How to start: Teaching your own course

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Getting to know you...

• Two truths and a lie:
  1. My uncle spoke at both my high school and college graduations.
  2. My husband and I adopted a little boy from China
  3. I spent one day in Paris and only pizza.
Lucinda, a third year graduate student, was asked to teach a winter session sophomore level course. She was honored that her department had chosen her for this assignment and excited about the prospect of the extra cash the extra assignment represented.
Lucinda’s Dilemma

While Lucinda had TA for other introductory courses in the department and had taken a similar course as an undergrad, she did not know what the department expected for this particular course. How do you suggest that Lucinda go about identifying her department’s expectations for the course?
Your ideas

- Talk to prof that uses courses as prereq
- Ask prof who taught last
- Old syllabi
- Course description
Expectations and Support

After learning more about the nature of the course, Lucinda still has some questions.

- How many office hours am I expected to hold?
- How do I get the syllabus, etc. photocopied?

What other logistical issues would you recommend she explore?
Your ideas
Feel for the discipline

Lucinda now has a feel for the department’s needs for her course. She is excited start planning the course...but where to start? How would you suggest she proceed?
Your ideas
Some expert advice

• University of Delaware, Center for Teaching Effectiveness [http://cte.udel.edu/aboutcte.html]

• Dee Fink--Significant learning
  - University of Oklahoma, Program for Instructional Innovation [http://www.ou.edu/pii/tips/design.htm]

Start with Goals for student learning

• What do you want students to get out of the course?

• Taxonomy of goals for student learning from Fink’s *Significant Learning* framework. Link to pdf on [http://www.ou.edu/pii/significant/siglearning.htm](http://www.ou.edu/pii/significant/siglearning.htm)
How will you know?

Lucinda developed some exciting goals for student learning...but wonders ‘how will I know to what degree my students achieve these goals?’
Assessment of student learning

- University of Delaware, Office of Educational Assessment
  http://www.assessment.udel.edu/
- Other Resources
  http://www.ou.edu/pii/tips/ideas/feedback2.html
Design of Learning Activities

- Align with goals and assessment
- You do not have to be a curriculum designer but rather a curriculum connoisseur...select only the best for your students.
  - Problem Based Learning: https://chico.nss.udel.edu/Pbl/index.jsp
  - Case Studies: http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/cases/ubcase.htm
Lucinda's indecision

Lucinda has lots of great ideas for the course, but she is not quite sure how to approach creation of the syllabus. She can not decide how much to weight the various aspects of the course, so she is thinking of waiting until the course has a few meetings to create the final version of the syllabus.

What are your thoughts about this (in)decision?
You ideas
Communicating your goals and expectations

• Syllabus
  ▪ Contract between you and your students
  ▪ Provides an instructional roadmap for students

• Syllabus tips
  ▪ Have a complete syllabus for the first day of class
  ▪ Use existing syllabi as guides
  ▪ May adapted existing with permission
Final advice

• Plan ahead for the semester
• Be flexible day to day
• Create a record for yourself of the successes and misses to inform your future teaching
• Enjoy the personal rewards of creating an effective student learning environment
Questions? Comments?

One more question for you:
Why do you think I picked this power point design?