

TEACHING TUESDAYS



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BELLISARIO BULLETIN



– By [Denise Bortree](#)

Welcome to Teaching Tuesdays! The leaves are changing, and the semester is speeding up. Thanks for all your work with our amazing students. We had a great TTIRL session last Wednesday! Thanks to those who attended and participated in our discussion about AI in the classroom. This week's issue of Teaching Tuesdays includes three useful articles. First, Jenna Spinelle shares how her online teaching experiences reshaped her approach to teaching. She offers some interesting insights into what makes a good instructor. Then, award-winning professor Sara Liao shares her thoughts on teaching in the Bellisario College. And finally, Danielle Harris walks us through *Turnitin's AI Misuse Rubric*, a tool to help instructors potentially identify when students use AI for assignments. Lots of good stuff in this issue. Enjoy!

Important Items of Note

- **AI, Pedagogy, and Academic Integrity** | Visit the [AI, Pedagogy, and Academic Integrity site](#) for information and resources.

Careers/Internships

- **October 3** | 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Info Session: T. Howard Foundation | 60 Willard Building | Free session for students to get information about paid internship opportunities as well as other career-development support.

Upcoming Events

- **October 4** | "From Barbie's World to Elf's New York: Exploring Narrative Nuances In Film" | 7:00 - 8:15 pm | Carnegie Cinema (113 Carnegie Building) | Deepak Sethi, a comedy writer who teaches in the Penn State Hollywood Program and has over a decade of experience writing for primetime television, will present a free public lecture.
- **October 5** | Grading Differently: Rethinking How and Why We Do Classroom Assessment | 10:35 - 11:50 am | [Register](#) | In this interactive workshop (based on data collected across Penn State), you will explore emerging alternatives to conventional grading schema.
- **October 10** | Writing Your DEI Statement | 10:35 - 11:50 am | [Register](#) | In this interactive workshop, participants will reflect on their own role and their contributions to advancing DEI, and we'll explore useful frameworks for conceptualizing and writing DEI statements.
- **October 10** | Canvas: Integrating the OneDrive Learning Tool | 1:00 - 2:30 pm | [Register](#) | Learn how to add the OneDrive LTI to a course and how to update content and assignments by adding OneDrive files.
- **October 10** | Prep and Practice: Top Hat Course Engagement | 1 - 2 pm | [Register](#) | Here is the opportunity to get familiar with Top Hat by exploring the environment and identifying features that help learning be engaging, interactive, accessible, and connected!

TEACHING TIP



How Teaching Online Made Me a Better Instructor

– By [Jenna Spinelle](#)



Traditionally, the course development process for in-person and online courses happens separately. Faculty teaching in the classroom spend hours crafting slides and lecture notes and designing activities to engage students; those teaching online spend that time writing lesson modules and finding ways to hold students' interest when they never see you or their classmates in person.

I'm here to say that the process doesn't have to be that segmented. In fact, creating your in-person course with an online student in mind might just make your class more organized and accessible to anyone taking the course synchronously or asynchronously.

I took this approach for the one-credit course I teach on independent content creation and have also applied it to the news writing and podcasting courses. Here are a few takeaways that created a better experience for me and the students.

Be Organized

Organization is essential for an online course because you don't have the opportunity to make last-minute announcements in class. You need to know what's due when so you can keep students on track through email and Canvas announcements.

Teaching online also requires you to have most, if not all, of your lesson materials ready at the beginning of the semester because some students will work ahead if their schedule allows. I always have at least one student like this every time I teach online!

After adopting these habits for teaching online, I decided to do the same thing when I taught podcasting for the first time last spring. At the end of the semester, nearly every student told me how much they appreciated seeing all the deadlines and course materials at the beginning of the semester so they knew what was expected of them and what they should expect from me in class. Plus, doing all the prep work over winter break freed up time on the weekends during the semester that I would normally spend making slides!

