

INSTRUCTOR'S HANDBOOK

DavidsonLearns seeks to enhance the intellectual life of adults by providing a selection of challenging, diverse, and relevant courses and, in so doing, form a community of learners. Our volunteer instructors are motivated by their desire to share their knowledge and facilitate thoughtful discussions on academic topics.

The following guidelines have been created to help you be a successful DavidsonLearns instructor and to create the best environment for your students.

Types of Courses

DavidsonLearns offers both traditional courses (4-6 class sessions) and mini-courses (2-3 class sessions) in three presentation formats: in-person only, online only, and synchronous hybrid. The latter defined as both in-person and online students attending the same class at the same time.

Registration and Waitlist

Students register for courses through the DavidsonLearns website. If a course fills, students are encouraged to add their names to the waitlist. As seats become available, they are admitted to the course in the order they joined the waitlist. If your course is full and someone asks you personally to be allowed in, please contact the Executive Director (executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org).

Locations and Audio/Visual

DavidsonLearns holds in-person and hybrid courses in a number of [locations](#). The audio/visual capabilities generally include a white board and internet access. If you are teaching an in-person or hybrid course, the location will be determined by your audio/visual needs, day and time preferences, and class size.

If you plan on using your computer for your presentation in an in-person or hybrid course, please bring your presentation on a flash drive as backup in case of technical problems. Also, if you need internet access, please let us know ahead of time.

Course Materials

If some material is critical to your course and available to the public, please describe it in your course description as “required.” If, instead, some material would serve as background for students who are less familiar with the topic, but you do not intend to cover it explicitly, then describe it as “suggested.” If material is available on the internet, directing students to the URL is the most cost-effective method of distributing it, but please take care not to link to an unauthorized (pirated) copy.

Copyright

DavidsonLearns respects the rights of copyright owners. Copyright law requires that you obtain permission from the copyright owner before using or distributing copyrighted material;

however, there are exceptions. Two common exceptions are works in the public domain and United States government documents. Instructors at nonprofit educational organizations may also qualify for exceptions for in-class performances/displays and for distributing limited materials under the principle of “fair use.” You should only use or distribute materials (on paper or by any electronic means) that fit within these exceptions.

Below are links to three websites that will help you evaluate whether your use of material fits within any of the exceptions. The first, from the Davidson College website, provides

- a brief introduction to copyright (see “What is Copyright/Basics” tab)
- the definitions of public domain and fair use (under the “What is Copyright/Public Domain” tab), including an explanation of four factors you should take into consideration in determining whether your material is covered under the fair use exception
- information on how to obtain permission to use material (under the “Using Copyright Material/Requesting permission” tab).

<http://davidson.libguides.com/c.php?g=349319&p=2357359>

The second, from the Baylor University website, is a Fair Use Analysis Worksheet. This checklist walks you through an evaluation of the four factors you need to weigh as you determine whether your material is likely to be covered under the fair use exception.

<https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/68621>

The third, from the University of Minnesota, addresses the Classroom Use Exemption.

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/copyright/teaching-good-news>

As you evaluate course materials for compliance with the copyright law, the DavidsonLearns Curriculum team can assist you in the evaluation process. If you have printing requests or other questions about course materials, please contact the Executive Director (executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org).

Prior to First Class

A few days before your first class, we will email you a class roster with the names of students taking your course. If you would like to have the roster earlier, just let us know.

In-person and Hybrid

We have a skilled and practiced group of Facilitators who are available to assist you and your students. A few weeks prior to the start of your course, your assigned facilitation host will meet with you at the instructional site so you can become familiar with the building and parking, test the room’s technology, and verify that the site’s technology is compatible with the technology you plan to use in your course. You and your facilitation host can discuss your preferences for room setup and how you would like to be introduced. The host will also answer any questions you might have.

Online and Hybrid

Your Facilitator, who has been trained to set up and manage the online platform for you and your students, will confer with you to understand what Zoom features you plan to use in your course, to determine what level of Zoom support you want for each class, and to conduct a “dry run” with you to practice the collaboration you specify. The Facilitator will provide as much or as little Zoom support as you want, thereby freeing you to focus on teaching your course.

