

Dear Instructors,

Welcome to UPEP! We are glad you are here. Below you will find some helpful best practices and tips to assist in designing, preparing, and teaching your course at the prison. While we strive to make our courses at the prison mirror our courses on campus in terms of rigor and expectations, there are prison-specific challenges that both you and the students face. The following tips are designed in the spirit of UPEP's mission to foster social transformation, to support academic freedom, and most importantly, to provide our students with high-quality postsecondary experiences.

This is a working document, and we are certain some things are missing. *Please let us know if you have suggestions.* Thank you.

**1. Provide students with all required readings at the beginning of the semester.**

Many things can happen during the semester and our students like to be prepared. Sometimes they will have more time to read ahead and other times they want to ensure they have everything they need to do the assignments. We suggest providing students with all required course material, i.e. books, PDF readings, handouts, PPT slides, at the beginning of the semester to avoid gaps in accessibility. There may be times when the prison is inaccessible, therefore, it is important that students have what they need to keep up with the course. The UPEP staff can help in creating course readers. Please be sure that we receive your course materials *at least* a month prior to the first day of class.

**2. Use a variety of educational resources and provide supplemental materials.**

On Mondays and Fridays (4:30PM-6:30PM), students have access to Canvas, the University of Utah library, EBSCO and JSTOR, AP news, as well as other selected websites. However, they do not have open access to the internet. (e.g. they cannot access Google, YouTube, etc.). Please consider the types of supplemental resources that might be beneficial for students to have for your class. Think about creating a “suggested reading/listening/viewing” list that you want to include and make those resources available to the students on Canvas. Examples of supplemental materials include podcasts, photos, music, films, and posters. Supplemental readings are also useful.

**3. Be clear about your expectations and grading standards and stick to them.**

UPEP students expect transparency in expectations regarding assignments, classroom participation, and grading. We strongly suggest that you use rubrics for writing assignments and grade in the spirit of assisting in the development of writing. You should keep attendance, grade assignments in a timely manner, and assign a final grade for each student. At the end of the class, you should share each student's attendance record and final grades with UPEP Director, Andy Eisen.

**4. Be flexible with timelines and build flexibility into the syllabus.**

We work in a prison and so inevitably, things will occur that will throw your class off track. There is no need to worry, but be prepared to be *flexible* with deadlines. We suggest building in a “TBD week” in the syllabus that would allow for flexibility in case you experience a lockdown (where you cannot hold class because the prison is closed to the public, volunteers, etc.) The TBD week should be toward the last week of class.

While classes are scheduled from 4:30PM – 7:30PM, class may not actually begin until 4:40PM, depending on when students are permitted to leave their living units. We suggest you arrive to the prison by 4:00PM to pass through security and then to setup the teaching laptop located in the locked cabinet located in Chapel #2. While you can bring in a jump drive to show a Power Point, film, photos, etc., you will not have access to the internet.

**5. Use a variety of pedagogical approaches in your class.**

You do not have to worry about UPEP students *not* reading or coming to class unprepared. Quite the opposite. They arrive ready to engage and will have a lot to say and contribute. We strongly suggest that you use a variety of pedagogical approaches in the classroom that move beyond discussion formats. These approaches could include partner work, small group work, large group work, and other creative configurations that allow students to lead discussions. It is easy to fall into a routine of talking at students and they can fall into routines too, of either speaking or staying quiet. We encourage faculty to have a lesson plan for each class with learning objectives (you may even decide to share those learning objectives with the students). It's a good idea for classes to have a final culminating project at the end of the semester where students are required to share something publicly.

**6. Group Assignments.**

Group assignments are great! However, please note that UPEP students may not be able to see each other on a regular basis outside of class because they live in different housing units and they cannot move freely within the compound. If assigning group work, bear in mind that UPEP class or the Resource Room hours may be the only time students are able to gather together. Make group work assignments clear on the syllabus so that students can prepare. You may also consider allowing for students to select who they want in their group as this will allow them to choose students living in their unit.

**7. Provide consistent and timely feedback.**

Please try to provide consistent and timely feedback on assignments. Students like to be able to incorporate the feedback they receive into their future assignments. Providing feedback on Canvas is a great way to reach students. Faculty may also use UPEP staff and/or Resource Room personnel to transport feedback, too. Feedback that arrives all at once too late in the semester is not as useful as feedback that arrives in consistent, digestible intervals.

**8. Review your syllabus for unnecessary and irrelevant content.**

Syllabi often have statements related to technology (i.e. AI in the classroom) and accessing services on the main campus (i.e. campus recreation center) that do not apply to UPEP students. Please review your course syllabus and remove any text that isn't directly applicable to UPEP students. We strongly encourage you to think about how you can provide things like office hours and meetings with students, and we are happy to work with you to ensure students get the experience you want. We are happy to meet with you to discuss syllabus content, language, and the required information to be included.