



A guideline to creating your own class

Step 1 - Identifying spaces

Familiarize yourself with B.A. program goals and course offerings in your department prior to preparing your course proposal. Give yourself and your department at least 1 year of planning and implementation time before you will teach your course.

Step 2 - Coming up with a course description

Develop a course description that explains the purpose, content, and overall learning outcome(s) of your class. Make sure to obtain feedback from faculty members, and fellow-TAs at this stage.

Step 3 - Using model syllabi

In connection with step 2, begin to review model syllabi. Compare syllabi from other undergraduate courses, classes that you have taken, and courses with a focus similar to your proposed course. Many instructors post syllabi online these days (also via open-sources). Make sure that in the end your syllabus contains at least the following information: Name of the course, meeting times, location; instructor information; course description; required texts and materials; assessment & grading; course-policies; course calendar. The *Center of Teaching Excellence* offers great resources for syllabus writing on its website (<http://www.cte.hawaii.edu/TA/Syllabi.html>)

Step 4 - Textbook, journal articles, or both?

Think about whether you prefer a textbook, articles/book chapters posted to *Laulima*, or a combination of both. Questions to consider are whether you would like to use a classic text from your field or a newly released textbook (teachers can often request a free copy from publishers). Journal articles and individual book chapters can be a cheaper alternative to students and often provide more freedom in topic selection. If you decide to use a textbook, check with the UHM Bookstore one semester ahead about order deadlines. If you work with articles and book chapters, make sure that they are appropriate for the students' level (discipline-related encyclopedias and introductions to book chapters can be good choices to introduce a concept).

Step 5 - Drafting assignments

Begin drafting the assignments for your course. While it is important for students to know what the major projects for the course are, it is good to leave some options for spontaneous assignments (e.g. homework, extra-credit) that emerge from your classroom as the semester progresses. If you plan to obtain a focus-designation for your

course (Writing Intensive; Oral Communication; Hawaiian, Asian, & Pacific Issues; Contemporary Ethical Issues), you will have to meet certain requirements in compliance with the hallmarks of the Office of General Education (<https://www.hawaii.edu/gened/focus.htm#areas>).

Step 6 - Creating a course schedule

Using a weekly calendar, begin to formulate topics that you are going to cover. Align course topics with course readings. It is okay to leave a few dates open (“TBA”) if you would like to decide on a topic or reading later in the semester. If you plan on teaching a focus-designated class, make sure that you give hallmarks sufficient consideration in your course schedule.

Step 7 - Obtaining permission for your course

Plan to revise your syllabus multiple times before you submit it to your department for review. Be prepared for revision requests. In most cases, your department will take the necessary administrative steps to add your course to the list of available classes.

Step 8 - Spreading the word

Last but not least, make sure to spread the word about your new course. Announce it in the classes that you are teaching, ask your B.A. program advisor to mention the course to undergraduates. Often instructors also advertise a new course on blackboards in their department.

Most importantly, keep in contact with your department and request feedback at all stages of the course development.

Good luck! 😊