



## **INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

(With thanks to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UNC Asheville for providing a model of organization and wording of this Instructor Guide)

The Society for Lifelong Learning at Western Kentucky University (SLL) is created by and designed for a community of those who love to learn and teach. Teaching for the SLL makes each instructor an integral part of this unique teaching and learning environment. SLL participants, many of whom are retired, seek to enrich their lives and expand their minds. They bring to the classroom enthusiasm, honesty and sensitivity. They also bring their often vast and enriching backgrounds of knowledge and experience. They are not concerned with grades and credits but seek intellectual enrichment. They expect their instructors to be in charge of the class but also to be open to their questions and comments while fostering a climate in which divergent opinions are exchanged and respected.

SLL members and the SLL staff appreciate the contributions which instructors make as they share their time and knowledge and teaching skills in the classroom. The SLL teaching/learning community thrives in a common spirit of participation and commitment that is essential to successful learning and growth.

### **SLL – Working Together**

The Program Manager of WKU's Lifelong Learning is a paid employee of Western Kentucky University in the Office of Continuing and Professional Development and works in cooperation and concert with the volunteers of the SLL Advisory Board, committees, participants and instructors to plan, execute, evaluate and support SLL courses and programs.

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The SLL Curriculum Committee plans, develops, and evaluates the SLL curriculum. The Committee is composed of members who work to insure balanced and high quality curricular offerings through instructor and course selection, planning, development, and evaluation.

## **COURSE PROPOSALS**

A course proposal form is available on the Society for Lifelong Learning website:

[http://www.wku.edu/sll/documents/sll\\_course\\_proposal.pdf](http://www.wku.edu/sll/documents/sll_course_proposal.pdf)

The course proposal must be completed and submitted each time a course is proposed even if it is a repeat course. The completed course proposal and course outline should be submitted to the Office of the Program Manager either in printed form or electronically by **March 1<sup>st</sup> for Fall Term** courses and by **September 22<sup>nd</sup> for Spring Term** courses.

If there are questions about any information requested on the course proposal form, the instructor should direct them to the WKU Lifelong Learning Program Manager, who will consult with the Curriculum Committee Chair.

Each course proposal will be reviewed by the SLL Curriculum Committee and assigned to a member of that committee who will serve as the “liaison” for that course proposal. The liaison will be in contact with the prospective instructor and will contact the instructor if there are questions about the proposal. The Curriculum Committee liaison will notify the instructor regarding the acceptance or rejection of the course proposal. If the course is accepted, the liaison will contact the instructor to confirm the specific dates and times the course will be offered.

If, for any reason, an instructor will not be able to offer a course as originally planned and proposed, s/he needs to notify the WKU Lifelong Learning Program Manager as soon as possible.

## **INSTRUCTOR BENEFIT**

All instructors who are not members of the SLL may participate in the “Teach One – Take One” program and select one of the many courses offered by the SLL during that term to enjoy as a participant. Registration for non-member instructors will be completed by the WKU Lifelong Learning Program Manager. Registration for members serving as instructors is completed via the online registration system.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

The cost of any required books for any course should not exceed \$30.00

If an instructor intends to use a book s/he has written, edited or published, purchase of that book by participants must not be required but may be recommended.

Textbook(s) required and/or recommended must be listed on the course proposal form with complete information including ISBN (can be found on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)), specific edition (if common text is needed), as well as cost(s). Verification that a book(s) is/are “in print” is also essential.

Participants may purchase books at the location of their choosing and are not ordered by the Program Director.

## HANDOUTS

Each instructor needs to be familiar with copyright law and is personally responsible for avoiding infringement issues.

If your course will be enhanced by the use of handouts, we ask you to consider the following options:

- Post handouts online and provide a link to students. TopSCHOLAR® is the research and creative activity database of WKU. It is not only a place to showcase your professional accomplishments, but also a platform you can use to create electronic journals. Some examples of the types of materials included in TopSCHOLAR® are working papers, conference papers, articles and creative writing, photographs, original music and drama, data sets, learning modules, electronic journals and newsletters, podcasts, class presentations, and all WKU graduate and honor theses.

A few of the benefits of TopSCHOLAR® include increased visibility with indexing by all major search engines, a way to showcase your accomplishments worldwide, creates permanent online access to your work, and will generate monthly statistics for authors. To date, TopSCHOLAR® houses 16,959 papers and has had 1,634,760 total downloads, 495,756 just within the last year. One of the newer features is the real-time worldwide map indicating where a reader is located and the type and title of the material being accessed. We will work with you to get your content uploaded – we are here to help! For more information email [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu) or visit <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/>

- Email handouts as a pdf file to [SLL@wku.edu](mailto:SLL@wku.edu) with a request to either email to class participants or print in advance of the class meeting. Please limit printing to a reasonable number and consider using slides in the classroom wherever possible. Requests should be made at least TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE of class date.

Please be aware that some of your participants may need detailed instructions on how to download files or open and print files that are sent as email attachments.

## INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA

The Knicely Conference Center provides each SLL meeting/class room with a “Smart Cart” that provides a computer with internet access, CD and DVD with playback via overhead speakers, projection equipment. Each room has a large screen for projection from the computer or DVD player. Each room is equipped with a microphone and we urge instructors to use this technology to ensure all members (including any with hearing issues) can enjoy the class.

Please attend instructor orientation sessions that precede each term to get familiar with the technology and room set up. If you are unable to attend an orientation session, please contact the WKU Lifelong Learning Program Manager to arrange for an alternate time.

## **CLASS MEETING EMERGENCIES**

Please call WKU Police at (270) 745-2548 to report any classroom emergency and state our location as Room # \_\_\_\_\_, Knicely Conference Center, 2355 Nashville Road.

