

**HE703: Higher Education in the Digital Age**  
**Dr. Kelly Schrum**  
**George Mason University**

**Spring 2024**

**Monday, 4:30-7:10 pm | Online [Zoom] <https://go.gmu.edu/HE703zoom>**

Higher education is changing rapidly. Digital tools and resources are reshaping how we teach, learn, research, communicate, and collaborate inside and outside of the classroom. This course explores topics such as digital literacy, gamification, data, personalized learning, artificial intelligence, accessibility, social media, teaching and learning, and the future of higher education. We will analyze current debates and issues, develop a working knowledge of the changing digital landscape, and learn to critically evaluate digital tools and resources. Students will use digital tools to address practical issues in their academic and/or professional area of expertise, including teaching, advising, administration, scholarship, and university life.

**Learning Objectives:**

- Analyze current debates and issues related to higher education in the digital age.
- Examine the ways in which existing and emerging technologies are transforming higher education.
- Develop a working knowledge of digital tools and their relevant applications in higher education.
- Examine scholarly research on digital literacy in higher education.
- Develop the ability to assess digital tools, including strengths, weaknesses, and relevance in specific higher education settings.

**Contact Information:**

Dr. Kelly Schrum | [kschrum@gmu.edu](mailto:kschrum@gmu.edu) | Office Hours: Email to schedule

David Lemmons (Teaching Assistant) | [dlemmons@gmu.edu](mailto:dlemmons@gmu.edu) | Office Hours: Email to schedule

**Feedback | Response to Email**

Communication is essential to success in this course. The instructors will provide feedback on all weekly assignments within 48 hours and within one week for longer assignments. Instructors will respond to emails within 24-48 hours during the week and with 48-72 hours during weekends and holidays.

**Requirements:**

- Blog Posts (25%)
- Digital Activities (25%)
- Final Project (30%)
- Participation (20 %)

**Blog Posts:**

There are 6 required blogs/posts: 2 introductory posts on Padlet (Week 1); 2 current topic blog posts (Weeks 3, 6); and 2 weekly topic blog posts (weeks 10, 11). Blog posts are due at midnight on the due date.

**Digital Activities:**

There are several hands-on digital activities required in this course. These include a lightning talk, an online scavenger hunt, digital prototype development, and two activities from the provided list. See Blackboard menu “Digital Activities” for details. You will complete the lightning talk and online scavenger hunt in class; you will complete the digital prototype and digital activities of your choosing from the provided options during asynchronous class sessions. We will talk more about the prototype in class and additional instructions will be provided.

**Participation:**

Both the quality of preparation for class and participation in class (synchronously and asynchronously) contribute to the success of the course. This includes participating in weekly shared discussions (via Google Docs) as described in Blackboard. It is expected that all readings/viewings/explorations will be completed as outlined in the weekly assignments. Readings/viewings/explorations as well as assignments will be discussed in class (synchronously and asynchronously) and full participation is expected.

This class supports many different kinds of participation. Whatever your learning style, whatever your strengths, there are multiple ways to demonstrate learning and contribute to our collaborative exploration of higher education in the digital age.

Shared Discussion [Google Doc]: You will work collaboratively in small groups to share ideas and discuss course materials and weekly topics 6 times during the semester. There are 4 specific roles: facilitate, question, discuss, and summarize. These roles will rotate each week. The role of the facilitator is to communicate with the whole group, write a welcome message with some opening thoughts early in the week, establish a timeline for the weekly responsibilities, and keep the group on task. The role of the questioner is to pose thoughtful questions for the group based on the week’s readings. The role of the summarizer is to summarize key points from the discussion at the end of the week. Any additional students in the group are discussants. In addition, everyone should participate actively in the discussion.

\*Note\* If you prefer to write an individual blog post rather than participating in the shared discussion for these weeks, please email Dr. Schrum ([kschrum@gmu.edu](mailto:kschrum@gmu.edu)) by January 23.

**Final Project:**

Research, design, and produce a 20- to 30-minute, asynchronous interactive activity related to higher education in the digital age. Classmates will complete each activity within a scheduled time period.

The goal is to integrate digital tools to lead the class in learning content or skills in a creative, engaging, and effective way or to address an issue or problem related to higher education in the digital age. This is not a lecture or a lesson on how to use a specific technology, but an interactive activity demonstrating how digital tools and resources can be used in your area of research or expertise, including higher education teaching, scholarship, student affairs, and administration. The Final Project topic must be approved by the instructor.

