

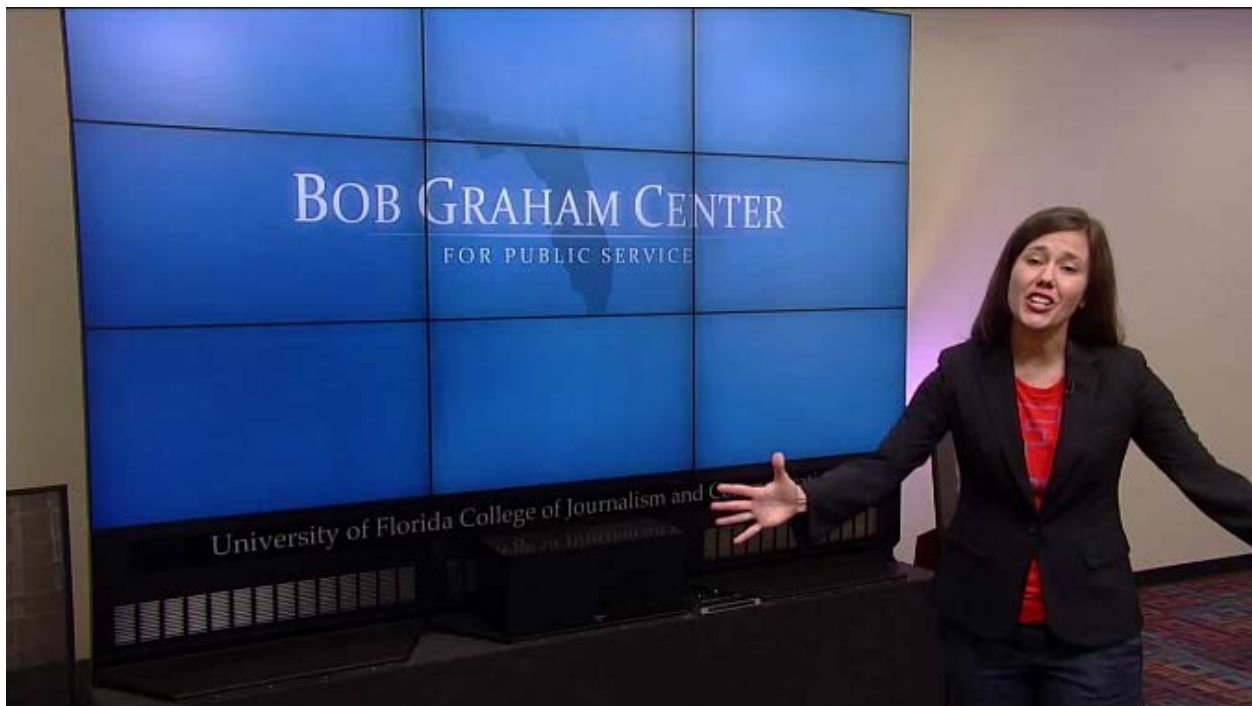
Quick Guide to Online Course Content

Why is Content Important?

The instructional material that is delivered to the students is generally referred to as “content.” Clear, concise, well developed materials will help students achieve mastery in the individual topics as well as the overarching course goals. In short, course content is the foundation upon which all the pieces of your course rest.

Welcome Message

A welcome video can personalize your course, provide the “big picture” as to why the subject is important and also acquaint students with course policies and requirements.



Dr. Emma Humphries shares her passion in the welcome message for IDS2338 Rethinking Citizenship.

Welcome Message Do's

- Use Video—even a short cellphone “selfie” helps student connect with you as a human being
- Communicate your enthusiasm and passion for the topic
- Answer questions that students typically have at the start of the term
- If you use PowerPoint, keep the text short and to the point
- Consider creating short introductory messages for each module/unit/section of the course

Welcome Message Don'ts

- Avoid videos over 10 minutes long—create multiple videos if necessary

Goals

Goals are the things that your students should know and be able to do when they have completed your course. Everything in the course should move the student toward achievement of the goals. As required by UF's [Policy on Course Syllabi](#), the goals must be stated in the syllabus and you may want to refer to them in your welcome message and throughout the semester.

Deadlines

Perhaps the question that students ask most frequently is, "When is _____ due." Save yourself the time of answering this question and make it easy for students to find out when their assignments are due.

