

AMBERTON UNIVERSITY
e-COURSE SYLLABUS

**HRT6610.E1 Digital & Distance Learning
FALL 2025**

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Name: Dr. Robert M. Rupe, PhD, MS, MA
Office Phone: 817-835-8922
Email Address: rrupe@amberton.edu

COURSE INFORMATION:

HRT6610.E1 Digital & Distance Learning
Level: Graduate
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025

Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, September 13, 2025.

Students enrolled in distance learning courses are not assessed any additional fees for security or identity verification.

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

None

TEXTBOOK(S) AND REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Title: Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education
Author: Simonson, M., Smaldino, S., Zvacek, S., & Schmidt, J.
Publisher: Information Age Publishing
Year: 2024
Edition: 8
ISBN: 13: 9798887305110
Price: Available at <http://amberton.ecampus.com>, used online or e-Book

Amberton University has an agreement with eCampus.com to provide a full-service online bookstore to students. The Amberton University Virtual Bookstore is accessible through the University's website, www.Amberton.edu. There is also a bookstore link in the Student Portal.

The AU Virtual Bookstore provides an easy to use interface, online buyback of books, and same day shipment of most titles with an average delivery time of 2-3 days depending on the student's location. Textbook options include new, used, rental, and electronic media as available.

Since no books are sold on campus, students should plan accordingly and purchase their books in advance of the first day of class, allowing time for shipping. Be certain you are enrolled in the course before purchasing your book(s). All textbook information (Title, Author, ISBN, etc.) is available in the course syllabi so students can shop competitively. Most textbooks can be purchased from many different textbook vendors. Some textbooks may only be available on the University's Virtual Bookstore. Students should be careful to obtain the exact resource(s) required for the course.

APA Requirement

APA (American Psychological Association) style is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences. This resource, revised according to the 7th edition, offers examples for the general format of APA research papers, in-text citations, endnotes/footnotes, and the reference page. For more information, please consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (7th ed.). All coursework at Amberton University will comply with the standards contained in the APA Publication Manual.

COURSE COMPETENCIES

This course provides a comprehensive exploration of digital and distance learning, as well as educational technology, focusing on their roles in enhancing teaching, learning, and assessment across diverse settings. Students will examine the integration of technology in education, with an emphasis on tools, platforms, and strategies that support effective instructional design, learner engagement, and collaboration in digital environments. The course delves into the applications of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, virtual and augmented reality, gamification, and learning management systems (LMS). Learners will also explore accessibility considerations, digital equity, and the creation of inclusive, technology-enhanced learning environments. Additionally, the course addresses instructional design for virtual platforms, strategies to foster collaboration in distance education, and the use of analytics to monitor and improve learner outcomes. Emphasis is placed on developing the skills necessary to design, implement, and evaluate innovative learning experiences, while also understanding the pedagogical and ethical implications of utilizing technology. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to leverage educational technology to create impactful, inclusive, and engaging learning experiences in digital and distance education settings.

UPON COMPLETION OF THE COURSE, THE STUDENT WILL BE COMPETENT IN:

1. Analyzing the role of digital and distance learning technologies in enhancing teaching, learning, and assessment across diverse educational settings.
2. Designing innovative instructional materials and learning experiences using emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, virtual/augmented reality, and gamification.
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of digital tools, learning management systems (LMS), and analytics to support learner engagement and achievement.
4. Integrating accessibility principles and digital equity considerations into the creation of inclusive, technology-enhanced learning environments.
5. Applying strategies to foster collaboration and community in digital and distance learning environments.
6. Developing skills in instructional design tailored for virtual platforms, emphasizing learner-centered approaches and adaptability.
7. Examining the ethical implications of using technology in education, including data privacy, equity, and the responsible use of AI.
8. Assessing the impact of digital tools and platforms on learner outcomes, engagement, and collaboration.
9. Synthesizing theoretical and practical knowledge of educational technology to solve complex challenges in digital and distance learning.
10. Demonstrating an understanding of the pedagogical frameworks that guide the effective integration of technology into education.
11. Critically analyzing trends and future directions in digital and distance learning to anticipate and address emerging challenges in technology integration and pedagogy.
12. Designing and implementing strategies for evaluating and improving the scalability and sustainability of digital and distance learning programs in diverse educational contexts.
13. Analyzing pedagogical frameworks to align technology with learner needs.
14. Implementing data-driven decision-making strategies to enhance instructional design, learner engagement, and course effectiveness in digital and distance learning environments.
15. Exploring the psychological and cognitive factors that influence learner motivation, self-regulation, and persistence in online and distance education.

