Introduction:

Congratulations! You have been assigned to teach an online course. You have TA’ed in the past and might have lectured a traditional course before, but teaching online is a new challenge. How do you build UBlearns content? How do you speak to the camera? How can you build a good teacher-student relationship with students that you might never see in person?

According to the Online Learning Consortium, the enrollment for online courses in the US has increased consistently for the last thirteen years and has grown to 5.8 million. Over 25% of students in higher education have enrolled in at least one online course. At UB during the 2017 academic year, 791 course sections were offered either online or as online-classroom hybrids. The UB Department of History is focusing on assigning more online teaching positions for their Summer and Winter Sessions. For example, for the Winter 2019 Session, all three courses will be offered online.

This handbook will help you create an online course by providing basic but crucial information for designing UBlearns content, for conducting the course, and for encouraging student engagement. The guide is divided into six parts, and each section will ease you into the sometimes complicated process of online course management by using a step-by-step approach. In addition, it will help you access support networks for online teaching and suggest useful resources.
Online Teaching Handbook

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I. How to Build UBlearns Content

This section demonstrates how to build UBlearns course content for the online learning environment. There are multiple ways to design your course; these examples should help you get started.

a. Organizing the Content Menu

- First, go to UBlearns page.
- Select the course you are teaching from My Courses.
- Locate the “Content Menu” column in the top left corner.
- You can build and edit the column contents by clicking one of the icons circled red. (Note: the example below is not a default Content Menu setting)
Announcements

This is the entry point of course-wide communication. The UBlearns specialist at the UB Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) recommends that you master the Announcements menu for class-wide communication such as your introduction to the students at the start of the semester or for assignment information. After an announcement is made, an automated e-mail will be sent to the students.

To create an announcement:

- Click on Announcements in the Content Menu
- Click on Create Announcement
- After creating a message, click on Submit button on the lower right corner

Syllabus

To upload your syllabus:

- Click on Syllabus in the content menu
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- Click on **Build Content** to the right (see screen capture)
- Select **Item**
- Scroll down to **Attachments** and upload your Word or PDF file, then click on **Submit**

For more information about syllabus making, please refer to Section V: “Online Resource for Course Design.”

d. Learning Units

The **Learning Units** menu item is where you can post the Panopto lecture video (for use of this function, go to “II. How to Stream Your Lecture”). You can also upload additional material such as YouTube videos and PDF reading assignments, as well as unit assignments in a single **Content File**.
To create a Content File, click on the Learning Units in the Content Menu first.

To create a unit, click on Build Content, then click on Content Folder to the right.

Name your Content Folder (For example: “Unit 1” or “Week 1”)

In the example below, learning units are organized into three Content Folders. You can set a specific timeframe to release each lecture session to students on specific dates. Notice how it states: “it will be available after Jan 29, 2019 12:00 AM”: 
To set the time and date for document release scroll down to the Standard Options section of the Create Content page.

Set up the time release function under Select Date and Time Restrictions. You can do this while you are building a Content Folder.

You can upload a word file, PDF file, YouTube clip, Panopto lecture recording, essay, quiz, etc. into a single Content Folder. In the example shown below, assigned readings, a lecture video, and an assignment are included in the same Content Folder which has been named “Unit 2: Medicine and Science in the 18th C US.”
e. Assignment Building

The test building menu offers a plethora of choice including Multiple choice, True/False, Essay, and more! You can mix and match various options, including essay writing, into one test. The completed test will appear in the Grade Center as Needs Grading. (Please see “g. Grading.”)

- First, click on the Term Assignments item from the content menu
- To start building a test, go to the Assessments dropdown list, then choose Test
• When building a test, you will have several additional options. For example, the **Test Availability** section lets you send an automatic announcement to students that the test is ready to download.

• Click Yes in **Add a new announcement for this test**.

• You can also build a rubric for an assignment. Please see “f. Grading” for detail.

