

**COURSE TITLE:** UNPLUGGING & DISCONNECTING FOR OUR HEALTH

**WA CLOCK HRS:** 60

**NO. OF CREDITS:** 6 QUARTER CREDITS  
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

**OREGON PDUs:** 60

**PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48:** 60

**INSTRUCTOR:** Suzanne Warner  
sw11235@yahoo.com

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Technology – smartphones, social media, the Internet – can make our lives easier and more fulfilling. However as with everything else, too much can be overwhelming and even unhealthy. It is important that we – and our students - learn to disconnect and pursue activities, and have experiences that are not technologically dependent. Participants explore the why and how to unplug/disconnect, spend some time experiencing unplugged time, and learn how to implement some unconnected time in the classroom as well.

This course is geared towards teachers and counselors of all grade levels.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

1. Spent time analyzing their voluntary connected/plugged-in time.
2. Learned why it is important that each person disconnects.
3. Learned how to successfully disconnect and unplug.
4. Explored and experienced hobbies and activities that are not technologically dependent.
5. Created a presentation about disconnecting to use in the classroom.
6. Examined their own journey to find balance within a world full of technology.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

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**HOURS EARNED:**

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

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**UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION**

**REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
  2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
  3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%
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**CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)**

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This

information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

## **ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION**

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

All readings/videos are (ironically) online.

None. All reading is online.

### **MATERIALS FEE**

none

## **ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION**

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

#### **Assignment #1: Introduce Yourself**

Introduce yourself – share a bit about yourself professionally, what interests you about this class, what concerns you may have about your own connections with technology, what concerns you may have about your students' connections with technology, and what you hope to gain from this class. You may either submit a 100-200 word written response or create a 2 -3 minute video.

(Click on this link to learn how to create a video in PowerPoint.)

#### **Assignment #2: – Where Does the Time Go? (Part 1)**

1. Think back over the last 72 hours. Calculate (to the best of your ability) how your time was spent each day – sleeping, working/commuting, hobbies, preparing food and eating, social media, TV watching, aimlessly scrolling through your phone/tablet, etc... Be sure to differentiate the time spent being connected for work versus your own choice to spend time being connected.

2. Create three pie charts or bar graphs showing what you did and how much time you spent doing each activity.

In a 200 – 300 written word response, respond/reflect on the following:

- Is there anything that needs to be explained regarding your data? (For example, maybe you spent time planning a vacation and were looking for a vacation rental.)
- Is the last 72-hours a reasonable representation of how much time you spend being connected through technology? Why or why not?
- What surprised you about your time allocation? Specifically, with the time you voluntarily spend being connected through technology.
- Using this small sample as a starting point, in what areas do you think you could reduce some technology use?
- What additional reflections do you have?

#### **Assignment #3: – For the Adult: Why Unplug and Disconnect?**

There are many reasons why a person would want to unplug/disconnect. Some people want to find more time to explore non-connected activities. Some may have concerns over being online/connected too much.

1. Read the following articles about why to unplug

- [The Benefits of Unplugging from Technology](#)
- [Seven Important Reasons to Unplug, Find Space, and Fight Technology Addiction](#)
- [Unplugging for Better Health: The Benefits of a Digital Detox](#)
- [What is Technology Addiction?](#)

2. What 3-5 reasons, either from this information or from your own research, speak to you about unplugging/disconnecting? Explore/explain what benefits you would like to reap from unplugging/disconnecting and why these benefits are important to you. What do you hope to gain from unplugging/disconnecting? You may either submit a 200-300 word written response or a word-equivalent PowerPoint Presentation or Google Slide Show.

#### **Assignment #4: – How Do I Unplug/Disconnect?**

Sometimes we know what we want and why we want it, but not how to get it. Your work for this assignment will answer the question, “How do I unplug/disconnect?”

1. Watch [Digital Detox: How to Unplug and Disconnect From Technology, NBC News](#).
2. Read the following articles:

- [How to Disconnect from Technology and Have More Personal Time](#)
- [Fifteen Ways to Unplug From Technology](#)
- [Five Tips on How to Stop Wasting Too Much Time on the Internet](#)

Create a PowerPoint Presentation, Google Slide Show, or video (5-10 minutes) that explains/shares how to unplug/disconnect from technology. Include in your presentation the reasons for unplugging/disconnecting as well as strategies to do so.

