



**COURSE SYLLABUS**  
**ETEC 591: Online, Virtual & Distributed Learning Systems**  
**Summer II 2026**

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Anjum Najmi, PhD, MLS  
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Preferred Form of Communication: Email  
Communication Response Time: 24-48 hrs

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:**

Textbook(s) Required:

Simonson, M., Samaldino, S., Albright, M, & Zvacek, S. (2012). Teaching and Learning at a Distance. Foundations of Distance Education (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Pearson.

**Course Description:** Examines theories and practice of online, virtual, or distributed learning systems, such as flipped classrooms, hybrid or blended learning environments, and distance education. Emphasis is on the design and implementation of effective instructional strategies for online, virtual, or distributed learning environments. Prerequisites ETEC 524 or permission from the instructor.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Learning outcomes are what you are able to do as a result of the activities, readings, instruction, etc. that have occurred in this course. Assignments/activities related to these outcomes are described in the assignments and assessments portion of the syllabus.

1. The learner will be able to explain the differences between teaching and learning, and identify theories, technologies, and methods that support each.
2. The learner will examine best practices for designing, implementing and evaluating online, virtual, and distributed learning environments.
3. The learner will evaluate relevant research related to online learning and barriers students and teachers face in implementing it.
4. The learner will design a unit of instruction using an online, hybrid/blended, or flipped learning environment.

## ETEC ePORTFOLIO for MS/MEd in Educational Technology

Students pursuing the MS/MEd degree in the Educational Technology Leadership (ETLD) *and* Educational Technology Library Science (ETLS) programs are required to submit an electronic portfolio prior to graduation.

This requirement does not pertain to students taking ETEC courses as an elective for other programs, nor to those pursuing only the School Library Certification who have already earned a masters degree.

Many courses in the ETEC program have identified artifact(s) that should be included in the eportfolio to provide evidence of acquired and developing knowledge, skills, and philosophical approaches. In courses where recommended artifacts are not identified, it is the student's responsibility to collect artifacts throughout the course and appropriately select which artifacts to include in the eportfolio. This includes courses from other departments and/or institutions for which the student is receiving credit towards the ETEC masters degree. For example, if a student takes courses in ELED, EDAD, MGMT, or TDEV and applies credits earned toward their ETEC masters degree, the student should include artifacts from those courses in their ETEC eportfolio.

For **ETEC 591**, the required artifacts are:

- Instructional Design Document (drafts and final document)
- Selected entries from the Instructional Design eJournal

Newly admitted majors in the program should contact Dr. Mary Jo Dondlinger, coordinator of the ETEC program, for more information on how to get started with the ETEC ePortfolio. If you plan to major in the program, but have not yet applied, you are strongly encouraged to do so as soon as possible. Please contact [MaryJo.Dondlinger@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:MaryJo.Dondlinger@tamu-commerce.edu) for more information about the program's portfolio requirement.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### **Instructional Methods / Activities / Assessments**

Each week will have a series of readings, activities and interactions. This course is designed to help you develop the skills necessary to learn new concepts, explore technologies, evaluate tools for facilitating learning, and develop meaningful online learning experiences. It is important that you reach out to your fellow classmates as your first sources of help. We tend to learn more from others than we can in isolation. Please use the discussion boards for posting questions, so we all can monitor and assist as needed, drawing on the expertise of various members of the class.

#### ***Reading Discussions*** – 30%

Engaging in dialogue with other students to discover critical issues and questions related to the course topic is a critical component of this course. Discussions typically cover content included in the assigned readings provided through supplemental course resources and experiences with the new technologies you are

exploring. A typical discussion requires 4-6 posts: one initial response to the discussion prompt, followed by 3-5 responses to other students' posts and replies. Prompts will be available well in advance of the deadline. Please post early so that others may reply.

**Late posts will receive zero points!**

**Design Experiments – 30%**

Each week you will be presented with a learning task, designed to introduce you to new technologies and that support online, virtual, and distributed learning environments. These are chances for you to play and experiment with technologies that can be used to design online learning environments. You will reflect on and report what you learned from your experiment in a blog or eJournal. You'll also rate the quality of your peers' reflections and receive ratings from your peers. These ratings will be used in your grades for each experiment.

**Design Project – 30%**

The major project for this course is an instructional design project applying concepts learned in the course into an online, virtual, or distributed learning experience for students. The final product for this Design Project is a presentation or "virtual tour" of your instructional design, introducing the unit, the expectations, and the timeline, including how you'll make use of synchronous (same time) and asynchronous communications. You'll submit a draft of the design project for peer review in Week 4. Submitting your project for peer review and providing feedback to others **on time** on their projects is imperative and is a required activity in the course.

