WABASH CENTER
For Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion

The Last Thing You Want to Do Is Create An Online Course

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There's no one way to go about developing a course. More often than not, it's an individualized process driven by standards, one's academic field, the course intent, and personal preferences, and habits. Below is one way to approach the development of your online or hybrid course.

FIRST

Prepare your **syllabus** and outline your course. Choose the course structure that best fits your student learning outcomes and the pedagogy appropriate to that end: fully online, hybrid, tutorial, synchronous or asynchronous, concepts-mastery, competency, skill-attainment, scaffolding, etc. Using a mindmap or a scope and sequence worksheet to plot your course can be very helpful. Determine the **assessment of learning** practices or instruments you will apply. Discern how much you really need in your syllabus and what best resides on your online course site. Hint: you really only need a two-page (printable) syllabus!

SECOND

Prepare the course learning support content: course reading checklist, handouts, bibliography, assessment rubrics, course project descriptions, work samples or models, etc. Post all documents in PDF format unless they are editable worksheets. Determine the **student learning activities** that support your course objectives, including assignments, quizzes, exams, course projects, discussion forums, exercises, etc. Be sure the student learning activities align with course learning outcomes. If your LMS uses competencies frameworks, be

sure to align and link your student learning activities to the appropriate competencies framework. Rule of thumb: *do not teach what you will not assess.*

THIRD

Write the copy for your online course, including Induction components: introductions, orientation, transitions, closure, directions, instructions, prompts for forum discussion or exercises, session and course closure session, etc. Determine the pedagogical function of the discussion forums (discussion and dialogue, analysis, providing evidence of comprehension, critical reflection, theological interpretation, reflection on experience, etc.). Not all online courses or course sessions require student "discussion." Avoid superfluous material: align learning objectives with content, student learning activities., and assessments. *Repeat: do not teach what you will not assess.*

FOURTH

Determine interactive and media components for your online course. The online environment is a visual and experiential platform, exploit that advantage to enhance the learning experience. Make wise choices and applications of media: recorded Powerpoint slides (Do not post Powerpoint format files), videos (a 20-minute video is too long), internet sites, recordings, etc. The criterion is that every component needs to have a pedagogical function related to your learning outcomes. Avoid superfluous material: align learning objectives with content, student learning activities, and assessments. *Again: do not teach what you will not assess.*

THE LAST THING YOU WANT TO DO

The last thing you want to do is set up your online course site.

1. Determine the course format (weekly, thematically, etc.)
2. Create a course banner to give your course site personality.
3. Create your course modules using your copy from step 3 (copy and paste).
4. Create your online Gradebook. Assignments you create should automatically populate your Gradebook. Determine how you will use the Gradebook (e.g., will you make it visible to your students?). Link writing assignments to the Turnitin function on your LMS if your institution uses it.
5. Ask a colleague or your instructional design staff to review your course site.

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