#### **Assignment #5: – For the Student: Why Unplug and Disconnect?**

Read the following articles:

- [Twelve Brain Benefits of Unplugging – And How to Find Device-Free Time for Your Students](#)
- [National Day of Unplugging: What are the Benefits?](#)
- [A Day Without Media](#)
- [U.S. Surgeon General: We need to protect our kids from social media risks immediately](#)

Create a visual slideshow using a minimum of 5-6 slides (Google Slides, Prezi, PowerPoint, etc..) or create a 2-3 minute video that educates students on the benefits of disconnecting/unplugging and how to unplug/disconnect. Include information that you have learned in previous assignments as well as any other information gained from your own research.

#### **Assignment #6: – Brainstorm!**

Brainstorm a list of activities that you would like to pursue that do not involve being connected. Some things to keep in mind....

- It could be as simple as walking your dog and not bringing your phone – or borrowing a hardcopy of a book from the library versus reading on an e-reader.
- This is not an all-or-nothing scenario - some activities may have a small technological component, but most of the activity is unplugged. An example - you may want to try some new recipes, so you look for some online. But then, print the recipes and cook/bake without using your phone/tablet/computer.
- Maybe you go on a hike and use your phone to take pictures (but only pictures, no checking email).

Submit your list of 5 – 10 brainstorming ideas with a few sentence explanation of each the idea and if it is something completely new or a change on a current hobby/habit. Also include a paragraph or two of your desired outcomes by making these changes/additions.

#### **Assignment #7: – Time to Unplug/Disconnect!**

Look back at your assignment submission for Assignment #6. Over a minimum of a 72-hour period, select 2 -3 ideas as you would like to try. For each idea, submit the following:

1. Describe in detail the unconnected/unplugged activity you would like to incorporate into your lifestyle.
2. Make a plan for doing so; describe this plan.
3. Implement. Describe the overall experience, including how you felt while unplugged/unconnected – not limited to, yet include some comments to the following questions in your response: Were you anxious? Were you calm? Did you think about being unplugged/unconnected? What did you like about being unplugged/disconnected? What did you not like about it? Did you notice any difference in your own well-being at other times throughout the day?

Your submission should be a total of 300 – 400 words.

### **Assignment #8: – Where Does the Time Go? (Part 2)**

Think back over the 72-hour period when you completed Assignment #7. (If it was too long ago, then think about the last 72-hours.) Calculate (to the best of your ability) how your time was spent – sleeping, working/commuting, hobbies, preparing food and eating, social media, TV watching, aimlessly scrolling through your phone/tablet, etc... Be sure to differentiate the time spent being connected for work versus your own choice to spend time being connected.

1. Create three pie charts or bar graphs showing what you did and how much time you spent doing each activity.
2. Compare this data to the data from Assignment #2.
3. In a 200 – 300 written word response, respond/reflect on the following:
  - Is there anything that needs to be explained regarding your data? (For example, maybe you spent time planning a vacation and were looking for a vacation rental.)
  - What surprised you about your time allocation? Specifically, with the time you voluntarily spend being connected through technology. Did the amount of time change compared to the first time you did this assignment? Specifically, did your non-required plugged-in/connected time change at all? Regardless of whether this is a yes or no answer, why do you think there was a change (or not)?
  - What additional reflections do you have?

### **Assignment #9: - Culminating Assignment**

This final assignment for Section A is one where you will summarize how you might implement peace in your classroom.

Consider the following:

- Describe your thoughts about disconnecting/unplugging. What were your initial thoughts at the start of this class and what are they now?
- Has the amount of time you spend voluntarily connected/plugged-in changed from the start of the class? Why do you think this is?
- What do you want your students to know about disconnecting/unplugging? How do you plan to teach them these ideas?
- What do you want your students' parents to know about disconnecting/unplugging? How do you plan to share these ideas with them?
- What surprised you about your 72-hours of trying to disconnect/unplug? What will you do with that information?
- What are your final thoughts about what you have learned in this course and how it may affect you personally as well as your classroom and teaching?