The Facilitator will also conduct an orientation for the online and hybrid students before the class starts, making sure they can connect and providing basic Zoom operation and etiquette instructions customized to your preferences, including how you want to handle questions.

DavidsonLearns will send an email to all students several days prior to the first class with course information and a recurring Zoom link for the online classes. The Facilitator will send a reminder email to all online and hybrid students before each subsequent class with another copy of the Zoom link.

First Class

In-person

A DavidsonLearns Facilitator will be at your first class session to set up the room as you direct, deliver the nametags, welcome your students, and introduce you to the group. Our students have stressed their desire to meet their fellow classmates, so please allow time at the start of the course for brief introductions. If necessary, we can also have someone present to help with technical needs; however, we encourage you to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Hybrid

Two DavidsonLearns Facilitators will attend your first class, one to manage the online aspect and one to assist with the in-person aspect of the first class. They will set up the room as you direct, deliver the nametags for the in-person students, welcome all students, and introduce you to the group. Our students have stressed their desire to meet their fellow classmates, so please allow time at the start of the course for brief student introductions.

Online

The Facilitator will be online for each class, performing the tasks you have agreed to. Our students have stressed their desire to meet their fellow classmates, so please allow time at the start of the course for brief student introductions, which can be managed by you or by the Facilitator as you direct.

Nametags

As students arrive for the first in-person and hybrid session, please ask them to pick up their nametags. We encourage you and your students to wear the nametags during each class. At the end of class, please remind students to bring their nametags with them to subsequent class sessions.

Communicating with Students

During the first class, we recommend you establish a protocol for communication. This becomes especially useful if a class needs to be cancelled (see below).

- Email is an easy, effective way to communicate, but make sure all class members use email. If you communicate by email, **please enter addresses in the “Bcc” field** to protect everyone's privacy.
- It may be necessary to use phone calls or a phone tree for students who do not have access to email.

Severe Weather for In-person and Hybrid Courses

In the event of severe weather, our Executive Director will notify you and your students of a class cancellation as soon as possible. In addition, we will post an announcement on the *DavidsonLearns.org* homepage. The Executive Director will work with you to schedule a make-up session. Generally, we add a session to the end of the course, but other arrangements can be made.

Other Class Cancellations

If you find it necessary to cancel a class, it is your responsibility to notify the Executive Director ([executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org](mailto:executivedirector@ davidsonlearns.org)) and class members as soon as possible, using the email list or phone list you established the first day of class. The Executive Director will work with you to schedule a make-up session.

Notification

Cancellations will be posted on *DavidsonLearns.org* homepage, and an email or text will be sent to each class registrant. Registrants are responsible for providing DavidsonLearns with their email address or mobile phone number. Registrants should check the website and their email/text messages before class.

Ethical Behavior

Instructors may not promote the use of specific products or services either during the class session or through their course materials. No instructor may promote specific religious, political, or philosophical beliefs or discriminate on the basis of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, national origin, age, gender, or sexual orientation. No instructor is to solicit any business or referrals and/or use the student contact information provided in class lists for purposes other than class business. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Executive Director ([executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org](mailto:executivedirector@ davidsonlearns.org)).

Adult Students

The characteristics of adult students are different from those of a typical undergraduate. It is rare that you have to cajole class members to talk! The life experiences that adults bring to a course are rich and varied and often well worth sharing. However, you may find the need to temper individuals who tend to dominate discussions.

There is no typical DavidsonLearns course, and it is this variety of learning experiences that will make for a rich intellectual environment. Most of our students are quite comfortable with technology and use it well, but our in-person students prefer the dynamics of live interaction. Since adult students are highly motivated, it works well to provide them with links to course resources so they can view those on their own.

Course Survey

Our objective is to continually improve our participants' learning experience, be that in our in-person, online, or hybrid courses. At the end of each course, students are sent an online survey that asks for their feedback on specific course components and provides comment boxes for feedback for the instructor and for DavidsonLearns. The Curriculum Committee chair will relate the relevant information to each instructor.

Updated May 17, 2024