**IST 220 (CRN: 3714): Connections II (CT)**

Course Syllabus – Spring 2015

Marshall University

Morrow Library Commons

Wednesdays 6:30 – 9pm

Instructor: Christopher “Kit” Anderson, Integrated Science and Technology, Morrow Library

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Office Hours: By appointment

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Credit Hours: 3

*“It was easy to teach people to give right answers to questions; what was hard to teach was to ask the right questions, questions that are interesting, important, useful, and far-reaching.”*

*-- Alfred North Whitehead*

**Course Description**

This course will focus on recognizing system dynamics patterns in the real world. It will also consist of your improving your communication skills, primarily in writing, speaking, and data presentation. A substantial part of this class will be driven by your own interests, plans, and ambition.

**Required Texts**

* *Thinking in Systems* by Donella Meadows

**Additional Texts**

Students will be required to read additional readings throughout the semester. These may include newspaper or magazine articles, book excerpts, or papers. Students may be required to purchase a collection of articles from Prime Copy Plus on 4th Avenue. Other readings will be distributed by hard copy, email, or Blackboard.

**Helpful Texts**

* *Wishcraft* by Barbara Sher (available free online at wishcraft.com). This is especially good for those who don’t know what they want to do. Also excellent for those who seem to hit roadblocks to achieving what they want to do.

**Attendance Policy**

Because this class is only once a week, and we’ll be doing a lot of participatory work in class, **attendance is required**. I may not take roll each week, but there will be exercises and participation in every class. Most of these assignments cannot be made up. Absences must be negotiated with me at least one week in advance.

**Assignments**

Because I want the course to remain flexible throughout the semester, a semester’s worth of assignments are not contained in this syllabus. Instead, I will try to hand out a schedule of assignments for a few weeks at a time, or at the very least, before the next class. If you aren’t in class, please don’t rely on me to give you your assignments immediately, as I don’t always check my email daily. I will try to help as best I can, but your best bet is to get missed assignments from classmates or Blackboard.

For almost all in-class assignments, you will not be able to make these up. In the case of a university-excused absence, missing the assignment will neither hurt nor help your grade.

**Explanation of Assignments**

In-Class Assignments – These will vary widely. And they will include (but aren’t limited to) self-reflection, diagnostic quizzes to gauge abilities and understanding, planning and learning to find ways to overcome hurdles in seeking our goals.

Goal-Setting – Throughout the semester, you are expected to have a goal and do something each week between each class to achieve that goal. You are expected to be able to report on your goal at class each week. There are only two rules: (1) You must have a realistic and measurable goal for each week that you can tell if you objectively achieved or not. (2) You can drop your goal, but you must have a new goal to replace it.

Lynda.com assignment(s) –You are required to take 2 different Lynda.com classes:

1. Something from the Microsoft Office software suite (e.g. excel, word, access, etc). You will only need to demonstrate 3 or more things you learned to our class.
2. A class of your own choosing. Every week, Lynda.com adds new offerings. Some popular choices in the past have been photography and iPhone tricks. For this second Lynda assignment, you will need to:
   1. Print review out and turn in a certificate of completion for the class, and
   2. Write a short of the instructor’s presentation styles (oral, and visual). That is, what worked or didn’t work about the Lynda class (no more than one page.)

[FYI: You sign on at Marshall’s Lynda.com page the same way you would log in to an MU networked computer.]

Speaking Assignments & Feedback – Speaking assignments are short presentations you will need to do with respect to the Lynda.com assignments [see above] and goal-setting assignments that you will need to do in small groups that we will have in class. (for example, memorizing a minute speech or poem to practice vocal variety, hand gestures, eye contact, and eliminating filler words.)

Homework Assignments – These include, but aren’t limited to: quizzes, data presentation, drafts, editing, systems thinking homework. [N.B. Extra HW can be assigned at the discretion of the instructor to individual students who aren’t prepared for class.]