Choose ONE of the following to present your answers:

- A. Write either a 500+ word paper  
OR  
B. Create a PowerPoint or Google Slide Presentation (500-word-equivalent; about 10-15 slides)  
OR  
C. Create a video (500-word-equivalent)

## **ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

### **B. LEARNING APPLICATION**

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. ?Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

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### **Assignment #10: Journaling**

Take into consideration your new knowledge from your work in Section A, Learning Acquisition.

Over a 2 – 3 week period, take time to find times to disconnect and unplug. You can use the work you have already started in Assignment #7 as a starting point and/or try something new. Keep a journal of what you chose to do and how you felt during and after, keeping in mind the reasons why you want to disconnect/unplug. Some questions to consider: How did unplugging/disconnecting make you feel during the timeframe that you were not connected? How did you feel once you reconnected? Overall, regardless of whether currently connected or not, how did you feel in general? Did having some additional unconnected time during the day benefit your overall well-being? Or not? Explain.

The journal can be in whatever form you'd like – paragraph form, bullet points, video – it's your journal, so you choose the format. It's OK to have a digital journal, on google docs, for instance, and post your response.

### **Assignment #11: Lesson Plan for the Classroom**

Create a lesson plan for students or parents (or, if not applicable, for children/teens/adults – your choice – in your life) on the topic of disconnecting and unplugging. You may use the Heritage Institute Lesson Template or any template of your choosing.

1. Implement your lesson with students/parents/adults.
2. Submit the lesson plan.
3. Write a 450-500 word commentary/reflection, including (where applicable):
  - What worked well?
  - What could have been improved?
  - What, if any, additional topics and issues were raised?

**If it is not possible to teach your lesson, then in place of the above, complete both of the following:**

Option A:

Plan and facilitate a workshop or seminar for a colleague(s) on disconnecting/ unplugging. This could be written as a presentation, informational written material, graphic - it is your choice of how you share the information.

**AND**

Option B:

Mentor a colleague(s) to help her//him/them disconnect/unplug. In a 500+ word paper, include a summary of your meetings/conversations, what was discussed, concerns shared, issues, etc.

### **Assignment #12: Online Blog/Website/PowerPoint**

Create either an online blog, website (free websites can be easily created on Google), video, or presentation sharing the information you learned in this course. The information should be geared towards parents and families with the goal of educating them on disconnecting/unplugging and how to incorporate the strategies at home for themselves and their families.

Submit the URL of blog or website; attached if PowerPoint.

### **Assignment #13: (500 Level ONLY) 500-level assignment**

In addition to the 400-level assignment, complete **three** (3) of the following:

A. Conduct additional research via periodicals, online articles, or videos about social media and our students, and document the key points you learned in either a 3-4 page paper or a mind map with equivalent scale of content. Include an analysis of how this research supports or contrasts with the course text and assignments. Include a bibliography of your sources.

**AND/OR**

B. Create an annotated bibliography focused on the topics learned in this class. Include 6 - 8 resources.

**AND/OR**

C. Read one of the books listed in the bibliography of this syllabus or the textbook. Write a 2-3 page reflection comparing the premise of your chosen book to that of the information you learned in this course.

**AND/OR**

D. Another assignment of your own design with the instructor's prior approval.

**C. INTEGRATION PAPER**

Assignment #14: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

**SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER**

**(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)**

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

**INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:**

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:**

**Suzanne Warner, M.S.**, received her Masters Degree in Education from the University of Rochester, New York. She has taught mathematics in the middle school, high school, and college settings, most recently in Oregon. Suzanne has been lauded by administrators, colleagues, students and parents regarding her teaching and classroom management skills. Her students enjoy learning in a respectful, productive environment, where each student is in control of her/his own learning and behaviors. She strongly believes that all students want to do well, and creates a teaching environment for them to succeed.

When not in the classroom, Suzanne enjoys spending time with her family reading, hiking, backpacking and traveling.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**UNPLUGGING & DISCONNECTING FOR OUR HEALTH**

**Bowles, Meleah and Elise Williams Rikard**, *Life Unplugged: A Digital Detox Workbook*, Rock Point Publishing, 2019, paperback, 144 pages. This workbook guides you through ways to de-stress, cultivate mindfulness, and improve your mood and health while also helping you find balance and joy in your daily life through digital detox. It's the mini vacation without the extra cost of actually going away and all the wellness benefits you need for a more fulfilling lifestyle. You'll find: Habit-tracking worksheets to keep you on task ~ Fun challenges to help you be the most successful in your detox ~ Journaling prompts to get your creative juices flowing ~ Tips to finding and integrating alternative activities into your daily routine ~ Ways to optimize your free time, so you're more productive throughout the day. With this life-changing journal, you'll learn to live without being attached to your phone, TV, laptop, or social media. It can be as easy as taking a few breaks from your digital devices a day to make you feel refreshed, enlightened, and purposeful. Sleep better and improve your overall mental and physical health by taking a break from the internet. The practice of digital detoxing has proven to improve your memory, posture, blood pressure, and give you greater feelings of gratitude and happiness.