You can also build an essay assignment with the **SafeAssign** function. Safe Assign is a plagiarism detection software. You can compare students’ submitted essays with websites and academic papers to detect whether students copy & pasted their answers from somewhere else.

• In order to build an essay assignment with the SafeAssign function, put the cursor on the **Assessments**, then choose **Assignment**.

• Then, in the **Submission Details** section (see image on next page), choose “Check submissions for plagiarism using SafeAssign” to enable the function. You may check “Exclude submissions from the Intuitional and Global References Databases” for an undergraduate survey course.
When you grade essays with the SafeAssign function, you will see whether the submitted essay has been copied from another student’s paper, specific website, etc.
f. **Tools**

You can *divide your students into a few groups* to carry out group assignments such as **Blogs** or **Discussion Boards**. In doing so, you need to create groups manually, but the good news is that you can reuse these groups for multiple activities.

- To create student groups, click on **Tools** in the course menu, then **Groups**
• Click on **Create**, then choose **Manual Enroll** so that you can assign students by yourself

• Usually, four to five students are assigned into one group, but it is totally depending on how your assignment is designed

• In order to access the group page you have just set up, click on the **Tool** menu again, then select **Groups**, and your newly created groups will be listed

• To create a **discussion board** for each group, select an individual group page by clicking “group 1” or “group 2”
• In each group page, you will see the Group Tools options such as Group Blog, Group Wiki, etc.

• To make a group discussion assignment, click on the Group Discussion Board to create a Discussion Forum

• In order to prevent chaos, never let students create a Forum. You might consider letting students create a Thread, but many instructors have found it easier not to let students make threads, either
A sample discussion thread would look like the following image:

![Sample Discussion Thread Image]

Needless to say, there should be more than one participant. This is one lonely mock discussion board. Students can add their responses and leave replies here. If you want a lively discussion, a prompt should be more elaborate than the one included here!
To create a group blog, go to the group page again, and click on the Group Blog.

- Make sure to set the blog as either course, individual, or group. In a course blog, everyone in the course can post and comment. In an individual blog only the “owner” can post, and other course members can only comment on the post.

A sample blog would look like the image next page. By the way, never let students post a photograph only blog entry or a one-word comment like this sample! For your information, I took this picture from the Brooklyn Bridge Pier. Pretty, isn’t it?
...Or you might consider using following non-UBlearns services for group assignments:

**Flipgrid**: [https://flipgrid.com/](https://flipgrid.com/)

A video discussion platform for the snapchat generation!

**Instagram Stories**: [https://blog.bufferapp.com/instagram-stories](https://blog.bufferapp.com/instagram-stories)

This Instagram feature lets students post photos and videos that are available for only 24 hours.

**Google Apps via UBmail**: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/email/google/apps.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/email/google/apps.html)

Students can use Google Calendar, Docs, Drive, and Hangouts for their collaborative assignments.


**g. Grading**

- You can access the **Grade Center** in the **Course Management** section of the **Content Menu** on the left

- If ungraded students’ assignments are submitted, they will show up in the **Needs Grading** section after you click on Grade Center

- In the **Full Grade Center** below that, you can see all the students’ assignments. This is where you can calculate students’ final grades by creating a **Weighted Column**

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A few words on **Rubrics**: When you are building assignments, you should create rubrics for every kind of activities possible (i.e.: Essay Rubric, Discussion Board Rubric, Blog Rubric, etc.). Not only do these rubrics save time when grading, they are a useful tool to justify your grading to students, thus reducing the number of students inquiring about their grade!