ACQUIRED SKILLS

1. Developing learning solutions for virtual environments
2. Evaluating educational technology
3. Assessing the effectiveness of digital and distance learning strategies

COURSE POLICIES:

(1) DO NOT plagiarize in any way. Any student that plagiarizes, regardless of intent, **will receive a zero** for the assignment. Academic honesty is highly valued at Amberton University. A student must always submit work that represents his or her original words or ideas. Review the section herein that discusses Academic Honesty/Plagiarism. Plagiarism can be described as, but is not limited to the following examples:

- Having a tutor or friend complete a portion of your assignments

- Having a reviewer make extensive revisions to an assignment
- Copying work submitted by another student to a public class meeting
- Using information from online information services without proper citation
- Using any source of information without proper citation

(2) Late Policies:

Late Policy for Assignments is as follows:

Late Assignments will be penalized with a 15% grade deduction for each day late for the first 2 days, unless you have made prior arrangements with me. If an assignment is turned in **3 or more days late, NO points will be earned. Deadlines will be defined as 11:59 p.m. CST.** Do not wait until the last minute to turn in assignments. The syllabus is offered well in advance to allow students to plan accordingly.

Special Note: No late assignments will be accepted in the last week of the course, except in extreme circumstances and arrangements have been made with the instructor prior to the due date. No assignments or exams will be accepted after the course end date.

Policy for Exams is as follows:

Midterm and Final Exams are timed tests.

Web-based Exams: Web-based exams must be taken within the range of dates provided in the course materials, timed tests must be submitted before timer expires, or test will be lost, and no points awarded.

(3) **No Extra credit** – There is no extra credit in graduate school in my courses.

(4) Assignments not submitted correctly will not be graded or returned. Directions in course room.

(5) All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in this course. Even assignments that are late and do not receive a grade must be turned in. In other words, you do not have the option of skipping one or two assignments and taking a lower grade in the course. **Failure to complete all assignments as specified will result in a grade of an “F.”**

(6) **Assignments that do not rise to the level of graduate level work will be graded accordingly.** Please adhere to recognizable and consistent guidelines when preparing your papers, especially when citing other sources. **APA standards will be strictly enforced**, so be sure to use the latest APA Manual, rather than programs which claim to do this automatically. I have not yet seen any programs that do this perfectly.

(7) **Academic Resources** - When you are conducting research for any assignment, the majority of your sources should be the **text books** or **peer-reviewed academic journals**, such as those you find in the University library databases. Some sources can be from article written by experts in magazines or online, but only if they are verifiable experts and have author names.

WARNING: Internet searches will often take you to non-academic information resources such as Wikipedia.com, Ask.com, Answers.com, Encarta.msn.com, Infoplease.com, etc. Keep in mind that the information you find in these sources is unreliable and may not be accurate, since it does not come under a formal oversight or peer-review process. Avoid using these types of sources. **It is NOT permitted in this course and will NOT be counted towards fulfilling assignments.**

While you may use and cite some non-academic resources such as trade journals or an organization's website only when researching a company, you may not rely on them exclusively, keep them to minimum. With this exception of company Web sites for company-research, no un-authored material may be cited in this course. If a company Web site is used, students must take strong measures to determine the *author* (corporate or individual) and *date* of the material cited, per APA guidelines. No other un-authored sources may be used.

The use of primary sources, when appropriate, is always encouraged. For example, when writing about leaders in certain industries, one may want to issue questionnaires, surveys or conduct interviews. Data from these sources is considered primary, as opposed to secondary data found in some peer-reviewed journals. Keep in mind, there are proper ways of conducting primary research and these methods go beyond

the scope of this class. Therefore, quality secondary sources should be your primary source of research and information.

Remember that you are responsible for the accuracy of any facts presented in your assignments and therefore should confirm the veracity of information you find on non-academic sources through further research.

Read the Research Resources section at the end of this document.

(8) A successful learning experience depends on the student's willingness to stay on schedule with respect to due dates, course readings and other requirements. You are encouraged to plan ahead and pace yourself so that adequate time is allotted for each assignment and unexpected circumstances do not hinder your success.

(9) Feedback – I will provide grades for **graded assignments** within 5-6 days of the due date. Graded assignments are **not** the same as those that receive participation grades. Assignments and DQs that count as participation grades are merely assigned a numerical point grade. However, if you need feedback at any time regarding participation grades, please ask me, and I will be happy to provide it.

