

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

**Fall 2020**

**Tuesday, 4:30-7:10 pm**

**Online [synchronous and asynchronous]**

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. The global pandemic has accelerated this trend.

This course explores topics such as digital skills, 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 discipline 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.
- Analyze 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 tools and their applications 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)

**Requirements:**

- Blog Posts (20%)
- Digital Activities (20%)
- Final Project (40%)
- Participation (15%)
- Productive Failure (5%)

**Blog Posts:**

There are 5 required blog posts: 1 introductory blog post (Week 1); 2 current topic blog posts (weeks 3, 6); and 2 weekly topic blog posts (weeks 9, 11). Blog posts are due at midnight on Monday of the due date.

Introductory Blog Post (250 words): In this blog post introduce yourself to the class, including your program of study and main academic area of interest. Include a photograph of yourself in the blog post by [inserting](#) the image rather than attaching it. Based on your experience and the readings, what key issues would you like to explore in this class? Include at least one discussion question based on this week's readings. What questions do you have about higher education in the digital age?

Current Topic Blog (500 words each): The one constant in today's world is change, especially as it relates to the future of higher education. This assignment offers an opportunity for individualized reading and analysis of the available literature on higher education in the digital age related to your final project. Select at least one peer-reviewed journal article and a second substantive scholarly or journalistic source (article, video, podcast, blog post) related to your final project topic. Write a blog post providing a brief summary and analysis of each source as well as a discussion of connections between the sources and with broader course themes. Be sure to include key ideas, strengths and weaknesses, areas for further research, and connections to your HE703 final project. Include a citation and a URL for each source.

Weekly Topic Blog (500 words): Include key ideas or themes from individual readings/viewings and across readings/viewings as well as questions and your overall summary of the topic. What is important to you from the readings and viewings? What is important in the broader context of the course? How have these readings/viewings shaped your thinking about higher education in the digital age? Comment substantively on blog posts by at least 3 classmates.

### **Digital Activities:**

There are several hands-on digital activities required in this course. These include a lightning talk, an online scavenger hunt, and three 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 three digital activities of your choosing from the provided options during asynchronous class session.

### **Participation:**

Both the quality of preparation for class and participation in class (synchronously and asynchronously) contribute to the success of the course. This is especially true in an online class. Preparation and asynchronous participation significantly enhance the quality of learning. 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 participation of many different kinds. Whatever your learning style, whatever your intellectual and practical strengths, there are multiple ways to demonstrate your learning and contribute to our collaborative exploration of higher education in the digital age. Responsible technology use is encouraged.

Shared Discussion [Google Doc]: Some weeks, you will work collaboratively in small groups to share ideas and discuss course materials and weekly topics. There are 3 specific roles: facilitate, question, 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 and to add questions as groupmates post their thoughts. The role of the summarizer is to summarize key points from the discussion at the end of the week. Everyone should participate actively in the discussion.

### **Final Project:**

Research, design, and lead a 20- to 30-minute, interactive activity related to higher education in the digital age. This activity can be synchronous, meaning we will engage in the activity together during class time, or asynchronous, meaning students will participate on their own time within a set scheduled window.

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 8/31/20; revised pitch due 9/7/20)
- FP02 Topic (Due 9/14/20)
- FP03 Outline (Due 10/5/20)
- FP04 Annotated bibliography (Due 10/19/20)
- FP05 Draft. Include a discussion of the approach, a detailed description of the activity, the ways in which digital resources will enhance content understanding, and technology needs. Include complete drafts of all materials. (Due 11/9/20)
- FP06 Implementation (Due 11/17/20, 11/24/20, 12/1/20)
- FP07 Reflection: A written reflection (5 pages), 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 11/24/20, 12/1/20, 12/4/20).

### **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 11/9/20.

### **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.

### **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).

### **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)).

### **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**

08/31/20	Last day to add classes
09/08/20	Last day to drop (no tuition penalty)
09/15/20	Last day to drop (50% tuition refund)
09/28/20	Last day to drop classes (0% tuition refund)

## Mason Email Account

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

## Other Campus Resources

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

[Ask A Librarian](#)

Education Librarian: Anne Melville 2202 Fenwick Library | 703-993-3715  
| [adrisco2@gmu.edu](mailto:adrisco2@gmu.edu)

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

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

[University Career Services](#)

## 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.

## Diversity

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services, and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Please see [Mason's Diversity Statement](#) for more information.

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic &amp; Assignment</b>
W1	8/25	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due: Blog 01 Introduction</li></ul>
W2	9/12	Future of Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due: FP01a Pitch</li><li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li></ul>
W3	9/8	Teaching & Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due: FP01b Revised Pitch</li><li>• Due: Blog 02 Current Topic 1</li><li>• Individual meetings with Dr. Schrum</li></ul>
W4	9/15	Current Topics 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due: FP02 Topic</li><li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li></ul>

W5	9/22	Who Owns Knowledge? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: Digital Activity 2 - Scavenger Hunt</li> <li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li> </ul>
W6	9/29	Current Topics 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: Blog 03 Current Topic 2</li> <li>• Due: Digital Activity 3</li> </ul>
W7	10/6	Data and Higher Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: FP03 Outline</li> <li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li> </ul>
W8	10/13	FALL BREAK — NO CLASS
W9	10/20	Communication & Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: Blog 04 Communication &amp; Collaboration</li> <li>• Due: Digital Activity 4</li> <li>• Due: FP04 Annotated Bibliography</li> </ul>
W10	10/27	Social Media <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li> </ul>
W11	11/3	Digital Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: Blog 05 Digital Literacy</li> <li>• Due: Dig Activity 5</li> </ul>
W12	11/10	Games & Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: Blog 11 Productive Failure</li> <li>• Due: FP 05 draft</li> <li>• Google Doc Shared Discussion</li> </ul>
W13	11/17	Final Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: FP06 - Implementation</li> </ul>
W14	11/24	Final Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: FP06 Implementation</li> <li>• Due: FP07 Reflection (11/17 presenters)</li> </ul>
W15	12/1	Final Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: FP06 Implementation</li> <li>• Due: FP07 Reflection (11/24 presenters)</li> </ul>
	12/4	Final Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due: FP07 Reflection Due: FP reflection (12/1 presenters)</li> </ul>

**NOTE: See Blackboard for weekly reading, viewing, and assignment details.**