

**MSc in Digital Education**



# **COURSE GUIDE:**

**Digital futures for learning**

**Session 2017/18**



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## Welcome

Welcome to *Digital Futures for Learning*. This course gives you the opportunity to consider the trajectory and implications of digital technologies and ways of working for the future of learning. This instance of the course is linked to the University of Edinburgh's *Near Future Teaching* project, a major institutional initiative led by one of your tutors, Sian Bayne, in her role as Assistant Principal for Digital Education. It's being delivered in an open access format so that other students and staff at the University, and beyond, can explore the discussions and materials we will develop throughout the course.

The course takes as its starting point the key themes of

1. trust, truth and entanglement
2. privacy, anonymity and resistance
3. complexity, mess and serendipity

and uses them to guide exploration of emerging practices and technologies. We will ask: how are more established digital practices evolving? How will new digital technologies and trends impact on education? How will the students and teachers of tomorrow construct their learning environments and practices?

As we'll see, the answers to these questions are very dependent on context – the future of digital education technologies is volatile and subject to rapid change. For this reason a significant part of the course will be structured around **participant-developed, peer-assessed "Open Educational Resources" (OERs)**. Each OER will take one of the themes or issues from the initial block as a jumping off point for imagining, debating and theorising what digital futures for learning might be like.

These OERs will be academic in nature, content-driven, and created by a knowledgeable author (you!), but the form they take is up to you, and you will decide, with support from your tutor and peers, how best to structure and deliver your OER. More on this below.

This is an explicitly 'blue skies thinking' course. It aims to encourage you to be critical consumers and producers of new technologies as they emerge, and to give you tools for thinking about and responding to the promises and threats of the 'next big thing'. In addition, the course's structure allows you to engage with new technologies and ideas in an exploratory way – as you create OER topics for the second half of the course, you can lead the way in helping your peers to contextualise emerging trends and ideas and also to help inform the future of digital education at the University of Edinburgh.

Have a fantastic semester.



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## Course learning outcomes

On completion of this course, you will:

- be able critically to consider and situate new and emerging trends and technologies;
- be aware of some of the social factors influencing technological innovation, and of emerging technological factors influencing society;
- be able to identify the potential of emerging technologies and environments for teaching and learning;
- demonstrate practical skill in the deployment of emerging technologies for learning purposes.

## Delivery mode and participation etiquette

The course is delivered – entirely online – through a combination of environments. The core environment for course communication is Moodle, and you'll find our course site at <https://www.moodle.is.ed.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1052>. This is where you will find discussion space, announcements and information, and course readings and resources. Some parts of the course site will be open access, so that others beyond the course will be able to engage with it. These will be clearly marked. Registered students will have access to this site from Monday 11 September, 2017.

The course is quite flexible in terms of how you structure your workload, though there will be one-hour synchronous tutorial sessions offered in some weeks, which you are encouraged to attend. In Block Four (weeks 9–12) you **must** engage with the OERs developed by other students on the course, and will be responsible for providing feedback and a mark for **three** of these.

The nature of this course means that what you get out of it will depend as much on the other course participants as on your tutors and the course material we have created. Their OERs, and their participation in and feedback on yours, make up a significant part of both your time and the mark you receive for this course. The ethos of this course is therefore one of active, collegial and constructive participation.

## Equipment you will need

You will need a computer with a broadband connection. You will be given guidance by peers in Block 3 as to which technologies you will need for their OERs, but in general it is assumed that you will be able to:

- Listen to audio and view video.
- Access and use Blackboard Collaborate – please work through the “session preparation & checklist” at least a week before the first tutorial session.  
<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/services/learning-technology/communication/collaborate/session-preparation>

## Course structure and format

The course will be divided into four blocks. Block One, lasting 5 weeks, will involve reading around the core themes and considering the key literature and ideas associated with each. Block Two will consist of a 2-week position paper writing period, and Block 3 is an Open Education Resource (OER) preparation period. The final 3-week block, Block Four, will be

taken up with engaging with and evaluating the OERs of your peers, and synthesising the outcomes of your OER development in written form.