Deadline Do's

- Provide your students with a listing of everything that is due in one place
 - If you use the syllabus tool in Canvas, a list will be generated from your assignments and quizzes automatically
- Keep the days when things are due the same each week
- Use the same deadline time for all assignments (students prefer 11:59 p.m.)
- Provide interim deadlines for large assignments
- Be sure to provide separate "original post" and a "response" deadlines for discussions
 - As Canvas does not currently support two deadlines within an assignment, create a calendar item for one of the due dates
- Point students to the deadline listing when they message you about due dates
 - If you answer their question with the deadline information, you will have missed an opportunity to train them to go to the course listing
- Double check the deadline setting in each assignment at least a week in advance
- Consider sending a reminder about upcoming deadlines using the announcements tool
- Consider posting upcoming deadlines on your course homepage (you can also make the announcements your home page)
- Double check the deadline setting in each assignment at least a week in advance

Deadline Don'ts

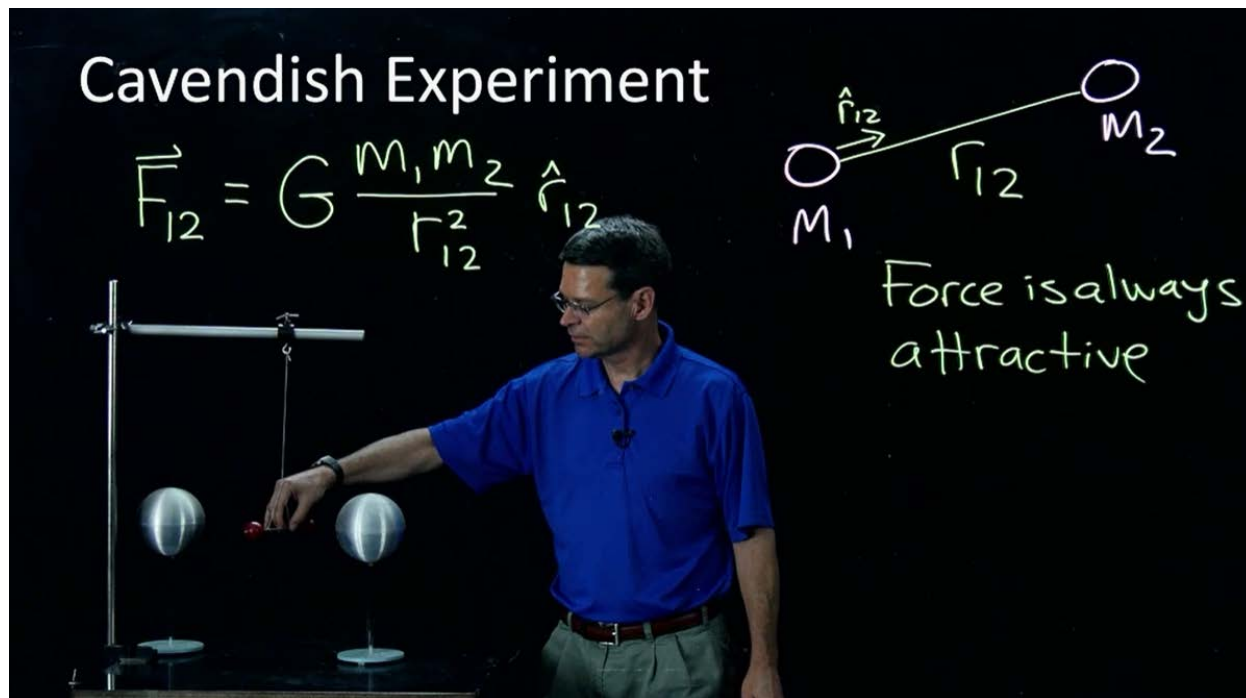
- DANGER: if you list the deadline for an assignment in multiple places, you risk potential confusion if the due date is changed
 - If you fail to update the deadline in every location, students may be frustrated by the conflicting information

Alignment

All course materials, whether print, presentations, videos, or activities, should align with the stated course objectives. This helps students understand why they are working on any given assignment. It paints a big picture for the students. It can also help you weed out course material that is not essential. If you do wish to include additional material, be clear as to what is required and what is extra.

Engagement

Remember that variety is the spice of life! Where possible, use different modalities for your material: images, text, video and hands-on.



Dr. Darin Acosta explains an experiment in PHY2048 Physics with Calculus.

Engagement Do's

- Provide course material in short segments
- Create assignments that require students to DO something with the information
- Keep video presentations short—no longer than 20 minutes (4 – 10 minutes is ideal)
- If you are using video, communicate your enthusiasm about the topic
 - If you're not excited and interested in the subject, you can't expect the students to be excited
- Use images and diagrams to help illustrate your point
- If you use PowerPoint, keep the words on the slides to a minimum
- Move out of the classroom and into the world!
 - Real-world experiences help to engage students and see topic relevance
- Invite guests to share their expertise with your students
 - Through the magic of video this can be done live or recorded

Engagement Don'ts

- Avoid giving students work that doesn't support the course objectives and ultimately the course goal