Stay Current

I've also found that teaching online gives me greater incentive to update course materials from semester to semester to keep up with changes in media and technology. Again, it's more difficult to show an impromptu example or talk about something happening in the news on any given day so the lesson content should be as current as possible at the start of each semester.

Doing this work for online courses also put me in the habit of doing it for the courses I teach in person. Again, I spend time at the beginning of the semester reviewing weekly lessons and updating references, examples, and other content as needed. I'm sure you already do some of this, but the big shift for me was reviewing the entire semester at once, rather than doing the first 3-4 weeks before the start of classes and saying I would do the rest as the semester goes, which of course rarely happened!

Maybe I'm just weird this way, but I love the energy of interacting with students in the classroom and the work of planning and organizing a course at the beginning of the semester. I'm always happy to talk with faculty who are interested in adapting or converting their courses for online instruction or applying this approach to your teaching in the classroom!

SPOTLIGHT



Sara Liao, a 2023 Deans' Excellence Award, Research & Creative Accomplishments recipient, is an assistant professor of media studies with the Bellisario College of Communications. She is also a 2023 recipient of the Helen Award for Emerging Feminist Scholarship at the International Communication Association. Sara's current research interests are represented in two major areas, one is the study of gender politics and feminist activism, and the other social movements and digital culture.

Q&A with Sara Liao

Be sure to check out Sara's full [biography](#)!

What is your favorite aspect of being a teacher with the Bellisario College of Communications?

My favorite aspects of teaching for the Bellisario College are:

- The intelligent and diverse body of students!
- The flexible mode of teaching; I have taught both undergrad and grad courses (class sizes ranging from 7 to over 300) in a combination of formats (world campus, remote synchronous, remote asynchronous, and in-person).
- The state-of-art in teaching methodology and community of teachers.

How would you explain your teaching philosophy?

My goal in education is to cultivate critical media users, sympathetic communicators, and responsible citizens who will stand firm for social justice, equality, and equity. Three pillars of my teaching philosophy are:

1. Integrating theoretical thinking and real-world applications.
2. Fostering an inclusive classroom and beyond with a strong commitment to diversity.
3. Highlighting digital media literacy.

What makes you passionate about media studies?

Media studies is a broad and interesting interdisciplinary subject field of study. You can find approaches from anthropology, sociology, history, psychoanalysis, psychology, gender studies, and many more. The field welcomes a diverse body of research topics, most of which employ a critical perspective to cultures and societies. Trained in media studies, I find myself highly aware of, and committed to, the mission of justice, equality, and emancipation that the field supports and encourages. I demonstrate this not only through research, but also via teaching and collaborating with people who share similar visions.

What have you found to be the key to student engagement and success in your course(s)?

I always begin my classes with an emphasis on the mindset and attitude in classroom, and being respectful to diverse experiences and expression. My approach to student engagement and success is first to create and foster a safe space for respectful communication and conversation. As a critical scholar and an immigrant, I constantly share and invite students to share stories of how we navigate spaces and societies that we are unfamiliar with, which helps the whole classroom become aware of and acknowledge diverse cultures and backgrounds and the limits of our own knowledge.

As for engagement methods, I tend to use a lot of visual illustrations combined with flexible yet interactive in-class activities and/or assignments (such as small collaborative projects, short video assignments/mock TedTalk, online forum discussions, polls and surveys, etc.). I encourage students to talk about cultural differences in class and offer alternative ways for them to continue these discussions using tools such as TopHat in written forms. I do this in an effort to foster a more inclusive environment by acknowledging that the ability of speech is contingent upon multiple factors such as social training, cultural experiences, and language capabilities. As I am teaching courses related to globalization, international communication, and critical cultural theories, students are encountering case studies and discussions which challenge an ethnocentric viewpoint on politics and cultures.

The Bellisario College mission statement aims to "...prepare students to take their place in an information-rich society and in the professions as active, critical and ethical participants." What does that statement mean to you, as a professor of media studies?