### **Block 1**

#### **Weeks 1-5: orientation, exploring the literature, developing topic ideas**

In this block, you will be introduced to the course and its aims, and will read broadly around the course themes, participating in discussions and synchronous tutorials. By the end of the block you will have decided on an area you would like to focus on for your position paper and OER.

### **Block 2**

#### **Weeks 6-7: position paper preparation**

This is an independent research and writing block. Your position paper – which will form the basis of the content for your OER development in Block 3 – is due at the end of week 7. Your tutor will be on hand to support this process. Your paper will be on a topic of your choice which is relevant to the course themes and the broad subject of “digital futures”. Topics will be published, and peer-markers for the OERs allocated, at the end of week 7.

### **Block 3**

#### **Weeks 8-9: OER development**

You will be responsible for planning and developing 3 hours of learning for your peers, in the form of an OER (Open Educational Resource) based on your position paper topic. This block will involve a combination of working through OER guidance and resources, discussing OER development, and developing your own OER. Your OER must be published and available at the end of week 9.

### **Block 4**

#### **Weeks 10-12: OERs and analysis papers**

The final three weeks of the course will consist of students participating in and providing feedback on the OERs of their peers. You will be expected to provide formal feedback on three of the OERs, and engage with others in weekly “crit” discussions. During this period you will also begin to write your OER analysis paper. In week 12, we will look back over the course and plan for the next phase of the OERs.

## **Assessment**

**A note on word counts:** The absolute minimum/maximum for the two written assignments is +/-10% (so, the minimum is 1800, maximum 2200). However, this is *not* an invitation to write 2200 words! Aim for as close to the 2000 limit as possible, but don't worry if you go a little over or under – that's the purpose of the margin.

Word counts *include* anything in the assignment up to the references (including tables, footnotes, and so on). References and appendices are not included in the word count. Please state the word count at the start of the assignment. Those going over or under the 10% margin will be considered not to have met the requirements for the assignments, and mark penalties are therefore likely to result.

**Position paper** (30%, tutor marked): You will write a 2000 word position paper which extends the themes from Block 1 in a direction which is of personal or professional interest and relevance to you. This paper is due at the end of week 7, **Sunday 5 November 2017**.

**Assignment 1, Position Paper criteria:**

**Knowledge and understanding of concepts:** *is the topic well defined, the key concepts explained clearly, and the link with the course themes and with digital education made explicit? Does the paper take a critical approach to the topic?*

**Knowledge and use of the literature:** *Is the appropriate scholarly literature drawn on in framing the topic? Are relevant course readings discussed and critically explored in relation to the topic?*

**Constructing academic discourse:** *Is the position paper produced with careful attention to the quality of the writing and the skilful expression of ideas? Is it scholarly in its approach to the topic?*

**Open Educational Resource** (30% peer marked & tutor moderated, 10% self assessed): You will design, develop and publish an Open Educational Resource (OER) based on your position paper topic. This may be theoretical and exploratory, involve a critical perspective on a new technology or environment, or be a problem- or issue-based resource. It can use interactive elements, as well as textual, visual, audio or multimedia communication across a single or a range of environments. The main requirement of the resource is that it engages the rest of the class in considering, in a scholarly way, issues relevant to the course. You may eventually wish to make your resource more widely available – to others on the programme, or beyond – and the feedback you receive from your peers can help you to improve and develop your resource for this purpose.

This assignment will be submitted in two stages. **Stage 1** is your block 3 work, culminating in a complete OER, ready to be used by your peers in Block 4. This is due on **Sunday 19 November 2017**. During Block 4, groups will engage with one another's OERs, with each group member providing detailed feedback and a provisional mark for three others. You will receive this feedback (but not the mark) at the end of Block 4.