**Peer Review – 10%**

Instructional design and technology professionals rarely work in isolation and are responsible for getting feedback on their work throughout the instructional design process. Thus, giving and getting thoughtful feedback are vital skills to learn and practice. Peer reviews of the Design Project will take place in Week 4. Neglecting to make your project available for peer review and/or failing to provide meaningful feedback to peers by the due dates seriously impedes your classmates' workflow. Because the peer review constitutes 10% of your course grade, being "absent" or late for peer review will impact your course grade by a full letter.

**Grading**

Grades will be determined using evaluation rubrics and weighted as indicated in the table below. Rubrics will be posted in eCollege in the Q&A Forum. You are responsible for reviewing the rubrics and raising questions or concerns about them prior to submitting an assignment.

Activity	Weight	Course Grades
Reading Discussions	30%	A 90-100% B 80-89%
Design Experiments	30%	C 70-79%

Design Project	30%	D 60-69% F 59% or less
Peer Reviews	10%	

Grade of "X" (Incomplete) - In accordance with the Academic Procedures stated in the TAMU-C Catalog, students, who because of circumstances beyond their control, are unable to attend classes during finals week or the preceding three weeks will, upon approval of their instructor, receive a mark of 'X' (incomplete) in all courses in which they were maintaining passing grades." The mark of "X" will only be considered in strict compliance with University Policy upon submission of complete medical or other relevant documentation.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Browser support**

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases,

D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

## Desktop Support

Browser		Supported Browser Version(s) Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

## Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version). For example, as of June 7,

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
			2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  - o 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - o Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - o Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
  
- You must have a:
  - o Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  - o Speakers or headphones.
  - o \*For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
  
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
  
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.
- Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.
  - Pop-ups are allowed.
  - JavaScript is enabled.
  - Cookies are enabled.
  
- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - o [Adobe Reader https://get.adobe.com/reader/](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
  - o [Adobe Flash Player \(version 17 or later\) https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/)
  - o [Adobe Shockwave Player https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/)
  - o [Apple Quick Time http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
  
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software.

Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### Brightspace Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on



the words "click here" to submit an issue via email.

### System Maintenance

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

### Interaction with the Instructor

If you have a general question about the syllabus, class content, or anything that you would typically ask aloud in a traditional classroom environment, please do so in the Q&A Forum so that others might benefit from and participate in the exchange. If it's not something of general interest to others in the course, or involves personal concerns (i.e. grades, progress, etc.), e-mail me. I check my TAMUC email daily during the week; emails sent via D2L go to this address. You may also call or text me. If you'd like to meet for a face-to-face visit, just let me know and we'll set-up a time to meet at my office in Commerce or somewhere in the DFW area.

### Other Questions/Concerns

Contact the appropriate TAMU-C department relating to your questions/concern. If you are unable to reach the appropriate department with questions regarding your course enrollment, billing, advising, or financial aid, please call 903-886-5511 between the hours of 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Course Specific Procedures:

### *Academic Honesty Policy*

Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of academic **dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), auto-plagiarism (duplicate submission of single work for credit in multiple classes), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. All works submitted for credit must be original works created **by the scholar** uniquely for the class. Works submitted are subject to submission to TurnItIn, or other similar services, to verify the absence of plagiarism. Consequences of academic dishonesty may range from reduced credit on the plagiarized assignment to petition for removal from the academic program or institution, depending on the circumstances and extent of the violation; however, in typical instances, an automatic F in the course is considered appropriate. Any works referenced should be properly cited in accordance with APA 6th edition style.

### *Scholarly Expectations*

Work submitted at the graduate level is expected to demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills and be of significantly higher quality than work produced at the undergraduate level. To achieve this expectation, all students are responsible for giving and getting peer feedback of their work prior to submitting it for a grade. Students are also expected to resolve technical issues, be active problem solvers, and embrace challenges as positive learning opportunities. Educational technology professionals must be able to work cooperatively and collaboratively with others—skills which students are expected to practice in this course. Students are expected to ask for help when they need it and offer help when they notice someone in need.

