

AMBERTON UNIVERSITY
e-COURSE SYLLABUS

HRT6610.E1 Digital & Distance Learning
Fall 2026

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:

Professor: Dr. Robert M. Rupe, PhD, MS, MA
Amberton Extension: 817-835-8922
Amberton Email : rrupe@amberton.edu

COURSE INFORMATION:

HRT6610.E1 Digital & Distance Learning
Level: Graduate
Beginning Date of Session: Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026
Ending Date of Session: Thursday, Nov.19 2026

Student access available to the Student Portal: Saturday, Sept. 12, 2026

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. 12, 2026					
Week-1	9/18	DQ 1	2	Discussion Grade	0
		Library Quiz	2	Quiz Grade	0
		Assign. 1	4	Participation Grade	2,4,5,6
Week-2	9/25	Assign. 2	4	Participation Grade	2,3,4,5
Week-3	10/2	Assign. 3	4	Participation Grade	6,1,7,8,9
Week-4	10/9	DQ 2	9	Discussion Grade	8,10,9,3,11
Week-5	10/10 - 10/16	Quiz 1	20	Quiz Grade	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,3
Week-6	10/23	Assign. 4	4	Participation Grade	12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Week-7	10/30	Assign. 5	20	Assignment Grade	15,16,17,18
Week-8	11/6	DQ 3	9	Discussion Grade	3,4,8,10
Week-9	11/7 - 11/13	Quiz 2	20	Quiz Grade	10,11,12,13,14,15,16,18
Week-10	11/19	DQ 4	2	Discussion Grade	0
Course End: Thurs. Nov. 19, 2026					

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:

Students should review instructor feedback provided through Moodle or Amberton CampusWeb Portal. Final grades are processed approximately one week after the session and may be viewed through the student portal. Grades will not be released by phone or through unsecured channels. 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 granted only at the professor's discretion for emergencies or illness.

Students have 30 days from the end of the session to complete the course requirements. If the conditions are not met within this 30-day window, the "I" automatically converts to an "F".

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 delivered through Moodle. Students are expected to have reliable internet access, basic computer skills, the ability to upload/download files, use Amberton email, and submit assignments in the required format. Students needing assistance should use the Amberton SSO support/ticket process.

HOW TO ACCESS YOUR COURSE:

SINGLE SIGN-ON (SSO) INSTRUCTIONS FOR AMBERTON UNIVERSITY

Students should access Amberton systems through the Single Sign-On portal at <https://sso.amberton.edu>. After logging in, students can access Moodle, Amberton email, CampusWeb, and other assigned applications. Students who need help accessing SSO should submit a support request through the SSO support option or contact support@amberton.edu.

MOODLE TUTORIAL:

Upon successful log in and access to the Moodle learning platform, there is a Student Moodle Tutorial course available, to learn about the basics of Moodle. Simply click on the link for the Student Moodle Tutorial 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.

EMAIL COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to use their Amberton email account and Moodle for course communications. Students must use their official university email account for all university related communication and should check their Amberton emails regularly for course and university notices.

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 must be submitted through the appropriate Moodle assignment link unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Students are responsible for submitting files in the format required by the instructor.

INSTRUCTOR/COURSE EVALUATION:

Students will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous course and instructor evaluation near the end of the session. Instructions and dates will be provided through Moodle and/or Amberton email.

RESEARCH RESOURCES:

The Amberton Library provides access to full-text articles, peer-reviewed databases, and research tools, with options like Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and TexShare for items outside its collection. For research assistance, students can connect with library staff during operating hours via email (Library@amberton.edu), phone (972-279-6511 ext. 185), "How-to" videos, live online chat, or in person at the Garland campus. The online library is available through Single Sign On (SSO).

MICROSOFT OFFICE 365 EDUCATION:

Amberton University students may access Microsoft 365 Education resources as provided by the university.

GOOGLE WORKSPACE FOR EDUCATION:

Amberton students are assigned a Google Workspace for Education account, including Amberton Gmail, Google Drive, Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. Students should use their Amberton Google account for course-related work when required.