In **Stage 2**, you will consider the feedback you've received, and what you have learned from engaging with other OERs. You will use this to revise your OER in whatever way you feel is appropriate, and submit a link to your final OER, along with a copy of your analysis paper (assignment 3), on **Sunday 7 January 2018**. The OER marks given by peers in Stage 1 will then be moderated and finalised by the course tutors, taking into account the peer feedback and marks and your analysis of decisions you have made about how to further develop it.

**Assignment 2, OER peer assessment criteria:**

**Knowledge and understanding of concepts:** *Did the OER show the author's knowledge and understanding of core concepts from the course? Did it expand on or extend the course themes? Was its engagement with digital futures explicit? Did it enhance your understanding, as a participant?*

**Knowledge and use of the literature:** *Did the OER draw on academic literature from the course and beyond in a compelling and engaging way? Did the use of literature come across as authoritative?*

**Planning and implementation of OER:** *Was the OER well organised and thought out? Was its use of technology appropriate and successful? Was the OER complete and usable?*

**Development of professional practice:** *Was the OER contextualised in relation to digital education? Did the OER stimulate you in relation to your own professional practice or thinking?*



**OER analysis paper** (30%, tutor marked): You will write a 2000 word analysis of your OER development, which will include a synthesis of the content of the discussion around it, and a reflection on the resource itself, the feedback given by the peer markers, and changes you have made as a result. The paper is due, along with your revised OER (assignment 2, stage 2), on **Sunday 7 January 2018**.

**Assignment 3, analysis paper criteria:**

**Knowledge and understanding of concepts**

*Is the content of the OER and discussion around it clearly summarised? Are points of debate or discussion drawn out and explained? Are concepts explored in more detail where necessary?*

**Reflection**

*Does the paper show awareness of and engagement with both the students' own and other participants' experiences of the OER? Is peer feedback taken into account and analysed?*

**Framing and analysing practice**

*Is a clear account given of the choices made in developing and presenting the OER? Are those choices adequately supported? Are changes made in light of Block 3 discussion, and peer feedback, clearly described and justified?*

**Development of professional practice**

*Does the paper discuss in a convincing manner how future OERs might be developed in light of the student's experience?*

## **Submission dates**

You must submit your 2000 word position paper (Assignment 1) in Moodle by the end of week 7 of the course, **Sunday 5 November 2017**.

Your OER (Assignment 2, stage 1) will be published at the end of week 9, **Sunday 19 November 2017**, and the link submitted in Moodle, and made available to the group.

Your 2000 word analysis paper (Assignment 3) and link to your final OER (Assignment 2, stage 2) must be submitted in Moodle by **Sunday 7 January 2018**.

## **Rationale for course structure and peer and self assessment**

For us the key to this course is the way it is co-created by its participants. This is important because of the subject matter of the course – digital futures – and how quickly the topics of interest will evolve. Creating a sustainable and exciting course of this nature needs a pedagogical approach which is both carefully structured and open in terms of content.

There will be considerable flexibility in the way your Open Educational Resource (OER) is structured and presented – you can use a combination of environments and activities, and make use of digital environments of your choice. The important things are that:

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- the OER can be completed with the three hours allocated (including any additional assigned reading);
- the OER engages and involves participants in considering, in a scholarly way, issues relevant to the course content.

In other words, the benefit of the OER is not primarily intended to be for the student who creates it – it is equally for the students who will participate in it (Boud et al 1999). If an OER is of high quality, then the whole cohort will benefit, as these OERS make up the whole of the course content in block 4.

For this reason, it is important that the assessment of these OERs is as consequential as possible: that it reflects the purpose of the assignment, which is to facilitate learning for the whole student group. Therefore, OERs will be assessed by a combination of peer and self assessment, using an assessment rubric developed by the course organiser. It seems logical and fair that the intended beneficiaries of the OERs be the ones to judge their quality and effectiveness. The peer assessment is therefore worth 30% of the final mark for the course, with an additional 10% coming from self-assessment, which allows the OER author to assess their own performance in conjunction with writing their final analysis paper, and also to take account of factors which may not be so visible to the audience (the effect of time constraints or of trying innovative environments, for example).