- When you a building an assignment, you will have a choice to attach a **Rubric** in the **Grading Section**

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- If you select the **Create New Rubric** option, you can generate your own rubric criteria by adding, deleting, and editing columns and rows. You can create multiple rubrics, and they will be stored so that you can keep reusing these rubrics throughout the course.
When a submitted assignment shows up in the Grading Center as Needs Grading, you can grade the assignment by following your rubric guide. You can even leave feedback for the student. After selecting appropriate scores for each criterion, the rubric function will calculate the student’s grade for you.
h. Virtual Office Hour Tool

Webex: http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/webex

UB faculty members and students can use this web conference tool with video and audio connections for virtual office hours.

i. Resources for UBlearns

UBIT Help Center: http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/get-help.html  716-645-6188 or ublearns@buffalo.edu

Getting Started with UBlearns (overview of basic functions): https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/ublearns/getting-started.html

UBlearns for Faculty Help: http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/ublearns.html

Blackboard Help, Navigate Inside a Course: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Getting_Started/Navigate_Inside_a_Course
II. How to Record and Stream Your Lecture

a. UB Panopto

If you do not have a clear software preference when it comes to record and stream your lecture, **UB Panopto** is the choice for you. You can download the software by going to [https://ub.hosted.panopto.com/](https://ub.hosted.panopto.com/). Make sure that your computer’s camera and microphone can be recognized by Panopto.

UBIT has a user-friendly step by step guide ([http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions.html)), ranging from how to install the software to upload the lecture video to your UBlearns site, as well as from how to edit your video to adding captions in your video lecture. Thus, this section introduces just enough information to get you started.

After you download the software, you can begin recording your lecture. Click on the “Create” drop down list and choose “Record a new session.”

The recording screen will look like below. The left hand side screen is where you appear during the lecture. You can synchronize with your PowerPoint presentation during the recording, which appears on the right.
**Panopto Basic Functions:**

UB Panopto ([https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto.html))

Step by step basic How to use guide: [http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions.html)

**Some other Functions that might be Useful:**

Making basic edits: [http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions/editing-a-session.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions/editing-a-session.html)

Adding captions: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions/captions.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/instructions/captions.html)

**Panopto Support Groups:**

More Ways to Learn about Panopto: [http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/learn.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/learn.html)

Panopto Support: [https://support.panopto.com/s/](https://support.panopto.com/s/)

Panopto Webinars (basic training webinars held twice a month): [http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/learn.html](http://www.buffalo.edu/ubit/service-guides/teaching-technology/teaching-services-for-faculty/panopto/learn.html)

**b. YouTube**

If you are already proficient with YouTube video streaming, you might stick with them. UBlearns supports YouTube, and linking the video to your lecture would be an easy task. Currently, they have better caption service than Panopto. But please be aware that your lecture would be available to the whole WWW!
III. Training Courses and Online Communities

Do you want hands-on training opportunities and communities for online instructors? UB and the SUNY system provide multiple pedagogical training opportunities and support communities for online instructors.

a. Training Opportunities

UB Center for Educational Innovation (CEI) ([https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei.html)) provides pedagogical support for online and traditional instructors. You can contact Martha Greatrix ([greatrix@buffalo.edu](mailto:greatrix@buffalo.edu)) to make an appointment for a one-on-one or virtual UBlearns guidance session.

CEI also offers three self-paced online courses for how to use UBlearns. First, the UBlearns Overview course allows instructors to explore all the functions of UBlearns. You can essentially build a “mock” online course, which can be later transferred to an actual online course. **I strongly recommend to sign up for this course well before you prepare for the course.**

You can also sign up for a sandbox version of the Blackboard course where you can test different tools with other course participants.

In addition, you might consider signing up for a course, Teaching Online: An Orientation offered by CEI. This is an online-based self-paced course for learning online course development and effective online teaching strategies. Participants are expected to spend approximately 10–15 hours on the course, including participating in online discussions.