(10) Student's Responsibilities – This syllabus contains information, policies and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

Student's Responsibilities

This syllabus contains information, policies, and procedures for a specific course. By enrolling, the student agrees to read, understand, and abide by the policies, rules, regulations, and ethical standards of Amberton University as contained in the current university catalog and schedule of classes.

Attendance Policy:

Regular and punctual class attendance and engagement is expected at Amberton University. In case of an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible. If a student intends on withdrawing from a course, it is the student's responsibility to follow the university's policy on formally withdrawing from a course. **Ceasing to attend classes does not constitute an official withdrawal.**

Attendance in a lecture course is defined as punctual arrival to, and engagement in, a full lecture session. A Student in a lecture course missing more than 20% (two class periods for weekday classes or one class period for Saturday classes) of the class meetings may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Attendance in a distance learning course is defined as active participation in the weekly online class sessions. "Active participation" can be defined as: submitting an academic assignment, taking an exam, engaging in an interactive tutorial, participating in an online discussion forum (or chat session), or initiating (or responding to) a communication with a faculty member about an academic assignment or the subject matter of the course. A student not meeting these requirements may be assigned a grade of an "F" or withdrawn at the discretion of Amberton University.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as though it were your own. If you use another person's words, ideas, or information; or if you use material from an outside source – whether a book, magazine, newspaper, business publication, broadcast, speech, or electronic media – you must acknowledge that source. Plagiarism is a violation of the University's code of student ethical conduct and is one that is taken seriously. Amberton University operates on an honor system; therefore, honesty and integrity are essential characteristics of all who are associated with the institution. All Amberton students are expected to abide by the honor system and maintain academic integrity in all their work. Amberton University and its instructors monitor student work for plagiarism and reserve the right to submit such work to technology-based plagiarism detection services and applications at any time.

Self-plagiarism means reusing work that you have already published or submitted for a class. It can involve:

- Resubmitting an entire paper
- Copying or paraphrasing passages from your previous work

Self-plagiarism misleads your readers by presenting previous work as completely new and original. Students may not submit the same paper in substance in two or more classes without prior written permission of the instructors involved.

Amberton University students who use Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content must adhere to the following policies:

Originality: Students must avoid presenting AI generated content as their own original work. It is essential to acknowledge the involvement of AI in the content creation process in order to maintain academic and ethical standards.

Paraphrasing: When using AI generated content, students must rephrase and/or modify the generated text. Paraphrased AI generated content should also be properly cited.

Acknowledgement: When using AI generated content in any assignment, proper credit must be given to the AI system that generated the content. <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Students agree that by taking this course, all required assignments may be subject to submission for a textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism and self-plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in future papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com website.

Turnitin is a writing improvement and plagiarism prevention tool which uses special algorithms, to compare text-based student submissions to the Turnitin database and other online sources. Turnitin produces a detailed **similarity report** that can be customized and viewed by instructors and students.

Turnitin “Draft Coach” is a Google based add-on to Turnitin which supports students in developing high-quality academic writing; and serves as an integrity coach. Draft Coach helps address errors and improve the quality of student’s writing by highlighting grammar mistakes, identifying incorrectly cited sources, and scanning for similarity across several databases. By providing formative feedback on how to address citation issues, incorrect grammar, and matches with the Turnitin database, Draft Coach provides explanations to help students become more confident writers, capable of producing higher quality work both in academics and in the workplace.

COURSE OUTLINE AND CALENDAR:

Week	Due Date	Activity	Points	Grade Type	Competencies Covered
Course Start: Sat. Sept. 13, 2025					
Week-1	9/19	DQ 1	4	Discussion Grade	0
		Library Quiz	3	Quiz Grade	0
		Assign. 1	8	Participation Grade	0
Week-2	9/26	Assign. 2	8	Participation Grade	2,3,4,5
Week-3	10/3	Assign. 3	8	Participation Grade	6,1,7,8,9
Week-4	10/10	DQ 2	7	Discussion Grade	8,10,9,3,11
Week-5	10/11 - 10/17	Quiz 1	10	Quiz Grade	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,3
Week-6	10/24	Assign. 4	8	Participation Grade	12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Week-7	10/31	DQ 3	7	Assignment Grade	15,16,17,18
Week-8	11/1 - 11/7	Quiz 2	10	Discussion Grade	3,4,8,10
Week-9	11/14	Assign. 5	20	Quiz Grade	10,11,12,13,14,15,16,18
Week-10	11/20	DQ 4	7	Discussion Grade	0
Course End: Thurs. Nov. 20, 2025					
Total			100		

GRADING CRITERIA:

Graduate	
92 – 100	A
82 – 91	B
72 – 81	C
62 – 71	D
Below 62	F

GRADE NOTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK:

A successful distance learning experience requires a flow of communication between instructor and student throughout the session. Instructor comments are considered essential to the learning process. Therefore, each assignment/exam submitted will be reviewed, graded, and returned to the student in a timely manner along with the appropriate commentary. Students should carefully review all comments.