**Weighted Determinants of Final Grade**

15% Two Lynda.com Assignments & Presentations

10% Feedback Assignments (including assigned student’s presentation)

20% In-Class Assignments

15% Goal-Setting Work & Presentations

20% Quality of Work or Quality of Participation (includes preparation and extra credit assignments)

20% Homework Assignments

Marshall University only issues whole grades, that is, no plusses or minuses. So all final grades will be assigned as follows, based on the weights listed above:

90%-100% = A

80%-90% = B

70%-80% = C

60%-70% = D

Below 60% = F

**Time management**

Because many students struggle in college with time management skills—even upperclassmen--it’s imperative that you develop time management skills, if you haven’t already done so. Time management is a discipline just like biology or math. I recommend that you watch on YouTube.com: **Randy Pausch Time Management**. It’s a lecture the dying professor gave about how to manage time to reach your goals. A book I recommend is Time Management from the Inside-Out by Julie Morgenstern.

**Cell Phone Usage**

Little aggravates me more than cell phone interruptions or people texting during class. As a courtesy, please put your cell phone on ‘silent’ during class. If you must use take a call or text, please leave the classroom, so you don’t disturb your classmates or me.

**University Policies**

By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy be going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on “Marshall University Policies.” Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page\_id=802

Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment.

**Students with Disabilities**

Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with physical, learning, and psychological disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in Prichard Hall 117, phone 304-696-2271 to provide documentation of their disability. Please see me after class, or set up a meeting with me via email, if you’d like to discuss your disability or reasonable accommodations with me.

**Core Domains**

**Learning Outcomes**

* Reflection
* Cultural Judgment
* Representation
* Reasoning
* Information Literacy

The table below shows the following relationships: How each student learning outcomes will be practiced and assessed in the course.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Student Learning Outcomes** | **How students will practice each outcome in this Course** | **How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this Course** |
| Students will . . .use reflection  (Metacognitive Thinking) | In doing the goal-setting assignments that require reflective inquiry in one’s successes and failures. | Goals must be actionable and measurable throughout the semester. Diligently doing and completing assignments. |
| Students will … use representation, cultural judgment, and reasoning skills…  (Communication Fluency) | By writing, paraphrasing, editing, in and out of class. Becoming conscious of what is “good” and “bad” writing. | Improvement in writing abilities via short essays and revisions. |
| Students will …use reflection, cultural judgment, reasoning and communication skills…  (Integrative Thinking) | By selecting, planning, and assessing their own semester-long project. | Depends on the students’ plans, which will include how to assess themselves. At a minimum, they will need to plan, budget, and account for their time. They will also give frequent updates to the class. |
| Students will…use reasoning, information literacy, abstract thinking, representation, and written communication…  (Ethical & Civic Thinking) | By completing the readings and assignments, and by particularly applying the Systems Thinking paradigm to real life. | Based on thoughtfulness and ability to apply concepts of books to different scenarios. Discussions, writing, and assignments. |
| Students will…use verbal communication.  (Communication Fluency & Reflection) | By giving multiple impromptu and prepared presentations, talks, or demonstrations. | Student will lead focus of feedback (e.g. “I’d like feedback on how I can do this \_\_\_ better). |
| Students will…build their cultural judgment and information literacy, and practice written communication. (Information Literacy) | By choosing and completing and reviewing two Lynda.com courses. Demonstrating knowledge both through demonstration in class and also a written review. Homework and in-class assignments will also require practice of informational literacy and writing. | A Lynda.com certificate of completion, and a not-more-than-one page review for each completed class. |
| Students will…build visual presentation skills.  (quantitative thinking) | By reviewing good and bad examples of infographics and building their own graphs as part of homework and/or speaking assignments. Discussion of articles and graphs on fivethirtyeight.com. | Telling stories through pictures and data charts. |

*A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.*

*–Herbert Simon*

*There’s an enormous power to doing what you really care about. The outside world will often try to distract you from what you really care about. It will send you a lot of false signals about your value, about what you should be doing. Do your best to ignore those signals.*

*–Michael Lewis*