Evaluation Criteria for Reflection</u>
- *Clarity*—Is the reflection clearly written/articulated and error-free?
- *Depth*—Is there evidence that you have thought deeply and have brought some of the ideas and understandings explored in class to bear on your reflections, where appropriate?
- *Critical thinking*— Does your reflection go beyond instrumental (how-to) issues, to consider the teacher's/instructional designer's roles and responsibilities with respect to the instructional use of technology?

<u>Notes:</u> Additional grade criteria is available in the D2L module for this course.

I am always available to discuss your ideas about assignments—just talk to me before or after class, or send me an e-mail, and we'll set up a time to meet.

If you feel that an assignment other than those I have suggested would better help you to meet your learning goals for this course, then please feel free to discuss it with me. I'm open to other possibilities, provided they are similar in magnitude, focus, and intent to the options I've provided.

<u>Course Plan</u>

Date		**Topics and Readings**
Sept. 10	<u>Topics</u>:	Introduction to the Course and Educational Technology What is technology? What is educational technology?
Sept. 17	<u>Topic</u>:	From Teaching Machines to 21st-Century Learning?: The History of Educational Technology
	<u>For this class, read</u>:	"A History of Instructional Design and Technology" (Reiser)
Sept. 24	<u>Topic</u>:	Do We Shape Technology or Does Technology Shape Us?: From Technological Determinism to Social Constructivism
	<u>For this class, read</u>:	"Not 'Just a Tool'" (Rose)
Oct. 1	<u>Topic</u>:	Asking the Right Questions about Educational Technology
	<u>For this class, read</u>:	"Grand Theft Education" (Strate)
Oct. 8	<u>Topic</u>:	Inside the Debate: Deconstructing the Discourses of Educational Technology
	<u>For this class, read</u>:	"Techno-Topias" (Buckingham)

Oct. 15	Topic:	"One damn slide after another": The PowerPoint Debate
	For this class, read:	"PowerPoint is Evil" (Tufte)
		"PowerPoint, Habits of Mind, and Classroom Culture" (Adams)
		Assignment 1 (Option A or B) Due

| Oct. 22 | Topic: | "Hard fun": Educational Games |
| | For this class, read: | "Playing to Learn?" (Buckingham) |

| Oct. 29 | Topic: | No Significant Difference?: The Failure of Ed Tech Research |
| | For this class, read: | "Looking Beyond Learning" (Selwyn) |

Nov. 5	Topic:	Disruptive Technology?: Online Learning in University Education
	For this class, read:	"Has e-Learning Delivered on Its Promises?" (Kanuka & Kelland)
	For this class, watch:	"What We're Learning from Online Education" (Koller) – link in D2L

| Nov. 12 | Topic: | Pecha-Kucha Night |
| | | ****Assignment II Due**** |

Nov. 19	Topic:	Does Google Make Us Stupid?: Attention, Distraction, & Media Multitasking
	For this class, read:	"Is Google Making Us Stupid?" (Carr)
		"Hyper and Deep Attention" (Hayles)

| Nov. 26 | Topic: | Learning for Life: The 21st Century Skills Movement |
| | For this class, read: | "Deconstructing the Metanarrative of the 21st Century Skills Movement" (Greenlaw) |

Dec. 3	Topics:	Future Hype?: Thinking Critically about the Future of Ed Tech
		Wrap-up & Final Class Celebration
		Assignment III Due

Academic Integrity Statement

The University of New Brunswick places a high value on academic integrity and has a policy on plagiarism, cheating and other academic offences. Plagiarism includes**:**

1. quoting verbatim or almost verbatim from any source, including all electronic sources, without acknowledgement;
2. adopting someone else's line of thought, argument, arrangement, or supporting evidence without acknowledgement;
3. submitting someone else's work, in whatever form without acknowledgement;
4. knowingly representing as one's own work any idea of another.

Examples of other academic offences include: cheating on exams, tests, assignments or reports; impersonating somebody at a test or exam; obtaining an exam, test or other course materials through theft, collusion, purchase or other improper manner; submitting course work that is identical or substantially similar to work that has been submitted fro another course; and more as set out in the academic regulations found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Penalties for plagiarism and other academic offences range from a minimum of F (zero) in the assignment, exam or test to a maximum of suspension or expulsion from the University, plus a notation of the academic offence on the student's transcript.

For more information, please see the Undergraduate Calendar, Section B, Regulation VII.A, or visit http://nocheating.unb.ca. It is the student's responsibility to know the regulations.