

Designing and Presenting an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Class for Tufts University

Prior to the Course

Choosing a Topic/Writing the Proposal:

- This is the most important step of the process. The topic should be something of interest to the study group leader (this will make the rest of the Osher experience more enjoyable). Examples of topics include:
 - Professions
 - Technology
 - Science
 - Law
 - Areas of study
 - History
 - International relations
 - Psychology
 - Personal hobbies
 - Writing
 - Arts
 - Travel
 - Music
- While many study group leaders choose to teach topics with which they are already familiar, others choose to research and teach new topics that they are interested in.

Choosing a Session Length:

- Once the study group leader has thought of a topic, it is important to do some brief research to ensure that the topic has enough material to develop a course. If there is enough material, the question then becomes: how long should the course be?
 - Individual Osher sessions are two hours long. With this in mind, should the course be two sessions (for a total of 4 hours)? Four sessions (8 hours)? Six sessions (12 hours)? Eight sessions (16 hours)?
 - Having an idea of how many sessions you would like to teach will help with planning each lesson and structuring the course.

Submitting the Proposal:

- There are three parts to the proposal:
 - Short course description (once some brief research on the topic you are interested in teaching about has been conducted, the proposal should be easier to construct)
 - A brief outline of the course
 - A brief biography of you, the study group leader
- All three components will come in handy when developing the course so it is important to spend a little time making sure this section is solid.

Once the Proposal is Accepted

Planning the Course:

- Once your course is approved by the curriculum committee and you get the go-ahead from Osher, it is time to plan the course.

Syllabus:

- Creating a longer syllabus based on the brief outline of the course you submitted for the proposal will help you plan out the course. The syllabus should include:
 - Course description (from the proposal)
 - Course outline with dates and suggested readings
 - Study group leader biography (from the proposal)
 - Include your email so the participants have a way to contact you

Types of Slideshows:

- Once the syllabus is complete, it is time to work on the presentation. While the presentation itself can be constructed in a number of ways, many participants like having a visual background.
- Many study group leaders choose to present via Microsoft PowerPoint.
 - The PowerPoint can have multiple components including text, pictures, video, maps.
 - The text can be bullet points based on what the study group leader is presenting.
 - Two great places to locate pictures for your course are:
 - Wikimedia Commons
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)
 - Remember to properly cite your pictures if the picture asks you to (this information can be found at the bottom of the webpage)
 - Your personal pictures
 - Video can be personal video as well as videos from YouTube or other online sources (AP Archives is helpful for historical references).
 - Maps can be taken from Wikimedia Commons or screenshots of Google Maps.

Prior to the course:

- Once the above steps are complete, there are two main things to do before the course begins:
 - Ensure that the classroom you are teaching in has the proper tools you will need to teach your course, specifically when it comes to connecting your computer to a smartboard.
 - If the class is taught via Zoom, make sure to set up the Zoom meeting prior to the course.
- Email the participants to welcome them to the course. This email could include:
 - A brief hello
 - Class dates and times
 - A brief overview of the course format
 - The syllabus

- Remember to copy OsherLII@tufts.edu so the Osher office has a copy of the details of your course.

Teaching the Course

Organizing an individual session:

- As stated previously, Osher class sessions are two hours long. This does not mean that you will teach for two hours straight but it does mean that you should get creative with the time.
 - Typically allow for a few minutes at the beginning of class for latecomers and people to mingle with the other class members.
 - For classes on Zoom, there might be technological difficulties (especially for classes early in the course). Hopefully, the few minutes of buffer time at the beginning of each session will allow for difficulties to be resolved.
 - Welcome everyone and then allow for the classroom assistant to take attendance and make any announcements (upcoming speakers, new class registration, etc.)
 - Once the classroom assistant turns the floor back to you, it is useful to briefly recap the material that was covered in the last session and to see if anyone has questions.
 - Once questions are answered, present an overview of that day's session.
 - Midway through the two hour session, take a 7-10 minute break.
 - If the class is taught via Zoom, plan to take two extra 2-3 minute breaks to allow the participants a chance to rest their eyes:
 - One 30 minutes into the session
 - One 90 minutes into the session
 - Try to leave the last 10-15 minutes of each session open for questions and a brief overview of the next session.
 - Plan to spend about 15 minutes following the session answering questions that participants still have.
- Participants enjoy hearing about personal experience with the subject matter from both the study group leader and their fellow participants.
 - Asking questions of the group while teaching is a good way to make the course interactive.

Organizing the Course:

- Each individual class can follow the general outline described above. However, for the first class and for the last class, there are a few additional items to add.
- Class 1 should be an introduction to the material. Introduce yourself, provide a brief biography, and then ask the participants to introduce themselves as well.
 - Some icebreaker questions include:
 - Where the participants reside
 - How many Osher sessions have they taken
 - What their experience is with the subject matter
 - This should be followed with an overview of the syllabus.
- The class can then proceed as a normal session would.

- The last class should provide an overview of what was covered during the session and allow for time throughout the session for the participants to ask questions that have not been answered during the course.