

# Customizing Your Course in Canvas

## Course Description

This course will allow users of the Canvas Learning Management System to bring their course's layout, features and appearance to the next level. Digital curriculum can provide engaging lessons and standards-based alignment, however, tend to lack personalization. This course will address how to leverage and customize existing digital curriculum to your tastes. We will cover how to maintain NCAA approval, adding your own content and lessons, using third-party apps, Open Educational Resources (OERs) and more.

This class is meant for experienced LMS users to get the most they can out of Canvas. It is a 6 week, 15 hour class and all content is delivered online. There may be a synchronous chat scheduled if participants are interested in exploring the Conferences tool.

## Schedule

This class will be 100% online and take place over six weeks from the start date.

## Credit

Participants who successfully complete all requirements will earn a certificate for 15 hours of professional learning. In order to receive a certificate, participants are required to complete the course requirements by eight weeks after the start of the class.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Describe basic principles of design
- Identify accessibility issues and describe the UDL principles
- Modify a basic webpage to improve design and add content
- Create personalized banners and images to personalize a course
- Improve assessments with rubrics and a variety of assignment types
- Understand how HTML is formatted
- Incorporate Open Education Resources (OER) into their classes
- Select the best methods to improve their classes for different students

## Standards:

This course provides the educator the opportunity to practice and demonstrate the following iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching:

- **Standard B:** The online teacher understands and is able to use a range of technologies, both existing and emerging, that effectively support student learning and engagement in the online environment.
- **Standard K:** The online teacher arranges media and content to help students and teachers transfer knowledge most effectively in the online environment.

## **Prerequisites**

Participants are expected to have regular access to online computers and be proficient with email and current Internet browsers. Participants should also have used at least one Learning Management System as a teacher.

## **Course Requirements**

Course Requirements In order to successfully complete this course, participants must meet the following requirements:

1. **Discussion Postings.** Participants are expected to participate in each module's discussion forum by responding to the discussion prompt and responding to at least two other participants posts. At least one of the three posts should be during the first half of the module.
2. **Readings and Activities.** Participants are expected to complete the readings and activities given in each of the modules.

## **Required Books & Resources**

All resources will be available online.

## **Course Outline**

### **Module One: Principles of Design**

The class begins with some background information on the basic principles of design, focusing on website design, and basic accessibility issues as seen through the UDL principles. We will talk about "above the fold", contrast, navigation, and usability in the context of Canvas classes. We will introduce ourselves to one another and share our best Canvas tips and struggles.

### **Module Two: Creating Attractive Content**

After looking at the theory, in this module we will apply it by finding webpage templates, on Canvas Commons and other sites, and modifying them to personalize them and add content. We will look at easy ways to create personalized banners and images. We will focus on the layout, features, and appearance of these pages to make good home and index pages. We will share our findings with each other.

### **Module Three: Getting Into the Weeds**

In our third module we'll look a little deeper at some of the details. We'll discuss how HTML is formatted and how you can make some changes to HTML when the Canvas Rich Content Editor isn't doing what you want. We'll also look at some other tricks we can do in Canvas, including using quizzes in an unusual way and playing around with the best ways to use SpeedGrader. We'll each explore a more esoteric part of Canvas, including the three Cs, and discuss our results.

#### **Module Four: Adding Variety to Assessments**

There is a lot that Canvas can do with quizzes, assignments, and discussions. In this module we will explore ways to improve assessments using rubrics and a variety of assignment types. We will also look at ways for both teachers and students to use video in our classes as well as how to most easily record and post them. Optionally, we will look at the question banks for quizzes. Depending on interest, we may look at the Learning Mastery Gradebook and Mastery Paths. Our discussion will be based around what assessments we've found the most successful online.

#### **Module Five: Accessibility**

Improving accessibility for a minority of students often improves it for all students. For this module we will look at ways we can improve accessibility of our class so that all students can access their learning in a way that works for them. We'll look at ways to add closed captioning as well as recording audio versions of information. We'll also look for some easy ways to enhance our classes with additional resources.

#### **Module Six: OER Resources**

In Jeff Renard's favorite module, we will look at OER resources that are available to incorporate into our classes. Canvas already has many different external apps setup to easily include resources. This is a great way to include interactive lessons and practice quizzes. Additionally, with some additional set up of an LTI connection you can include quizzes and other assessments that can automatically populate Canvas' gradebook. We each explore one or more external apps and discuss our findings.