

# DOTS: DePaul Online Teaching Series

## Syllabus – Spring 2009

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### Overview

The purpose of DOTS is to support faculty who will be designing and teaching courses in online or hybrid environments. This program is ongoing and activities are scheduled over at least three quarters, depending upon when you will be teaching your online course(s).

The program begins with an intensive six-module portion, in which you are currently participating, that includes:

- Online activities held prior to each module's formal meeting that
  - i) present participants with the module's objectives, assignments, and resources and
  - ii) allow participants to experience as students some of the strategies and tools applicable to online learning.
  
- A series of synchronous, in-person or online meetings, where we
  - i) discuss and assess the online activities preceding each meeting, in terms of pedagogy, technology, and relevance to the online-course design process,
  - ii) hear from experts in online teaching, in the context of each module's focus, and
  - iii) get acquainted with the hardware and software resources available to participants for engaging students in the online environment, through several hands-on technology workshops.
  
- Occasional debriefings and assessments, as needed, to ensure that the DOTS program meets the needs of all participants, new to or experienced with online teaching and the associated technologies.

Following completion of this intensive six-module portion, participants will be assigned an instructional designer and will have the option to work closely with him/her on a one-on-one basis, focusing on design issues and/or instructional technologies specific to each participant's individual course design and course delivery needs.

### DOTS Course Design and Grading Rationale

#### **Assumed student roles**

You will be viewing the DOTS course site from the students' perspective and will be participating in regular activities and assignments. We believe that, through experiencing these activities, you will be better able to assess whether similar activities and their requisite technologies will be appropriate to your online or hybrid course(s). Furthermore, in order for us to model the strategies you may use with your students and to help you experience the pace and the work requirements of an online course, each module is designed around deadline-driven milestones.

### **Symbolic grading**

Throughout the six modules, some of the online activities will receive fictitious “points” that will appear in the Grade Center. This is intended exclusively as an opportunity for you to view and experience Blackboard’s feedback features in a manner similar to that of your online students. Grade Center entries can be viewed by no DOTS participant other than you and will not be used in any manner other than as a demonstration of Blackboard’s feedback functionality.

## **Learning Goals**

Faculty who actively and successfully participate in this program will, upon completion, work to create a new course or reconceptualize an existing course for online delivery, using the principles and resources explored throughout the workshop and the services of the Instructional Design and Development department as needed. To this end, participants will be able to:

- Interpret and apply online-learning quality standards during the course-design process.
- Write clear course-level learning goals and module-level learning objectives for their online course.
- Align course-assessment strategies, learning activities, resources, and online-class interactions with their learning objectives, in a manner appropriate to the online learning environment.
- Determine and apply appropriate technologies to support the course's learning activities and the creation of a multimedia-rich and engaging online course.
- Know whom to contact for assistance with either technology questions or instructional design questions.

### *Design vs. Development: Definitions*

In the context of DOTS, the word "design" will refer specifically to instructional or course design. The term “development” will refer to finding or creating the necessary elements to enact the course design. The latter includes everything from writing and posting the syllabus to revising the Blackboard navigation buttons or videotaping an introductory or other message to your online students.

## **Expectations (asynchronous portion)**

- **To Actively Participate in Online Discussions**  
Online discussion is at the core of the DOTS program and of online learning in general, and we expect you to participate in an active manner. To this end, your posts and feedback to posts by other participants must be meaningful, substantive, constructive, and entered in a timely manner. Guidelines for online discussion and feedback will be provided in the context of relevant activities throughout DOTS.

- **To Complete Assignments**

Each module will include specific assignments with clearly delineated individual- and group-work portions. In all cases, assignment completion will occur prior to the synchronous meeting and will be

- i) guided by module-specific instructions and resources and
- ii) marked by deadline-driven drafting and submission of work that will be completed in written or possibly other formats.

The goal of DOTS is for the work you complete within the program to be relevant and useful to the course-design and teaching needs that are specific to you. If, along the way, you feel the need to revise any of these assignments, please contact the course facilitators. More customization options will be available to you during your one-on-one work with your assigned instructional designer after DOTS has been completed.

## Expectations (synchronous portion)

- **To Actively Participate in**

- i) discussions that reflect on the module's online portion,
- ii) guest presentations, and
- iii) scheduled technology workshops.

Five of our synchronous meetings will be face-to-face and two will be online. Face-to-face meetings will be held at the DePaul Lincoln Park Library. Online meetings will be held on the *Wimba Classroom*. Details on all meeting are available in each module's "Wrap-up Meeting" page.

## Schedule

The course schedule is posted as a separate document on the DOTS Blackboard site and will serve as an outline of the topics and activities associated with each module, including module-level deadlines. Detailed assignment and deadline information per module will be included in each module's resources.

## Time Management

Observing the course deadlines, outlined in the course schedule and detailed within each module's assignments, is particularly important and will help you and your fellow participants make the most of the course.

As is the case with all courses, regardless of modality, students should set aside a designated time slot each day for course work. In online environments, in particular, the absence of face-to-face meetings, which would help mark a course's progress, makes it even more important to create a clear sense of course progression. This is accomplished by setting and observing frequent deadlines that spread out student work over regular short intervals. For example, online course design must be such that it compels students to work on their online courses in daily two-to-three-hour-long sessions rather than in a single eight-hour-long sitting.

## Feedback on and Evaluation of DOTS

We will be asking you for feedback on a regular basis. Please be open and generous with your comments and suggestions, and patient with our need to assess the program in multiple ways. Receiving formal feedback from you will help us best meet your current needs as well as improve the program for future participants.