Teaching as the Sole Instructor: Supporting Materials

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# Design Your Course

## Know requirements for teaching courses at UO

1. Every approved course has a set of learning objectives that was approved by the Committee on Courses. Know what the learning objectives are for your course and center your course on them.
2. [Core Education courses](https://catalog.uoregon.edu/genedcourses/#text) must teach certain [Methods of Inquiry](https://provost.uoregon.edu/changes-core-education-group-and-multicultural-requirements). If you’re teaching a Core Ed course, make sure you know which Methods of Inquiry your course was approved to meet and address them in your planning and teaching.
3. [Syllabus](https://provost.uoregon.edu/syllabus-requirement-policy). Every undergraduate and 400/500 level course must have a syllabus that includes certain information.
4. [Office hours](https://provost.uoregon.edu/instructor-availability-and-office-hours-guidance). Instructors of all courses should provide live, synchronous options for students to meet with them for at least 2 hours per week. This should be a mix with both scheduled times and by-appointment times.
5. [Canvas](https://provost.uoregon.edu/canvas-use-policy). Instructors of all undergraduate courses with 5 or more students must maintain a Canvas site that includes the syllabus, provides information on student progress prior to the withdrawal deadline and before the final exam, and other essential information.

## Create your course plan

It is helpful to create an overall plan for your course before getting into the details of designing lessons. TEP is in the process of developing a Course Builder resource that I will share with you as soon as it’s finished. In the meantime, UO Online has developed an [Online Course Development Checklist](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/184252/files/11855264?wrap=1) that will help guide your overall development process. It’s designed specifically for online courses, but most of the steps apply just as well to in-person courses.

1. Use the course learning objectives to help you decide what kinds of assessments you will use to measure student learning. What kinds of recurring assignments will be helpful to facilitate that learning? Make a calendar that will help you take into account any no-class days and get a sense of the flow of the content and activities.
2. As things get more detailed, this [Week-by-Week Course Planning Template](https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/184252/files/11267851?wrap=1) might be helpful.

## Develop the syllabus

TEP offers pages about [how to write a syllabus](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/starter-syllabus-0) and a [Starter Syllabus template](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/starter-syllabus-0) you can use to make sure you include all the required information. Using a friendly and welcoming tone in the syllabus can improve students’ sense of belonging and foster positive faculty-student relationships.

## Design your lessons

1. **Use** [**Aligned Design**](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/aligned-course-design). Make sure there is a robust connection between your learning objectives, the assessments you use to measure student learning, and the work students do to learn the material.
2. **Create a strong through-line.** Make sure that what students do to *prepare* for class is actually important for what happens *during* class. And that any post-class work relies on what happened during the class session.
3. **Make learning active.** Students learn and retain information much more effectively if they are actively engaged than if they passively listen to a lecture, watch someone else do a task, or just skim text. Design your lessons to require students to think and do things. TEP’s [Student Engagement Techniques](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/2022-02/student-engagement-techniques.pdf) document describes a variety of active learning strategies. For a more in-depth treatment, try Elizabeth Barkley’s [Student Engagement Techniques](https://alliance-uoregon.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01ALLIANCE_UO/1ej399r/alma99900882622301852) book.
4. **Incorporate formative assessments.** Have students do activities that help them and you gauge their progress toward understanding; formative assessment involves the student doing an activity and then getting feedback about how they did. Examples include asking poll questions during class, having students write for a minute about a prompt you provide, etc. TEP’s [Student Engagement Techniques](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/sites/default/files/2022-02/student-engagement-techniques.pdf) document provides many examples, and more are available online.
5. **Use Transparent Design.** For any activity, be explicit about the purpose, the steps involved in the task, and the criteria for success. The [TILT Transparent Assignment Template](https://tilthighered.com/assets/pdffiles/faculty.pdf) explains the framework, and the [TILT website](https://tilthighered.com/tiltexamplesandresources) provides some videos and other information about transparent design.

## Assess student learning

1. More frequent, lower-stakes assessments can reduce student anxiety and result in a better measure of learning.
2. Is it possible for you to give assessments that go beyond in-class exams or research papers? Could you give an “authentic” assessment that involves the kind of task a professional in the field might do? Could you give students the option of creating a video or podcast? A poster? An oral presentation?
3. If you do give an in-class exam, keep in mind that students usually take about twice as long to complete exams as the instructor does. This can vary by field and exam type, so talk to colleagues and, if possible, get someone to “test drive” your exam before giving it to students.
4. Consider your grading capacity when deciding on assessment type.