Conference Center staff are always in the building when SLL classes are occurring. The main office is Room 120. An emergency medical kit and portable defibrillators are available in the Conference Center office.

If building alarms sound, please proceed to the safe zones identified within the building:  
**The auditorium or the restrooms.**

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

If the WKU Bowling Green campus is closed due to inclement weather, SLL classes will not meet.

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Course evaluations are completed by participants for all courses each term following the last class meeting. All evaluations are reviewed by the Program Manager and pertinent members of the Curriculum Committee. After the forms have been tabulated, each instructor receives summary feedback. Evaluations are used by the Curriculum Committee to determine scheduling of future courses.

*The following document is taken from online information made available by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, The University of Southern Maine*

## **SUGGESTIONS FROM EXPERIENCED LIFELONG LEARNING INSTRUCTORS**

Lifelong learning educators suggest that instructors think of their classroom time in twenty-minute segments and allow liberal time for social interaction (focused of course on the material) as well as opportunities to stand, walk, and stretch. *It is well to be aware that some students may need to be accommodated for hearing or visual problems.* A 10-15 minute break midway through the class is always welcome. Your classroom culture will, of course, reflect your personality, preferred teaching style, and the nature of the material. The following overview describes some of the more common types of teaching methods in use today throughout the OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute) national network. Some may work for you, some may not. We invite you to share your own best practices with us.

1. Be alert to hearing and visual issues. Make sure to use a microphone when possible.
2. Please give consideration to the fact that the social aspect of SLL courses is very important. We hope that participants will enjoy getting to know each other as they share their learning adventures.
3. A break about half-way through your class presentation is important to older learners. They will need to get up and MOVE a bit!

## **TEACHING METHODS: A SELECTIVE OVERVIEW**

### 1. Lecture/Discussion

Teaching by means of discussion is generally a lot more fun for both students and teacher, even though the preparation and the process (including preparing oneself for SLL students' perspicacious question) may be more work than preparing a lecture. While small lectures are given for background and context, the primary teaching method requires deciding on important and interesting aspects of the work being studied, determining the information that will provide helpful background for each question, and then shaping the question. Thus the students, in the course of their discussion, will not only themselves arrive at those important insights, but may also generate additional perspectives and interpretations. Flexibility is essential, since the discussion may not follow the planned agenda as the students make connections other than those anticipated. Also key is the willingness to be patient, to wait at times while students think, so as to create an atmosphere in which they feel safe trying out their ideas.

## 2. The Instant Lecture

When new material is being introduced, the instructor can create an “instant lecture” by asking students at the beginning of the class to call out what they already know on the topic. These opinions and ideas are written on the board and used as talking points for the lecturer’s opening remarks. In this way those who are already churning with ideas have an opportunity to express them and are less likely to sabotage the direction the instructor wants to take.

## 3. Collaborative/Interactive Lecture

The interactive lecture provides a suitable environment in which to deliver content-rich material while at the same time giving students a sense of ownership in their learning process. Some instructors effectively use the collaborative learning approach or, in especially large classes, student pairs. Others incorporate in-class writing exercises in which students write brief responses to a posed question on 3x5 cards; the instructor collects these and responds to them. This is advantageous for several reasons. First, it challenges extroverts to formulate thoughtful responses; second, it gives shy students an opportunity to offer their opinions in a private space out of the spotlight.

# **ALTERNATIVE TEACHING METHODS**

## 1. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning was introduced into education on all levels in the 1970s. It builds on the beliefs of John Dewey that the retention of material is best achieved through social interaction.

The primary feature of collaborative learning is the small group. At appropriate times the instructor breaks the class into groups of 3-5 with a unique task or set of questions, the same or different, depending on the desired direction s/he wants the discussion to take. The instructor does not engage with the groups but carefully prepares the material beforehand and sets a definite time limit. One member may be chosen to report on the group consensus (or lack of).

Usually a large group discussion follows. It is important that students have an opportunity to reflect on the experience immediately after and to give feedback to one another and the instructor.

## 2. Writing Across the Curriculum

The premise for “writing across the curriculum” is that the writing process itself intensifies and solidifies learning since, unlike speaking out loud and “off the cuff”, or merely recording the words and thoughts of the lecturer, it requires a mental process in which ideas must be formulated in some order or fashion.

**FREEWITING:** The instructor puts a word, phrase, statement, or question on the board, usually at the beginning of a class, and asks the students to write on it, without stopping, for five minutes, then to pause and formulate one sentence that sums up the rambling thoughts, to use that sentence as a springboard for another freewrite, and so on and so forth as long as it continues to generate new ideas and insights.

**ONE MINUTE PAPERS:** The instructor provides a list of possible topics related to the current material and asks students to write their “one-minute” responses on 3x5 cards.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:** This is a particularly effective writing experience in current events classes. To simulate the experience, instructors can put forth a provocative statement or question and ask students to write brief, punchy responses, which are then circulated among the other class members or read aloud for comment by other class members.

**3x5 Cards:** These are always useful for in-class writing as they encourage brevity and reduce the resistance to writing felt by many students. One idea is to pause for a minute during, or at the end of class and ask students to write down questions that remain unanswered and then to share these questions in small groups or with the entire class and the instructor.

## **COURSE INFORMATION SHEETS**

Students like to know what they are going to be doing and when they will be doing it, what they are going to read and when they are going to read it. A simple course information page can satisfy this need. Include your name and contact information, a brief description of the course, a list of materials/texts you will be using, an outline of the topics to be covered, and assignments, if they are expected. The need for flexibility, of course, can be built into your information sheet or opening class remarks.