Information for these three courses is available at: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/professional-development/online-courses.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/professional-development/online-courses.html)

Panopto offers Basic and advanced Training Webinars. One Basic Webinar lasts for one hour and is held twice a month. [https://support.panopto.com/s/webinars](https://support.panopto.com/s/webinars)

The SUNY System also offers an online course, EmTechMooC. This is an open-access course available free of charge to UB members. At the end of the course, you will develop an ePortfolio to showcase your professional skills and accomplishments. You will earn digital badges which will appear in your transcripts. The entire course can be completed in as little as five hours spread over five weeks. For the next available course, please visit: [https://emtechwiki.webapps.buffalo.edu/](https://emtechwiki.webapps.buffalo.edu/)
In addition, the SUNY system offers an online course **Quality by Design**. This is a four-week online course offers ideas for improving courses by providing a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of seated, online, or hybrid courses. [http://commons.suny.edu/qbd/](http://commons.suny.edu/qbd/)

### b. Online Support Groups

**SUNY Tools of Engagement Project (TOEP)** provides an environment to work alongside peers to expand your pedagogical toolbox. [https://sites.google.com/site/sunytoep/](https://sites.google.com/site/sunytoep/)

**Open SUNY Online Teaching** is an online forum for online teaching and learning practices. [http://cotecommunity.open.suny.edu/](http://cotecommunity.open.suny.edu/)

**The Online Learning Consortium (OLC)** is an organization promoting online teaching as the mainstream mode of teaching in higher education. [https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/](https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/)

### c. Self-assessment Tool

The **Online Course Self-Evaluation Tool** developed by the UB GSEngage let you assess your online course by completing the rubric [https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/gsengage/2016/08/31/use-a-rubric-to-self-evaluate-your-online-course/](https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/gsengage/2016/08/31/use-a-rubric-to-self-evaluate-your-online-course/). The rubric is available at [https://bbsupport.sln.suny.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/OSCQR/OSCQR%20Assets/OSCQR%203rd%20Edition.pdf](https://bbsupport.sln.suny.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/OSCQR/OSCQR%20Assets/OSCQR%203rd%20Edition.pdf)
IV. “Dos & Don’ts”

Now you have familiarized yourself with the basic mechanics of course building. But how do you speak to the microphone? How do you present yourself to the camera? How can you effectively communicate with students? What are “do and don’ts” of online teaching? This section introduces some basic tips for online teaching.

a. General Advice

CEI’s advice about student engagement: be proficient with the Announcements function. Use this menu as the doorway between you and the students. Make sure to attach rubrics to every assignment if the assignment permits you to do so and try to leave feedback as much as possible. The rubric-based feedback justifies your grading in an objective way, thus reducing student inquires about their grading. Don’t get shy about appearing in front of the camera; your presence on the lecture screen will help students engage with their lecture material. And utilize a virtual office hour tool like WebeX.

Some advice about course design: Sign up for the CEI’s UBLearns Overview Course as soon as you are assigned to teach online. While preparing for your course, make sure to familiarize yourself with speaking to the microphone.

One faculty member’s advice about course operation: “In general, I find breaking things up into daily assignments works better than leaving them long stretches on their own. I expect work from them every class and I give feedback every day. I usually produce a short video for each class as well.”

b. Advice on Student Engagement

According to The Online Teaching Survival Guide by Judith Boettcher and Rita-Marie Conrad, you should be aware of the following nine points (Note: The following list is borrowed from CEI. You can obtain a copy of the book online via the UB Library). The authors advise that you make sure that:

1. Activities encourage active interactions that involve course content and personal communication
2. Materials are authentic or relate to real-life applications
3. Courses include a variety of media to support learning (i.e.: audio, video, illustrations, simulations, charts, graphs)
4. Activities engage students in higher-level thinking skills, including critical and creative thinking, analysis and problem solving
5. Reflection comes up throughout the course
6. Topics and materials are up-to-date and relevant
7. There are sufficient opportunities for learners to work collaboratively
8. Class participation activities (i.e.: discussion boards, wikis, social networks) are used to encourage collaboration
9. Learners are encouraged to interact with others (fellow classmates, instructor, course guests, etc.) and benefit from their experience and expertise

The Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching (https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/effective-educational-videos/) also suggests:

1. Keep videos brief and targeted on learning goals.
2. Use audio and visual elements to convey appropriate parts of an explanation; make them complementary rather than redundant.
3. Use signaling to highlight important ideas or concepts.
4. Use a conversational, enthusiastic style to enhance engagement.
5. Embed videos in a context of active learning by using guiding questions, interactive elements, or associated homework assignments.