## Set up your Canvas site

[Provide a clear path through your course](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/providing-clear-path-through-your-course). Make your Canvas site as clear and easy to navigate as possible, because your students will likely be taking multiple courses with Canvas sites organized in different ways. And remember that what seems intuitive to you as the site designer might not be as obvious to your students, so it’s helpful to get feedback from a colleague.

1. Include a [welcome, “start here” module](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/welcome-modules-opening-door-your-canvas-course) that helps students orient to the site, the course, to you, and to each other.
2. Use modules to organize content, and include an overview page in each one that helps students understand what to expect for that module.
3. [Customize the blue Course Navigation](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/streamline-your-course-navigation-bar) menu to remove links to things like the Assignments and Quizzes folders. This guides students to navigate in the way you want them to.

The [Getting Your Canvas Course Ready for the Term](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/getting-your-canvas-course-ready-term) page provides step-by-step advice on how to set up your site.

# Build connections

1. With students.
   1. Let students get to know your academic credentials and a bit about you personally by introducing yourself on the first day. You could also include a video in the Welcome Module on your Canvas site.
   2. Ask students to complete a pre-class survey to get a sense of their backgrounds, interests, plans, and needs.
   3. Talk to students when you can: before class, after class, during office hours. Get to know them as much as possible.
   4. Use student names. Work to learn names by asking students to identify themselves when they speak in class and by using the photo roster available in DuckWeb. To find the photo roster, log in to DuckWeb, select Faculty Menu, then Course Administration Center. Find the course of interest, then select View Class Photos from the Action dropdown menu. Having students put name tents on their desks each day can help you learn names, and just help you use names if you don’t have them memorized.
2. Between students.
   1. Have students introduce themselves to each other and provide them with a brief question to discuss for just a couple of minutes at the beginning of class each day. The [Fast Friends](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16G-gJIv2XZWc7HOdpi6YWkX07uyOmwCjnJf4IqmwU-Q/edit) activity might be a source for questions.
   2. Consider establishing Cooperative Base Groups, small groups of about 4 students that get together for a few minutes at the beginning of the class period to check in on their progress, discuss a question you provide, etc.
   3. Have students do learning activities that require them to work in groups, and facilitate group formation and functioning. More information about managing groups and student success in general can be found in the [Student Success Toolkit](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/resources/student-success-toolkit).
   4. Encourage or even require students to form study groups.

# Other policy requirements to know about

1. [Dead week](https://provost.uoregon.edu/dead-week). Faculty legislation controls assignments that may be required during the last week of regular classes, commonly known as Dead Week. Make sure your syllabus clearly specifies any project that will be due during Dead Week.
2. [Final exams](https://provost.uoregon.edu/final-exams-policy). Final examinations must be given during the [scheduled final examination period](https://provost.uoregon.edu/final-exams-policy).
3. [FERPA](https://provost.uoregon.edu/student-records-privacy-policy-faculty-and-staff-ferpa-policy). As an instructor, you are legally responsible for preserving your students’ privacy. This means you may not share your students’ names or information about their performance with others except for legitimate educational reasons. This applies to sharing information with colleagues, other students, students’ family members, or others.
4. [Course attendance and engagement policy](https://provost.uoregon.edu/course-attendance-and-engagement-policy). Your syllabus must detail any attendance requirement as well as how you handle late work. Instructors must make accommodations for absences related to religious observances and University-sponsored events. Except in those specific cases, you may not ask for the reason behind a student’s absence, and your absence policy should be reason-neutral. TEP offers [guidance for enacting this policy](https://teaching.uoregon.edu/enacting-senates-course-attendance-and-engagement-policy-0).
5. [Academic misconduct](https://dos.uoregon.edu/addressing-academic-misconduct). If an instructor suspects that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, they are required to reach out to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards—either by submitting an Incident Report or requesting a consultation to discuss potential resolution options. The [Faculty Guide to Addressing Academic Misconduct](https://dos.uoregon.edu/addressing-academic-misconduct) walks you through the policy and has a template for a letter to send to the student to let them know that you have referred the case to SCCS.
6. [Other policies](https://provost.uoregon.edu/academic-policies-procedures-and-guidance).