This peer assessment combines with tutor assessment of the position paper (30%) and event analysis paper (30%) to give each student a rounded picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their OER structure, content and design. We hope that many of you will find this of particular value in your development as teachers and developers of your own resources, and will benefit from this type of in-depth assessment of a learning resource you have created, as well as from the experience of providing feedback and assessing the resources of your peers.

### **Useful references include:**

Boud, D., Cohen, R. and Sampson, J. (1999). Peer Learning and Assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 24/4.

Collis, B. and Moonen, J. (2008) Web 2.0 tools and processes in higher education: quality perspectives. *Educational Media International*, 45/2, 93-106.

Dochy, F., Segers, M. and Sluijsmans, D. (1999). The Use of Self-, Peer and Co-assessment in Higher Education: a review. *Studies in Higher Education*, 24/3.

Falchikov, N. (1995). Peer Feedback Marking: Developing Peer Assessment. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 32/2.

Keppell, M., Au, E., Chan, C. (2006). Peer learning and learning-oriented assessment in technology-enhanced environments. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31/4.

Race, P. (2001). *A Briefing on Self, Peer and Group Assessment*. York: LTSN Generic Centre.

Topping, K. (1998). Peer Assessment Between Students in Colleges and Universities. *Review of Educational Research*, 68/3.

## Study activities and time commitment

Study activity	Time commitment (hours)
Synchronous discussion	10
Reading in set texts	50
Position paper and OER preparation	70
Participation in and peer feedback on OERs	40
Analysis paper preparation	30
<b>total</b>	<b>200</b>

## Course environments: an overview

The main course space for Digital Futures for Learning is in Moodle, at <https://www.moodle.is.ed.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=1052> . Registered students will be given access to the site from Monday 11 September, 2017.



**Digital Futures for Learning, September 2017**

Digital Futures for Learning gives you the opportunity to consider the trajectory and implications of digital technologies for the future of learning. It takes as its starting point the key themes of trust, resistance and mess, and uses them to guide exploration of emerging practices and technologies. We will ask: how are more established digital practices evolving? How will new digital technologies and trends impact on learning? How will the students and teachers of tomorrow construct their learning environments and practices?

**Activities**

- Assignments
- Forums
- Resources

**Search forums**

[Advanced search](#) ?

Moodle is your first stop for course content, readings and handbook, announcements, discussion forums, and assignment submission. Our synchronous tutorials, using Collaborate, are also accessed from the Moodle course site.

Other core tools and environments we will use on the course include:

- Collaborate (virtual classroom – accessed from within Moodle)
- Twitter: <http://twitter.com/>

There may be additional technologies and digital environments used in some of the OERs.

### Collaborate

Our synchronous tutorials for the course will be held in Collaborate. Collaborate allows real-time video, audio and text discussion. If you have a webcam, we invite you to join in by video, but at minimum please ensure that you have a microphone and earphones so that you can contribute to the conversation. The purpose of meeting in ‘real time’ is to foster a sense of presence and community during the early weeks of the course, and to have a chance to meet up periodically after that.

It is expected that you will work through the Collaborate “session preparation & checklist” at least a week before the first tutorial session. <http://edin.ac/15fhY5R> . If you need any help with getting set up with Collaborate, please contact the IS Helpline at [IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:IS.Helpline@ed.ac.uk).

### Twitter

Twitter will be a space of ‘ambient collegiality’ through the course – use it to share links and resources, update the group about how you are getting on, and generally be sociable. See the technologies handbook for suggestions about how to manage your Twitter activities. The hashtag for the course will be **#dfled** – use this in any tweets you send so that other course members can find you. Please note also that you need to make your tweets public before they will be visible in the course hashtag stream.