**Dauda, Ulma**, *Unplugged: How to disconnect from technology and reconnect with each other*, Author Academy Elite Publishing, 2021, paperback, 122 pages. In a world of distractions, what matters most? We all have a desire to be seen, really seen, by others; to feel that we are important, that we matter, and that we are loved. We wish to give the same gift to our children; to see them, cherish their gifts, and celebrate their successes. We want to be there when things don't go according to plan, showing them that it is in the difficulties where we most learn about ourselves. How can we as parents discover our own strengths and values, increase our self-awareness and resilience, and then assist our children to discover theirs? Counselor and spiritual director, Kristen Hobby has found a way through her five step Sparks Model—a simple framework that invites us to share experiences, discover meaning, and learn more about ourselves and our children. This model of spirituality is free from dogma and religion, and offers a way for us to see each other, support each other, and to equip ourselves and our children for life's challenges. We can discover our strengths, find inner peace, build resilience, make meaning from the world, and then guide our children to do the same.

**Graber, Diana and Michele Borba**, *Raising Humans in a Digital World: Helping Kids Build a Healthy Relationship with Technology*,

AMACOM Publishing, 2019, paperback, 272 pages. Sexting, cyberbullying, revenge porn, online predators...all of these potential threats can tempt parents to snatch the smartphone or tablet out of their children's hands. While avoidance might eliminate the dangers, that approach also means your child misses out on technology's many benefits and opportunities. In *Raising Humans in a Digital World*, digital literacy educator Diana Graber shows how children must learn to handle the digital space.

**Levy, David M.**, *Mindful Tech: How to Bring Balance to Our Digital Lives*, Yale University Press, 2017, paperback, 256 pages. From email to smart phones, and from social media to Google searches, digital technologies have transformed the way we learn, entertain ourselves, socialize, and work. Despite their usefulness, these technologies have often led to information overload, stress, and distraction. In recent years many of us have begun to look at the pluses and minuses of our online lives and to ask how we might more skillfully use the tools we've developed. David M. Levy, who has lived his life between the "fast world" of high tech and the "slow world" of contemplation, offers a welcome guide to being more relaxed, attentive, and emotionally balanced, and more effective, while online. In a series of exercises carefully designed to help readers observe and reflect on their own use, Levy has readers watch themselves closely while emailing and while multitasking, and also to experiment with unplugging for a specified period. Never prescriptive, the book opens up new avenues for self-inquiry and will allow readers—in the workplace, in the classroom, and in the privacy of their homes—to make meaningful and powerful changes.

**Steiner-Adair Ed.D, Catherine and Theresa H. Barker**, *The Big Disconnect: Protecting Childhood and Family Relationships in the Digital Age*, Harper Publishing, 2014, paperback, 384 pages. As the focus of the family has turned to the glow of the screen—children constantly texting their friends or going online to do homework; parents working online around the clock—everyday life is undergoing a massive transformation. Easy access to the Internet and social media has erased the boundaries that protect children from damaging exposure to excessive marketing and the unsavory aspects of adult culture. Parents often feel they are losing a meaningful connection with their children. Children are feeling lonely and alienated. The digital world is here to stay, but what are families losing with technology's gain? As renowned clinical psychologist Catherine Steiner-Adair explains, families are in crisis as they face this issue, and even more so than they realize. Not only do chronic tech distractions have deep and lasting effects but children also desperately need parents to provide what tech cannot: close, significant interactions with the adults in their lives. Drawing on real-life stories from her clinical work with children and parents and her consulting work with educators and experts across the country, Steiner-Adair offers insights and advice that can help parents achieve greater understanding, authority, and confidence as they engage with the tech revolution unfolding in their living rooms.