OWL ORGANIZATION

AN INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE ON HOW TO ELEVATE YOUR COURSE SITES

written by the Schulich Medicine & Dentistry's Digital Media Student Interns

Western

Schulich
MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

SUMMER 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

We built this organizational guide to help you maintain the **structure** and **uniformity** of OWL sites. Read more to gain knowledge on how you can implement these **easy changes** to **directly enhance** your students' course experience and bring your online courses to the **next level**.

1 WHY UPDATE YOUR OWL SITE?

Improving the student educational experience

Why do students want *organized* and *streamlined* OWL sites?

- Regardless of whether your course is in-person, online, or blended, clear OWL pages help students **navigate** their course materials

- An organized and streamlined course makes life easier for **both** instructors and students, minimizing questions you may receive as course instructor

- Organized OWL sites minimize the amount of work it takes to access files and **saves students' time**

- Organization of an online course can impact the **efficiency** of student learning. It allows students to spend time focusing on **learning** as they know what is expected of them.

Tip #1: "Least Clicks"

Research has shown that when building course sites, we should aim for the 'least clicks possible' to get to any course materials necessary for students. By reducing clicks, student are able to more easily navigate OWL sites and find specific course material.

Lecture 1.1 (1 hr) ≡

Lecture 1.2 (1 hr) ≡

Lecture 1.3 (2 hr) ≡

Drop down sections on an owl page are an easy way to incorporate this tip!

2 ENHANCING YOUR OVERVIEW PAGE

📋 Overview

Maximize your organization and reduce confusion

CHECKLIST

- [ ] **HEADER BANNER (NAME + CODE)**

- [ ] **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

- [ ] **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- [ ] **INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO**

- [ ] **MEETING INFO (eg. Zoom link + password, async, etc.)**

- The overview page will be the first page that appears when students click on an OWL site.

- The overview page will provide a brief description of the course content in addition to course code, name, instructor contact info, and general course learning outcomes.

- A course homepage should welcome students, set the tone for the course, outline expectations and convey other important information including how the course will be conducted.

PHYSIOLOGY 3000
LIVE EVERY TUES, THURS, @3:30PM EST

Reach out to your DMI intern to create header banners for your course page!

Tip #2: Use the calendar! 📅

On your overview page, you'll notice a **calendar**. We've heard from students that this is an amazing tool they wish more profs used! Creating calendar reminders for **deadlines, projects, assessments** and even **weekly topics** will help students **stay on track**!

3 START WITH A
'START HERE' PAGE

How to make a lasting impression for your course

The 'start here' page is designed to let students know how to navigate the course. Information included in this section can include course expectations, timeline, materials, etc.

- A great way to integrate an **academic integrity** component into your site is to use this page to unlock the rest of the pages.
  - This can be done by setting the Start Here page as a **pre-requisite** to the other pages.
  - You can learn how to do this in our ***Advanced OWL workshop recording.***

- A cool option many students find helpful is including a **welcome video!** This can introduce the assessments, guidelines, background, OWL site navigation, and many more course elements.

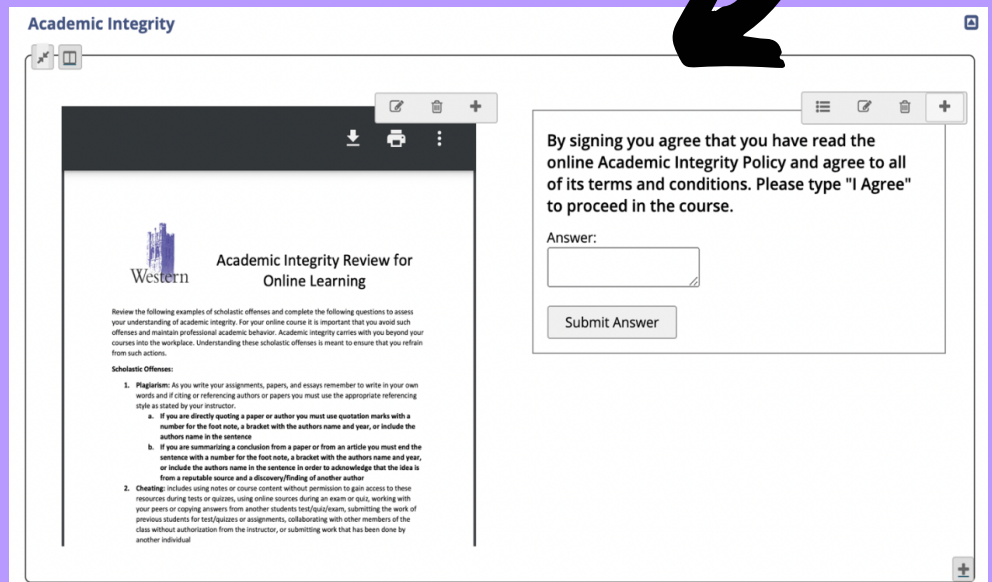## Recommendation: Course Roadmaps

Similar to calendars, roadmaps offer a way of helping students follow meeting times and deadlines. They can be accessible as .pdfs on the "start here" page and the syllabus. These maps can be organized based on the semester and course length. Reach out to DMI interns for help making one! See the Appendix for examples of course roadmaps.

Academic Integrity

CHECKLIST

- [ ] **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PAGE**
- [ ] **COURSE MATERIALS**
- [ ] **COURSE ROADMAP ***
- [ ] **WELCOME VIDEO ***

*these are optional, but recommended

4 THE 'BEST' WAY TO:
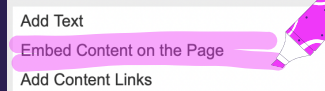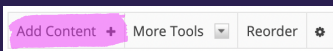
STRUCTURE LESSONS

+ Syllabus!