Do you feel like your courses, and our College, demonstrate admirable efforts to prepare students to take their place in an information-rich society and in the professions as active, critical and ethical participants?

Related to my teaching philosophy, I interpret it as that we are training responsible citizens to make informed decisions about the society. Particularly relevant to me as a media scholar studying cultures and globalization, I push students to challenge conventional thinking that they are socialized with, rethinking those perspectives in relation to tech innovations, media capitals and industrial arrangement, geo-political power dynamics, transnational cultural contexts, and more. Acknowledging that we all have our own bias and limitations in "seeing" information and what happens around us is the first step. The most important part of the pedagogy is to train students to actively think, critically reflect, and ethically act.

What are your thoughts on teaching technologies and their relevance when it comes to teaching media studies? In other words, do you feel it's important to explore different teaching technologies in order to stay abreast of what's happening in the world of media studies, and to keep students engaged in your course(s)?

It is important to explore different tech in classroom and beyond in order to:

1. Engage students, especially with interactive tech.
2. Keep up with the social trends and better prepare students for their future careers.
3. Train students with a critical perspective towards tech.

I want to draw from the discussion in the Think-In event, where my dear fellow colleagues all agree that we are the college that is most important to lead the university's education and train our students to be critical thinkers in an information-rich society with ever-changing techs.

CANVAS CUE



Turnitin's AI Misuse Rubric

– By [Danielle Harris](#) | Instructional Design

At last week's Teaching Tuesday's in Real Life event a participant mentioned that students may be using generative AI to compose posts for Canvas discussions. This poses a powerful question - how can this be prevented?

The most tangible way to address this issue, at this time, is to craft unique instructions and create tailored rubrics that require students to drill into course content as opposed to receiving superficial content from an AI platform. The more students are asked to reference content and concepts specific to your lectures and course content, the less they will be able to get desired responses from generative AI.

[Turnitin's AI Misuse Rubric](#) is a resource to aid in reviewing assignment prompts for potential vulnerabilities to generative AI tools and/or creating

prompts without those vulnerabilities. The rubric emphasizes areas that current models of generative AI tools are not generally capable of producing the same way that a human writer might.

Critical thinking/ Reasoning

To improve your prompt, reflect on:

Does the writing task ask students to thoughtfully consider the issue and draw a conclusion based on their evaluation?

The prompt requires students to skillfully analyze and synthesize the issue. Students should infer a logical conclusion considering multiple expert viewpoints based on what the prompt demands. The prompt encourages students to create new knowledge based on novel ideas.

Personalization

(Note: Refer to this trait if it is applicable to your assignment.)

To improve your prompt, reflect on:

Does the writing task ask students to reference an event that required their presence or personal experience?

The prompt demands students to reference an authentic experience, such as a classroom discussion, a field trip, or an event from their personal lives. Students will need to smoothly integrate their experiences and show evidence of original thinking to respond to the prompt.

Student voice

To improve your prompt, reflect on:

Does the writing task propose a clear purpose that requires students to write to their audience?

The prompt demands students to take powerful ownership of the task and purpose. Students will have to demonstrate a definitive perspective, considering the audience's knowledge and values, in order to respond to the prompt.

Sources & citations

(Note: Refer to this trait if it is applicable to your assignment.)

To improve your prompt, reflect on:

Does the writing task require students to include real, verifiable sources throughout their essay?

The prompt requires students to cite verifiable sources, including a strong variety of facts, concrete details, quotations, or examples. It's clear the sources must be current and relevant to the writing task, and a full reference list is required.

SHARE A TEACHING STRATEGY



Share something fabulous that you have been doing in your classroom! Do you have a teaching technology or strategy that you've seen succeed and would like to share it in the *Teaching Tuesdays* newsletter? If so, please [share your idea](#) for an upcoming issue.