Final grades are processed approximately one week after the last day of the session and may be located in the My Grades section of the online registration portal as well as being emailed to the student's Amberton University email. Amberton University staff will not release grades over the phone. University instructors will not leave a message with comments or grades in any type of media that is not secure.

For questions regarding grades after the semester has ended, students should use their university email account and contact the instructor at the faculty email address as provided above in *Professor Information* area.

Incomplete Grades

An "I" (incomplete grade) is given at the discretion of the professor and may be given only when an emergency or illness prevents the student from completing course requirements. Should an "I" be granted, the student has 30 days from the end of the session to complete the conditions of the incomplete. An "I" which is not properly removed within 30 days following the session enrolled will become an "F" grade.

How To Withdraw From a Course

To be official, the class withdrawal must be in writing and signed by the student requesting the withdrawal; no withdrawal is accepted verbally. Please review the "Schedule of Classes" (online or in-print) for procedures for class changes or withdrawals and the refund policy and schedule.

COURSE DELIVERY METHODOLOGY:

This course is offered as a distance-learning course through the Moodle Learning Platform. Amberton's distance learning courses, called e-Courses, are identical to classroom courses in terms of learning outcomes, competencies, and instructor expectations. A student choosing to take an e-Course must have the following skills and technical capabilities:

1. Access to the Internet
2. General knowledge in:
 - Internet browser settings and configuration
 - e-mail and file attachments
 - Uploading and downloading files
 - Using a word processing package
3. Ability to conduct on-line research

Students who have not mastered these skills should not enroll for this course but should consider enrolling in MIS2110 Computer Concepts and Internet Technologies for instruction in these areas.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:

Through the Amberton University Student Portal

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may access the course through the Amberton University Student Portal. The site may be accessed through the University's main page (<http://www.Amberton.edu>) or at <http://apps.Amberton.edu>. After selecting the "Student Portal" link, you will be prompted for a Username and Password.

Use your assigned **username and password** (AUID) as described below to enter the AU Student Portal:

Username = your capitalized firstname **initial**+lastname+last 3 digits of your SSN.

* Use your name exactly as it is listed on the University's records, including any suffixes or hyphenations, such as Jr, Sr, or II, as a part of your username.

For example: James Jones, Jr. SSN: 123-45-6789
Username: JJonesJr789

Password = your Amberton University ID# (AUID) **including the dashes**

For example: 04-999-999

Once your login has been validated, you may select from a variety of menu options, including your individual E-Course, email account, Remote Research, General Tools, all Syllabi and Research Tutorials.

If you are accessing the Student Portal from a public or shared computer, close the browser completely when finished, or click on the Logout button. For security purposes, no other person should have access to your Username or Password. If you feel your information has been compromised or if you experience technical difficulties, contact the e-course system administrator at: e-sysop@amberton.edu

If you have lost or do not know your Amberton ID#, please contact the Student Services Office 972/279-6511 or advisor@Amberton.edu for a replacement AUID card. You must know your Amberton ID# to gain access to the course and to send an email to your professor.

Through the Amberton University Moodle Website

Students enrolled in distance learning courses using the Moodle Learning Platform may also access the course by going to: <http://moodle.Amberton.edu>

For those utilizing Moodle for the first time, the **username and password** for the Moodle Learning Platform will be emailed to the student's University email account prior to the start of the course. For those returning to Moodle who do not remember their username and password, click on the link "*Forgotten your username or password*" available on the Moodle log in page (<http://moodle.Amberton.edu>). Otherwise use the same username and password as previous session.

Moodle Tutorial:

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a *Student Moodle Tutorials* course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the *Student Moodle Tutorials* and read through the various learning topics: Navigating; Communicating; Assignments & Exams; Grades; and Student Resources.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS:

Students will communicate with faculty through the Moodle Learning Platform or the Amberton University email system.

Each student enrolled is assigned an Amberton email account, which gives the student access to the Amberton email system (my.Amberton.edu). This email account is provided by Google Apps for Education. Students are encouraged to check their email regularly for University news, notices, and to communicate with instructors.