**c. Presenting on Camera**

Panopto’s “12 Tips for Presenting On-Camera” has some useful tips for the practical aspect of online teaching (PowerPoint link: https://uploads.panopto.com/2017/10/18130124/12-Tips-for-Being-On-Camera-21092017.pptx):

1. Set up lighting correctly (left: single light, right: two lights), or place a camera in front of a window
2. Pretend to talk to a friend while recording
3. OR actually talk to a friend while recording
4. Pause between sentences
5. Even if you “mess up,” just keep talking
6. Record in a single take, edit later

d. Other Resources

Basic Techniques of University Teaching: https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/basic-techniques.html

The DOs and DON’Ts of Online Learning: https://tomprof.stanford.edu/posting/601
V. Online Resources for Course Design

a. Primary Sources


The 100 British Museum Objects (World): [http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/british-museum-objects/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/about/british-museum-objects/)


Library of Congress YouTube Channel (US): [https://www.youtube.com/loc](https://www.youtube.com/loc)

DOCs Teach by The National Archives (US): [https://www.docsteach.org/documents](https://www.docsteach.org/documents)

Smithsonian (World): [https://www.si.edu/educators](https://www.si.edu/educators)

b. Open Access Online Textbooks

YouTube Crash Course Series (US and World)(Note: they have a closed captioning option!): [https://www.youtube.com/user/crashcourse/playlists](https://www.youtube.com/user/crashcourse/playlists)


c. Syllabus Making

UB Course Syllabi Requirements: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/syllabus-toolbox/syllabi-ub.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/syllabus-toolbox/syllabi-ub.html)
UB Syllabi Resources and Templates: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/syllabus-toolbox/syllabi-resources.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/syllabus-toolbox/syllabi-resources.html)

UB policies: [https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/ub-specific-information-policies.html](https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/essentials/ub-specific-information-policies.html)


Accessible syllabus, for making visually “up to date,” interactive syllabi: [https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu/](https://accessiblesyllabus.tulane.edu/)


Free Stock Photos: [https://unsplash.com/](https://unsplash.com/)

**d. Rubric Making**

UB Rubric workbook: [https://www.buffalo.edu/content/www/ubcei/professional-development/ubassessmentday/_jc_r_content/par/download_551647103/file.res/RubricWorkbook_20160308.pdf](https://www.buffalo.edu/content/www/ubcei/professional-development/ubassessmentday/_jc_r_content/par/download_551647103/file.res/RubricWorkbook_20160308.pdf)

UB Grading Rubric for Essay and Short Answer: [https://www.buffalo.edu/content/cas/philosophy/undergrad-study/learninggoals/ug_rubrics/_jcr_content/par/download_0/file.res/PHI-Rubric-2.pdf](https://www.buffalo.edu/content/cas/philosophy/undergrad-study/learninggoals/ug_rubrics/_jcr_content/par/download_0/file.res/PHI-Rubric-2.pdf)


Creating and Using Rubrics, Yale Center for Teaching and Learning: [https://ctl.yale.edu/Rubrics](https://ctl.yale.edu/Rubrics)

Sample rubrics by Eberly Center, Carnegie Mellon University: [https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/assesslearning/rubrics.html](https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/assesslearning/rubrics.html)
VI. Reading List

a. Overview

b. Teaching History Online


c. What is Online Teaching?


d. Course Design


### e. Student Engagement


### f. Assessment


### g. Meta List

UB Center for Educational Innovation, Online Learning Resource Reading List: https://www.buffalo.edu/ubcei/resources/online-learning.html
The Dos and Don'ts of Teaching Online: Practical Advice and Suggestions for Teaching Online:
https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1036&context=ama_proceedings
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