Tired of teaching your online course in a two-dimensional space where you hardly get to know your students? Second Life can innovate how you teach online. You can teach your online students in much the same way you teach your face-to-face students.

Sometimes, wouldn't you like to have a more interactive, engaging activity to illustrate an important concept or skill to your students? With Second Life, the sky is the limit on what we can create for small or large course activities.

That is, what is Second Life and why would one use it in higher education?

Second Life is a constantly running computer simulation created in 2003 by Linden Research Inc. Since it is a virtual world environment, users create three-dimensional “avatars” to represent themselves on-screen. One can choose his or her avatar to be a man, a woman, an animal, a robot, or many other possible bodies. It is through these avatars that users experience the virtual world and interact with other avatars. A user's avatar can walk, run, fly, dance, and communicate with other avatars, even with one’s own voice. Second Life has over two million international residents, its own economy, and spans over 775 square
(Continued)

Miles in real world scale, virtually of course. Educators are using Second Life more and more for instruction as over sixty universities teach entire classes in the virtual environment and over 500 colleges and universities have a presence in Second Life.

The primary reasons educators use Second Life are (1) its ability to recreate the real-time, conversational classroom in an online course, and (2) the power to create educational simulations to augment face-to-face courses.

Many students and instructors are frustrated with online courses conducted solely in D2L. Existing research shows that students feel like isolated individuals, and that feeling extends to instructors too. Student learning suffers compared to the face-to-face classroom. Thus, facilitating class discussions in Second Life can bring back the real-time presence, texture, and depth of space to our online classes that our face-to-face classrooms enjoy.

Creating educational simulations in Second Life to augment face-to-face courses is exciting! If you can think of any virtual space that can help your students learn better, we can make it in Second Life. Seriously. For example, we have developed a replica of the Birkenau concentration camp for Ron Berger’s Holocaust course, a crime solving simulation for Pete Killoran’s forensics course, and a planetarium for Juliana Constantinescu’s astronomy course. Jessica Menke and Kim Naber also developed an award-winning laboratory safety training simulation in Second Life to replace some very out-of-date lab safety videos!

See the next couple of pages for pictures and more information about what’s been happening on Athena Island.
Eastern Religious Thought, Alyson Prude, Spring 2012
Out of view to the right is a Tibetan style Buddhist temple.

Modern Japan, Rod Wilson, Sum 2012
This is an upper-level history course. Prof. Wilson is wearing a traditional samurai outfit to start the course.

Introduction to Philosophy, Chris Calvert-Minor, Sum 2012
Calvert-Minor is using a stockade to illustrate different senses of freedom.

Introduction to American Indian Studies, Tony Gulig, Sum 2012
Here is a modern day powwow circle made of lawn chairs doubling as the classroom.
Simulation Projects

Birkenau Concentration Camp Replica
Created for Ron Berger’s course on the Holocaust, this simulation allows students to experience the likeness of the Birkenau concentration camp. Students can witness the inside of the crematorium and several barracks.

Virtual Laboratory Safety Simulation
Jessica Menke, Kim Naber, Stephanie Patrick, and Karl Rutzen developed a virtual lab safety training simulation. They entered their simulation in Bizstart’s Collegiate Business Plan Competition in Milwaukee and won third place!

Crime Scene Simulation
For Pete Killoran’s forensics class, we will be building a crime scene based on a real case, and it will be the students’ job to find out what happened. Students will have to, among other things, analyze a blood splattering, find surveillance camera footage, and talk to witnesses to crack the case.

TRON Light Cycle Simulation
Ok, so this may not have much educational value, but it sure is fun. No traffic tickets!
Explore Second Life

Here’s how to get started in Second Life.

1. To create a free Second Life account and avatar, go to [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com) and click the “Join Now” button. Follow the instructions. Your avatar body and name can be WHATEVER you want them to be. For example, you can be a human, a mouse, a werewolf, a robot, or even Mary Pinkerton.

![Avatar Images]

Make sure you download the Second Life Viewer at the end of the account process – it is the program that allows you to access Second Life. After you download the Viewer, install it on your computer.

Your Viewer is analogous to an internet browser (like Firefox or Internet Explorer); it is your gateway to the Second Life regions. Please make sure that your computer can handle the Viewer. Copy and paste this link in your web browser to check: [http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/?lang=en-US](http://secondlife.com/support/system-requirements/?lang=en-US)

2. Before you launch the Viewer, make sure any headphones, microphone, speakers, etc. that you will be using are already plugged in and turned on. You should at least have headphones or speakers to hear sounds. You also need to be connected to the internet before you launch your viewer.

3. You are now ready to experience Second Life for yourself! Launch the Second Life Viewer now.

4. There are two ways you can find Athena Island.
   b. **In your internet browser**, copy and paste [http://tinyurl.com/AthenaIsland](http://tinyurl.com/AthenaIsland) in the navigation bar. A new webpage will pop up. Click “teleport now.” A small dialog box will appear. Then go back to your Viewer and click the teleport button that will have appeared in your viewer. You should land right at the Landing Point on Athena Island.

5. For extra help learning SL, go to: [http://facstaff.uww.edu/calvertc/vp/](http://facstaff.uww.edu/calvertc/vp/)

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Please contact Chris Calvert-Minor ([calvertc@uww.edu](mailto:calvertc@uww.edu)) for more information about Second Life. Whether you are interested in teaching your online course in Second Life, would like to embark on a simulation project, or just want to learn more, we would love to chat with you. We are planning a Second Life information session early in the Fall 2012 semester, so look for the announcement if you are interested.

Chris Calvert-Minor  
L&S Second Life Faculty Coordinator

Shane Gabel  
Second Life Student Worker