

- Writing Effective Course Descriptions
- New Payroll System
- Showcase
- Fun Fact: Concurrent Enrollment
- D2L Gem:
- Good Practice Reminder:
- Introducing: Emily Auerbach

Save the Date Announcements:

Coffee with Sarah: April 22, 2 pm at Barriques on South Park Street, Madison

Quarterly IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development Meeting: May 20, 1-3 pm at 21 N. Park Street, Rm 7045
Topic: Creating Rubrics with Kristine Pierick and the CEOEL Design and Development Team

Distance Teaching & Learning Conference 2016 : August 9-11
dtlconference.wisc.edu



Writing Effective Course Descriptions

At the February IL Instructor Appreciation and Professional Development meeting, Christine DeSmet discussed goals and steps to writing effective and engaging course descriptions. Course descriptions should be 100 - 150 words in length, clearly written, and tell students why they should register for your course. You should make use of a hook: the promise you make about your course.

Additional features of effective course descriptions include:

- Be conversational
 - Edit out redundancies
 - Start with including all the features and benefits of the course, revise as needed
 - Use a mix of sentence lengths. Use one word statements. Create excitement.
 - Use language (including jargon) that is meaningful to your audience
 - Use strong, specific verbs
 - Avoid "you will"
 - Use specifics about the course
 - Include numbers and numerals (30 issues, 8 assignments)
 - Everyone likes a list
 - Use wordplay and humor if it is done well
 - Include relevant testimonials from past students (with permission on file with the DCS IL office)
 - Show off what you really love about your course
 - Describe how your course will change the student's world
 - Use correct punctuation
 - Use the Chicago Manual of Style
- For more details about writing effective course descriptions or to update

your IL catalog course description, contact your academic program coordinator: sarah.korpi@wisc.edu

New Payroll System

April marks the end of phase 2 of the Payroll pilot. Beginning with all work done on April 1 (to be reported for the May 1 payroll cycle), instructors no longer need to keep track of graded assignments on tally sheets. Individual instructors may wish to keep their own records, but payroll will be completed with the new payroll system (based on LRMS/LPV records). Full adaptation of this system will take effect on April 1. The old tally sheets will no longer be accepted.

Showcase: March 16, 2016

The Independent Learning professional development model (monthly newsletters, quarterly meetings, instructor website, and instructor orientation course - forthcoming) was featured in a poster at Showcase 2016, March 16th in Varsity Hall at Union South. Showcase 2016 featured over 80 posters and a Keynote Presentation by Kevin Conroy. For more information about Showcase and to watch a video of the Keynote presentation, go to quality.wisc.edu/showcase

Fun Fact: Concurrent Enrollment

UW-System students enrolled as full time students can complete Independent Learning courses with concurrent enrollment. In this way, IL courses help students keep their student debt low.

D2L Gem: Lost Items

One advantage of D2L is that student work is backed-up, so we can be confident that work and feedback submitted through D2L is secure, and will not go missing.

Occasionally, an item or student may “go missing” unexpectedly. Often this is the result of someone “cleaning up” old records to make their D2L class-list or grade-book more manageable. If you notice that a student, file, or quiz has “gone missing” please let us know right away by sending an email to il@dcs.wisc.edu There is a narrow window of time in which “missing” items from D2L can be recovered.

More important is to avoid actions that could result in files “going missing.” Please do not delete any students, files, or exams from D2L. (We are required to keep all student work and assignment feedback on file for one term, or 12 months, past the course completion date. D2L is the place where we keep these items on file, so it is important that they remain in D2L.)

D2L courses will be cleaned up for you annually, and at that point, students who completed the course over 12 months ago will be removed.

Good Practice Reminder: ADA Statement in Welcome Letter

When students register for IL courses, student services emails their registration details to the course instructor. At that point, most instructors send the student a brief welcome letter. This letter serves to introduce the instructor, give the student an academic contact person, and get the student off on the right foot in their IL course.

If you send a welcome letter to students, please add the following ADA statement to the welcome letter:

Any student who feels they may

need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact student services to discuss their specific needs. Please contact student services at il@uwex.edu or 1-877-895-3276. Student Services coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

If a student contacts you directly about an accommodation need, please direct the student to student services. Because Student Services is the designated coordinator for reasonable accommodations, you cannot approve an accommodation yourself. Including the ADA statement in your welcome letter serves to open the lines of communication and helps to make the student more comfortable approaching IL with an accommodation need.

Philosophy is Back!

After a several year hiatus, we are excited to announce that Philosophy 101 is again being offered and students have already successfully enrolled in the course.

Special thanks to David Werther and Kristine Pierick for all their work on Philosophy 101. Without their efforts, IL would not be able to meet the needs of students in search of philosophy courses.

Introducing: Emily Auerbach

Emily Auerbach started her English professorship at UW-Madison in 1983 doing mostly correspondence courses in literature and a few continuing education classes. Three decades later, her work has branched out in numerous ways. She serves as Project Director of the UW Odyssey Project (www.odyssey.wisc.edu), a free, life-changing college humanities course for adults near the poverty level. Graduates of this program have moved from homelessness to UW degrees, from incarceration to meaningful work in the community.

In addition, she co-hosts University of the Air, a one-hour program broadcast statewide on Wisconsin Public Radio on Sundays from 4-5 PM featuring interviews with faculty in a variety of disciplines. She also is the Project Director of the “Courage to Write” series of radio documentaries and written guides on women writers and the author of the book *Searching for Jane Austen*, hailed by novelist Margaret Drabble as a “lively, engaging, and thoroughly modern” approach to Jane Austen.

Emily Auerbach has reached hundreds of thousands of nontraditional students through lectures and book discussions at public libraries, Elderhostels, prisons, retirement centers, schools, and service clubs as well as through courses taught through the mail and online. Over 4,000 people attended “Jane Austen in the 21st Century,” a 40-event festival she directed for the UW Center for the Humanities. This interdisciplinary festival was honored with the 2001 Governor’s Award in the Humanities. Emily Auerbach has received numerous other teaching, broadcasting, arts, and humanitarian awards for her outreach work.



Emily has three children, two grandchildren, five cats, and many fish and lives in a converted old stone barn in Middleton, Wisconsin. Asked about her work, she commented, “I love my job and feel lucky every day to do work that encourages lifelong learning.”