Course Overview
INFO 780-14 Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning
Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm
Spring 2005, Dr. Gerry Stahl

Course Description

This course examines social and technical issues and concepts of computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL). It covers such topics as: the ways individuals and groups learn in classes, teams and collaborations with computer support; the theory of collaborative knowledge building; CSCL software design, implementation and evaluation issues, and future directions of this technology. It includes review of current research literature, theories, issues, technologies and methodologies.

The course is primarily designed for PhD students, although Masters students may request instructor permission to take it. It is taught as a hybrid presence/online advanced seminar. It is aimed at mature students who are prepared to explore the research field of CSCL.

Foci this Term

1. This term the reading will be a new book on CSCL:

- Strijbos, J-W, Kirschner, P., Martens, R.(Eds.) (2004). What we know about CSCL: And implementing it in higher education. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

2. This term we will collaborate with participants in several CSCL seminars in Europe. These are doctoral seminars at some of the leading CSCL research centers of Scandinavia. We will collaborate online, using both threaded discussion and videoconferencing.

3. Last year, most of the students in the CSCL seminar expressed interest in taking the course again. Therefore, this year the seminar will be open to students who took it last year as well as those who did not. The more experienced students will be expected to lead small research teams in the class.

Course Approach to Learning

This course will engage in *collaborative learning* conducted by small groups of students taking advantage of computer support.

We will use a CSCL system called Optima and one called ConcertChat, as well as BlackBoard.

There will be weekly assignments. Each group will present their work to the rest of the class.

You will learn by reading, reflecting, applying, explaining, sharing, critiquing.

Please note: This course requires extensive online group work. You will have to meet online with your group throughout the week (if you have not done this before, you will learn how to do it in the course). You may have to use the computers in the CRC if you do not have a high-speed Internet connection on your own computer. You will work hard and learn a lot. Taking this course means you have agreed to try the approach of this course as described in this Course Overview.

Course Requirements

- Read the assigned texts carefully. Take notes.

- Discuss the readings and other course issues in the class discussion forum. Each week, as soon as you have finished a reading, enter comments or questions in the discussion forum; return a couple days later to respond to the discussion.

- Search for other resources (interactive designs in commercial products, informative websites, research papers, etc.) related to the readings and share these with the rest of the class in the discussion forum.

- Document the theoretical rationale and the use of techniques from the texts or other sources that led to your ideas. Cite your sources.

- Collaborate actively in a project group. Participate fully in all group work. At the end of the term, each group should submit a group research paper. Discuss a topic for this early in the term and get instructor approval for it. This might be a topic like: an annotated bibliography of important publications in CSCL; an annotated list of an open issue raised in the readings; an exploration of an issue that arose repeatedly in the readings.

- At the end of the term, submit a personal reflection paper of about 10 single-spaced pages. This should be a reflection from your personal, individual perspective on what you accomplished in this course, what you learned, and how you would continue the research of your group if your group had another 10 weeks to work on it. You should prepare notes for this throughout the term.

- Ph.D. students must write a conference research paper that meets the requirements for submission to a CSCL conference. This paper is in addition to the reflection paper and other assignments; it will be included in your Ph.D. portfolio. The submission-quality conference paper will count for 10% of your grade in this course.

Course Grading

The course work will involve online discussions and weekly group or individual projects. Grading will be based half on your individual participation in the course and in your group, and half on the grade of your project group for its portfolio of solutions to group projects.

50%	**individual**	
	10%	Participation in project group
	10%	Careful study of course readings
	10%	Participation in class
	10%	Participation in online discussions
	10%	Reflection paper
50%	**group**	
	20%	Quality of group products
	10%	Rationale for approach and write-up
	10%	Use of techniques from textbook and other sources – e.g., review of the research literature
	10%	Creativity of presentations to class

grades	
A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	50-69%
F	0-49%

Plagiarism. Obviously, plagiarism is not tolerated at Drexel and can result in failure. Plagiarism is passing off someone else's ideas, work or words as your own. Collaboration is encouraged, but always give credit to individuals or groups whose ideas, work or words you are reporting, quoting or summarizing.

Privacy Notice

All work and communication in this course should be considered public.

- Any communication on the Internet may end up being seen by people for whom it was not originally intended.

- The instructor and other Drexel faculty, students and staff may have access to anything in Blackboard or on the web.

- Future researchers may have access to these materials as data. Although they do not have permission to publish any data about you and although they should ensure anonymity and confidentiality of all personal data, you should assume that activities taking place in this course may be subject to future viewing.

- Students in future courses may have access to your work, particularly the group products.

Instructor's Background

Hi. My name is Gerry (pronounced like "Jerry"). For urgent or personal questions, you can contact me directly by email at Gerry.Stahl@drexel.edu . However, it is often better to ask questions about the texts, weekly assignments or other aspects of the course through the class discussion board so that everyone in the class can see and respond to your questions.

My professional research area is the field of CSCL (Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning). I think that collaborative learning is an exciting and especially effective way to learn. I believe that there is great potential to design good computer support for it. I have been experimenting with a number of CSCL prototypes and have written many

papers on the theory, design and evaluation of interactive systems to support collaborative learning. We will be taking advantage of what I have learned from my research in this course, and I hope you will benefit from this.

I have just completed a book on CSCL entitled *Group Cognition: Computer Support for Collaborative Knowledge-Building* and am launching the *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning*.

My background is in computer science and philosophy. At Drexel I teach mainly HCI courses; before coming to Drexel I worked at a large research organization in Germany; before that I was a Research Professor at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The 2002 international CSCL conference was at Boulder and I was the Program Chair for it; the 2003 one was in Norway and I was in charge of the workshops there; the next one will be in Taiwan and I will be in charge of workshops.

Let me know if you have any questions about my background or check out my home page, where you can see more details and read my papers: http://www.cis.drexel.edu/faculty/gerry.