

First Steps to Teaching on the Web

Define your Objectives

(These suggestions are taken from Web Teaching Guide, A practical approach to creating course web sites by Sarah Horton – Yale University Press)

Look at other teaching sites at your institution, and other institutions. Your impressions of other teaching sites will help you form your own approach.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What is my audience profile
 - What hardware and network connections are available to them?
 - What software do they have?
 - Do they expect Web access to class materials?
- What is their usage profile
 - How much time do you want your students to spend on the site?
 - Will the site be an addition to the regular course load, or will the materials replace some from the traditional curriculum?
 - Will the site be operative during the full term?
 - Will you use the site during class sessions?
- What are my teaching goals
 - What do you hope to accomplish that cannot be addressed using other tools or methods?
 - What do you want your website to look like in two years? Four years?
 - What have others done with the Web that might enhance your teaching?

Define the scope, or combination of scopes, for your class Web site:

Administrative – Web sites can handle many of the administrative tasks of teaching a course, particularly a site created using a courseware tool. Students can use the site to get information about scheduling or office hours, submit assignments, or check grades. Instructors can use the site to maintain class lists, post announcements, and distribute handouts.

Supplementary – A site can offer student aids to understanding, such as links to related sites or an on-line area to discuss class topics. A Web site can suffer neglect if it contains only supportive materials that are not integrated into the course. A site works best when it is made part of the classroom experience; for example, assign the links to related sites as required reading, or bring topics to class from students' online discussion.

Class Resource – Use your site to offer materials you use in teaching your course site. This use is particularly useful for materials that students have little access to. Students

often view videos and images during class sessions, but then must rely on their memory to compose an essay or other assignment on some aspect of what they saw. Allowing students to revisit these materials enhances their access to the materials, can make their realizations more profound

Instructional – This scope uses the Web for the delivery mechanism of instruction, as well as course materials, learning resources, and course administration.

Short-term Instruction – A site can be used for only part of your curriculum. You may want to “activate” a site for a section of your course that addresses the literary analysis of images. The site could contain images along with relevant supporting materials.