

Course Design Recommendations

1. **Start Here:** Indicate to students how to get started in the course when they open your course for the first time. This is accomplished by creating a welcome page in Canvas that can be set up as your Home Page.
2. **Syllabus:** Use the syllabus section in Canvas to upload your syllabus in PDF format. Every time you create an assignment, discussion, quiz or test, Canvas will automatically add a link to that assignment under your Syllabus. Include detailed descriptions for late work policy, and other relevant information to help students navigate and succeed in your course.
3. **Course Calendar:** Avoid typing information such as specific due dates on pages, quizzes, and assignments. It is best to use a Course Calendar document for this type of information to make it easier for you to keep it updated from semester to semester.
4. **About Your Instructor:** Include an "About Your Instructor" page, especially if you are not using a course home page. In this area, you can mention some of your educational background and professional experience relevant to the course. A professional picture is a nice addition to help add the human element into your course.
5. **Instructions:** Write clear Instructions for assignments, quizzes, tests, discussions. Clear instructions will save you time in the long run.
6. **Course Content Organization:** Be consistent with course content organization. For example, if the content item that will display your lectures is titled "Lectures", do not use other titles like "PowerPoints", "PowerPoints with Audio", etc. In Canvas, it is best to use wording such as "**Module 1 Lecture**", "**Unit 1 Lecture**", etc. This will keep your content organized and facilitate course navigation for students. Remember to include your objectives in each module. Here is a suggested outline for a module:
 - Module 1: Overview
 - Module 1: Objectives (These could be included in your Overview page)
 - Module 1: Assignments (These could be included in your Overview page)
 - Module 1: Lecture(s)
 - Module 1: Discussion(s)
 - Module 1: Quiz/Exam
7. **Course Navigation:** Hide items from your course navigation in Canvas that may cause confusion for students. To adjust your course navigation, go to Settings>Navigation. Keep the following items visible to students:
 - Home
 - Syllabus
 - Announcements
 - Modules
 - Grades
 - People
8. **Rubrics:** Create rubrics for grading. Using the rubrics tool in Canvas will help you grade content more efficiently, and will help you provide feedback to students.

9. **Text and Colors:** Use font types, colors, and text sizes consistently throughout your course. Avoid font colors that may be distracting or hard to read for students.

10. **Text on Images:** Avoid using text on images to provide instructions. Avoid turning a PowerPoint slide with important information into an image. Images with text used for decorative purposes are okay. For example, course and unit banners.

11. **Lectures:** Lectures in Flash (**.SWF**) format will not be supported in 2020. If you have the original PowerPoint files, it is best to reprocess them to make sure they will play both on PC's and mobile devices. If you do not have the original PowerPoint files, you will eventually have to re-create and re-record those lectures. To find out if your lecture is compatible, follow these steps in Chrome:
 - a. Click on the green lock icon available on the top-left corner of you URL address bar.
 - b. Scroll down and click **Flash>Always block on this site.**
 - c. Reload your page. If the lecture plays, your lecture is compatible.