The student's assigned email address would be Username@my.Amberton.edu

Example: LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

The student Username is determined by:

firstname initial+lastname+last 3 digits of student ssn.

For example: Linda Jones-Smith SSN: 123-45-6789

Email Address = LJones-Smith789@my.Amberton.edu

Students will be prompted for a Username and Password when accessing their email account. Use the Username portion of the email address as the username (Example: LJones-Smith789) and your Amberton ID# (including the dashes) as the password.

If you already have a Google Gmail account, you might be prompted to add this account to your current account. Click 'Yes' and you will be logged into your my.Amberton.edu email account. It will be a separate email account from your personal Gmail account.

If you need assistance with your email account, please visit <https://support.google.com/mail>

Students are responsible for reviewing the "Communication Guidelines" provided on the individual E-Course for specific instructor requirements.

Upon completion of a session, all communication and course specific information is removed from the Moodle system. If a student needs to maintain a record of communications or assignments, the student is strongly encouraged to print out or download these items to a disk for their own records.

FORMAT AND SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are to be submitted to the appropriate assignment Drop Box in the Moodle system. Specific directions and guidelines for submission of assignments are located on-line in the "Communication Guidelines" of the e-course. Due to compatibility issues, Office 2007 files cannot be read by earlier versions of Microsoft Office. Before submitting an exercise file, confirm the file is in the proper format for grading by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:

Each session, all Amberton students are provided with the opportunity to evaluate their courses and instructors. The evaluation process is an important one and provides students with an anonymous and confidential way to give meaningful feedback to the University. Summary information and comments are provided to faculty after the close of the session. All information provided is anonymous.

The Instructor/Course Evaluation will be open for completion during week 9 of the session. An evaluation assignment will be placed in week 9 of the Moodle course, along with the instructions on how to complete the evaluation. Prior to week 9, the University will send out an email containing instructions and dates for the evaluation period.

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

The Library provides access to full-text, and peer reviewed articles, and digital research tools. Students can search Library holdings through the online catalog and databases search engines available on the Library website or browse the physical library space and holdings located at the Garland campus.

Research items not contained in the Amberton Library collection can be located through interlibrary Loan (ILL) or through the TexShare program with the help of the Library staff. Students with questions about available services, resources, or research, may contact the Library via email at Library@amberton.edu.

RESEARCH ACCESS:

Databases can only be accessed by authorized users, and students at Amberton must enter their Amberton ID credentials-same as Moodle login-to gain access when off-campus. Use an Amberton website, such as the University site (Amberton.edu) or the library site (Library.amberton.edu) to find links to databased and digital books. Online resources are available all day, every day.

Library Live Chat Feature

Library staff are available to assist students with research problems or questions during Library hours through a live online chat feature, telephone, email, "How-to" videos, or in person. The library telephone is (972-279-6511 ext. 185. You can email questions to library@amberton.edu or visit the library in person on the Garland campus for assistance.

Microsoft Office 365 Education:

Amberton University students have access to a license for Office 365 Education, a comprehensive suite of productivity tools. This package includes:

- Microsoft Word for document creation
- Excel for spreadsheets and data analysis
- PowerPoint for presentations
- OneNote for digital note-taking
- Microsoft Teams for collaboration
- Additional classroom tools to enhance your learning experience

To set up your student account and access these resources, please follow the instructions provided in our step-by-step guide: https://amberton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Office365_Setup_Students.pdf

Google Workspace for Education:

All students are assigned a Gmail account in Google Workspace for Education.

To set up your student account and access these resources, please follow the instructions provided in our step-by-step guide: https://amberton.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Google_Drive_Students.pdf

Once logged into your student account, you'll have access to a suite of tools designed to enhance your learning experience:

- Google Docs: Create and edit essays, reports, and other written assignments
- Google Slides: Develop engaging presentations for projects and class discussions
- Google Sheets: Perform data analysis, create charts, and manage calculations
- Google Drive: Store, organize, and easily access all your files in the cloud
- Google Calendar: Schedule study sessions, track assignment deadlines, and manage your academic timetable
- Google Keep: Take and organize quick notes during lectures or study sessions
- Google Meet: Attend virtual classes, participate in group study sessions, or meet with teachers
- Google Classroom: Access course materials, submit assignments, and receive feedback from instructors
- Google Forms: Create surveys for research projects or participate in class quizzes
- Google Sites: Build websites or digital portfolios to showcase your work