### *Timeliness*

Because a 5-week term goes by quickly, assignments must be submitted by the designated due dates. Full credit cannot be earned by late or incomplete assignments. Assignments may lose up to 10% of their possible value each day late if submitted after the posted due date/time. (e.g. Assignments can lose all of their value at 10 days past due.) When a project incorporates peer review, it is imperative that all projects be available at the beginning of the review period and that reviews are completed by the end of the review period so that others may incorporate feedback into project revisions. Neglecting to provide meaningful feedback to peers and/or failing to make an assignment available for peer review will **each** result in 10% reduction in value (20% for both). You will have plenty of notification and time to complete course assignments. If you know you are going to be out of town, involved in a special event/project, or unable to access a computer, please plan ahead. Also ensure that you have a backup plan ready in the event you might lose power, Internet access, or your available technology.

### *Time Commitment*

In a graduate level course, it is a reasonable and accepted expectation that a student will spend between three and four hours outside of class for each hour spent in a class that lasts 15 weeks. This applies to online and web-enhanced courses just as it does to a traditional course. The activities in this course are based on a 5-week instruction schedule, which cuts the number of weeks by 2/3, thereby tripling the weekly time expectation. An understanding of this expectation can help serve as a gauge of how much time you will need to allow for and devote to each course. The average time commitment range calculation for a three Semester Credit Hour (3 SCH) course, such as this one, is shown in the following table:

<b>Average expected time spent on class or class related work.</b>	<b>Minimum expected average time based on 3:1 time ratio.</b>	<b>Maximum expected average time based on 4:1 time ratio.</b>
"In" class per class week	8 hours	8 hours
"Outside" class per class week	24 hours	32 hours
<b>TOTAL Weekly Expectation</b>	<b>32 hours</b>	<b>40 hours</b>
<b>TOTAL Term Expectation</b>	<b>160 hours</b>	<b>200 hours</b>

### **University Specific Procedures:**

#### *Student Conduct*

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/documents/studentGuidebook.pdf>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

#### ***Students with Disabilities***

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu](mailto:Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### ***Nondiscrimination Notice***

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### ***Campus Concealed Carry Statement***

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun.

Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web URL:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 911.

## **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

Because this course runs on a compressed, 5-week schedule, we'll be completing the full-semester equivalent of 3 weeks of work each week. Please note that the week runs from Monday through Sunday, except for the last week of class, which ends on **Thursday, August 7**.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Due Dates</b>
	Introductions	by Tues

<b>1</b> 7/6-7/12	<b>Account Set Up:</b> Set up a gmail account and blog for the course	Enter your gmail address and blog URL in the Class Google Doc by Thurs
	<b>Discussion 1:</b> What is “teaching”?	Initial discussion post by Thurs; 3- 5 replies by Sun
	<b>Design Experiment 1: Google Apps</b>	Submit your first post by Sun.
<b>2</b> 7/13-7/19	<b>Peer Ratings of Design Experiment 1:</b> Rate the report/reflection of your 3 assigned peers. Links to the evaluation forms will be sent to your gmail.	Ratings due by Tues
	<b>Discussion 2:</b> Instructional Design for Distance Learning	Initial discussion post by Thurs; 3- 5 replies by Sun
	Begin <b>Design Project</b>	Due for Peer Review in Week 4.
	<b>Design Experiment 2: Edmodo</b>	Blog about your Experiment by Sun.
<b>3</b> 7/20-7/26	<b>Peer Ratings of Design Experiment 2</b>	Ratings due by Tues
	<b>Discussion 3:</b> Flipped Classrooms	Initial post by Thurs; 3-5 replies by Sun
	<b>Group Technology Evaluation Project</b>	Due Sun
	<b>Design Experiment 3: Kkan Academy and/or YouTube</b>	Blog about your experiment by Sun.
<b>4</b> 7/27-8/2	<b>Peer Ratings of Design Experiment 3</b>	Ratings due by Tues
	<b>Discussion 4:</b> Distributed Learning Systems	Initial post by Thurs; 3-5 replies by Sun
	Post initial draft <b>Design Project</b> for peer review	Due Thurs.
	<b>Peer Review of Design Project</b>	Post comments to assigned peers by Sat
	<b>Design Experiment 4: PBWorks</b>	Blog reflection by Sun
<b>5</b> 8/3-8/6	<b>Peer Ratings of Design Experiment 4</b>	Ratings due by Tues
	Submit final draft of <b>Design Project</b> to project forum	Post project by Thurs

	<b>Discussion 5: I Used To Think...</b>	Initial post by Tues; 3-5 replies by Thurs
	<b>Peer Ratings of Design Experiment 4</b>	Ratings due by Tues