There are 7 required components for this project:

- FP01 Project Pitch (Due 01/28/24; revised pitch due 02/05/24)
- FP02 Topic (Due 02/11/24)
- FP03 Outline (Due 03/10/24)
- FP04 Annotated bibliography (Due 03/25/24)
- FP05 Draft. A working digital version of the final project (Due 04/14/24)
- FP06 Completed Final Project (Due 04/22/24)
- FP07 Reflection: A written reflection (4 to 5 pages, double spaced), including a summary of existing research related to your topic and a reflection on implementation. Discuss the process, lessons learned, and future research possibilities. (Due 05/04/24).

### **Productive Failure:**

Write a reflective essay (500 words) or create a 1-minute digital story about a productive failure related to this class. Describe what happened, what did not go as expected, what you learned from the experience, and how you moved forward. Willingness to take risks is rewarded! Include visuals as needed to explain your productive failure. Due 3/31/24.

### **Required Materials:**

This course utilizes Open Educational Resources (OERs). This means that the articles, interviews, and videos assigned in this class are available online. Some are publicly and freely available; others are accessible to Mason students via the [library](#). There may be modest costs associated with digital tools as needed. Required readings, viewings, and activities are listed by week in the Blackboard course menu. Complete these before writing blog posts or participating in shared weekly discussions.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Academic Integrity and Academic Dishonesty**

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an [Honor Code](#) with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the

person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited using APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual theft and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory except for medical reasons or [religious holidays](#). If you are absent, inform me of the circumstances as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to make up what you have missed.

### **Disability Accommodation**

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) or call (703) 993-2474.

### **Gender Identity and Pronoun Use**

If you wish, please share your name and gender pronouns with me and how best to address you in class and via email. I use she/her/hers for myself and you may address me as “Kelly” or “Dr./Professor Schrum” both in email and verbally. Students at Mason may now designate their first name in Blackboard via a [form](#) available through the Registrar’s Office.

### **Late Work**

As late work impinges not only on your own learning, but also on that of your colleagues in this collaborative community, any unexcused late assignments will lose one grade fraction (e.g., A- to B+, B to B-, C- to D) for each day late.

### **Medical Emergencies**

If you encounter a medical emergency or a family crisis, please contact me as soon as possible. Supporting documentation may be requested upon return to class (e.g., doctor’s certificate, hospital discharge forms).

## **GENERAL COURSE POLICIES:**

### **Grading Scale**

The following grading scale from the Graduate Catalog is in effect for this course.

A+ 99-100 4.00

A	93-98	4.00
A-	90-92	3.67
B+	87-89	3.33
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.67
C	70-79	2.00
F	69 and below	

### **Add/Drop Deadlines**

- 01/23/24 Last day to add classes
- 01/30/24 Last day to drop (no tuition penalty)
- 02/06/24 Last day to drop (50% tuition refund)
- 02/20/24 Unrestricted withdrawal (no tuition refund)

### **Mason Email Account**

Students must use their Mason email account to receive important university information, including messages related to this class. Additional information on student privacy is available at the [Office of the University Registrar](#).

### **Academic Resources**

[University Libraries](#)

[Ask A Librarian](#)

Education Librarian: Christopher Lowder | 703-993-3776 | [clowder2@gmu.edu](mailto:clowder2@gmu.edu)

[Higher Education Research](#) (Mason Library)

[Writing Center](#) (703-993-1200)

### **Student Support Resources**

[Contemporary Student Services](#)

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (703-993-2380)

[Patriot Pantry](#)

[Student Support and Advocacy Center](#)

[University Career Services](#)

### **Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence**

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu)).

### **University Policies**

The [University Catalog](#) is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs. See also [Academic Policies](#). All members

of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

### **Weekly Schedule**

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Assignment</b>	<b>Format</b>
W1	01/22	Introduction	SYNC [Zoom]
W2	01/29	Future of Higher Education	SYNC [Zoom]
W3	02/05	Current Topics 1 (individual mtgs)	ASYNC
W4	02/12	Teaching & Learning	SYNC [Zoom]
W5	02/19	Who Owns Knowledge?	SYNC [Zoom]
W6	02/26	Current Topics 2	ASYNC
W7	03/04	SPRING BREAK	NO CLASS
W8	03/11	Data and Artificial Intelligence	SYNC [Zoom]
W9	03/18	Social Media	SYNC [Zoom]
W10	03/25	Digital Literacy	ASYNC
W11	04/01	Communication & Collaboration	SYNC [Zoom]
W12	04/08	Games & Learning	SYNC [Zoom]
W13	04/15	Final Projects Workshop	SYNC [Zoom]
W14	04/22	Final Projects Revisions	ASYNC
W15	04/29	Final Projects & Wrap Up	SYNC [Zoom]

**NOTE: See Blackboard for weekly readings, viewings, and assignment details.**