General Presentation Tips

- Don't forget to introduce yourself at the start of your first class. Even if you already know some of the students, there will certainly be some you don't. Your students appreciate getting to know you personally and they like to hear about your background and expertise as it relates to the topic.

- Provide an outline of the day's program before you begin, then review and summarize any important points at the end.

- Consider and communicate logistics regarding a scheduled break and how you will handle questions. Generally, it works best to schedule a designated time to take questions. With online classes, you can also encourage your audience to submit comments and questions via the Chat feature.

- Have a Plan B in the event of technical difficulties.

Tips for Teaching Online

- Either a desktop computer or laptop is required to teach an OLLI course via Zoom. Tablets and iPads don't provide the necessary capability and flexibility for most courses.

- Turn off all other technology in your home to maximize your internet bandwidth during your class. For example, close any programs on your computer that you won't need for your class. Email and other programs will drain internet bandwidth away from your Zoom connection and could create a less-than-ideal viewing experience for your students.

- Please don't use a virtual background when you teach on Zoom. In most cases, it's distracting and is a drain on internet bandwidth, which can cause connection problems.

- Turn off or silence your cell phone during class to prevent any distracting interruptions.

- Prior to your first class, we'll schedule a time to do a Zoom test to check your internet connection, lighting, microphone, and general viewing experience. This will also be the time to do a test run if you plan to use a PowerPoint presentation, video, or other materials. Please be prepared to test everything you plan to use during your class to avoid any surprises.

- A staff person or trained volunteer will be assigned to assist with the logistics in your class, such as the welcome, attendance, and Zoom controls. Prior to each week's class, please email a copy of your presentation to the staff person who will be assisting with your class. In case you have unexpected internet connection problems, this will give you a backup plan.

- Be aware of copyright fair use laws, especially as they relate to online courses. For example, you may not use full-length film, music, or opera productions online without written permission from the copyright holder. Limited video clips are acceptable, as are non-copyrighted materials in the public domain (i.e. YouTube). If you're not certain about materials you plan to use, please ask. Our university takes this issue seriously.

Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations

Make your slide show a visual aid and not a visual distraction. Below are a few tips for creating great PowerPoint presentations.

- Keep your design consistent and simple. Use the slide master feature to set up a template. It's okay to vary the content with bulleted lists, columns, and images, but be consistent with your choice of font, color, and background. Avoid templates that are too busy; they will detract from your message.

- Use contrasting colors for text and background. Light text on a solid dark background (or vice versa) is best. Limit the number of slides. A good rule of thumb is one slide per minute.

- Limit the number of words on each slide. Avoid punctuation and use key phrases and essential information only. Complete sentences and paragraphs will force your audience to read rather than listen to your message. Empty space will enhance readability and reinforce what's important.

- A good rule of thumb is 6-8 lines of text per slide, with a font size of 28 to 32. Use a simple, readable font. Include a header on each page to frame the content. If you limit the text on your slides, you won't need to use features like underline or all capital letters to emphasize key terms.

- Avoid the use of flashy transitions such as text fly-ins. These features may seem clever, but are distracting and get old quickly.

- Use good quality images that reinforce and complement your message. Visuals can often communicate a message better than words, but keep them large and simple.

- Embed any external links (i.e. videos or websites) directly into your presentation. It's best if you also save the linked file on your computer.

- If you use builds (lines of text appearing each time you click the mouse), have content appear on the screen in a consistent, simple manner. Only use this feature when necessary because builds can slow your presentation.

- Practice moving forward and backward within your presentation. Audiences sometimes ask to see the previous screen again.

- Do not read from your slides. Practice the presentation so you can speak from bullet points. Reading from your slides will bore and frustrate your audience.

- Face your audience when speaking. If you need a prompt, either position yourself behind the computer or print a reference you carry with you.

- If you believe something will be hard to read or understand, don't use it.

- Time your presentation. You'll be more comfortable and your audience will appreciate your preparation.

- Do a complete grammar and spelling check. A document free of typos and misspellings sends a very positive message about your professionalism and preparation.