Maintaining a clear system for your OWL lesson pages

Step 1: Syllabus Page

While most professors use the syllabus or course outline tab, we've heard from students that it's simpler to use a **separate lessons page** with an **embedded pdf of the syllabus.**
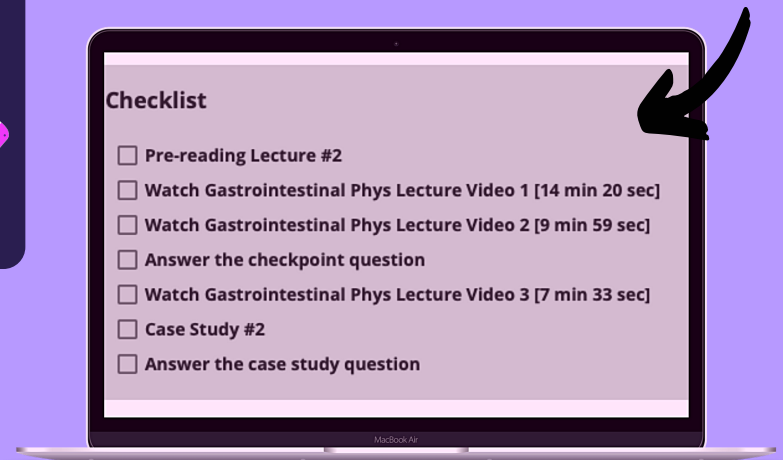
To embed a PDF:

Hit the "add content" button on the top left. In the drop down menu, select "embed content", and choose your file!

Add Content + | More Tools ▾ | Reorder | ⚙

Add Text
Embed Content on the Page
Add Content Links

CHECKLIST

☐ **COURSE ROADMAP BANNER**

☐ **WEEKLY CONTENT SUBPAGES WITH:**

☐ **PAGE HEADER**

☐ **TO-DO LIST**

☐ **LECTURES (DIVIDED. INTO PARTS W/ COLLAPSABLE TABS)**

Include a To-do Checklist for each lesson!

Sometimes students can feel overwhelmed by the lecture material, assignments, and quizzes assigned. Checklists are a quick way to keep students **on track** so they don't miss anything!

Suggestion: INCLUDE ESTIMATED TIME REQUIRED FOR EACH READING AND VIDEO

Checklist

☐ Pre-reading Lecture #2
☐ Watch Gastrointestinal Phys Lecture Video 1 [14 min 20 sec]
☐ Watch Gastrointestinal Phys Lecture Video 2 [9 min 59 sec]
☐ Answer the checkpoint question
☐ Watch Gastrointestinal Phys Lecture Video 3 [7 min 33 sec]
☐ Case Study #2
☐ Answer the case study question

MacBook Air

Courtesy of Dr. Anita Woods's Physiology 3120 course owl site

Tip #3: Make a course roadmap banner

A course roadmap banner helps students follow lecture times and deadlines in a visually appealing and organized manner. You don't have to make yours from scratch! Check out these templates made by Dr. Campbell and the 2020 Digital Media Interns: *Weekly Roadmaps* and *Daily Roadmaps*. Include one at the top of the lessons landing page!

5

THE 'BEST' WAY TO:

STRUCTURE LESSONS 2

Maintaining a clearer system for OWL lesson pages

Step 2: Weekly Content Subpages

Divide your lessons by **week** via weekly subpages. Each page should include a heading with the **date**, **lecture topic,** and **learning outcomes.** Embed lecture videos, recordings, powerpoint slides, and/or lecture notes (ensure you include both the .pdf and .pptx files!). Make sure to include the to-do list highlighted above and provide reminders about upcoming quizzes or assignments! Students also appreciate including links to a **forums** page to ask lecture-specific questions and engage in discussion with peers, TAs, and instructors.

- Upload videos in a format that can allow students **change the speed** if possible (tip: advise students to use the "Video Playback Speed" Chrome extension to change the lecture speed!)

- Include **transcripts** in videos to improve **accessibility**: YouTube videos are an easy way to do this!

- Upload synchronous session **recordings** to allow students to re-watch them later on.

- **Remind** students of upcoming assessments by adding **links** to upcoming **quizzes** or **assignments**

Suggestion: BREAK UP LECTURES WITH CHECKPOINT QUESTIONS

H5P is a tool for creating interactive HTML elements. Learn more about it *__here__*!

CHECKLIST

- **links to upcoming quizzes/assignments**

- **chunked lectures w/collapsable tabs**

- **lecture checkpoint questions**

- **upload synchronous recordings + lecture videos**

- **link to forums page**

- **learning outcomes (more below!)**

Tip #4: Divide lectures into "chunks"

| Lecture 1.1 (7 min) ☰ |
| Lecture 1.2 (10 min) ☰ |
| Lecture 1.3 (14 min) ☰ |

Divide hour-long video lectures into digestible 10-15 minute chunks as collapsible tabs within a page. This helps students maintain **focus** and **organization**.

6 THE 'BEST' WAY TO:

STRUCTURE LESSONS 3

Maintaining a clearer system for OWL lesson pages

Effective learning outcomes

Learning outcomes provide clear goals and emphasize key points to help **prepare students** for evaluations and guide their studying. Objectives need to be as **specific as possible**. AVOID USING THE *"SINISTER 16"* WORDS/PHRASES IN YOUR LEARNING OUTCOMES. Think about what you expect your students to be able to **do** rather than "understand" (which is a vague and un-actionable term!). Highlight how you expect your students to **prove** they can understand.

Ex: illustrating, explaining, compare/contrasting, identifying, solving, describing, etc.

Refer to the appendix for good learning outcome examples

Weekly Learning Outcomes

By the end of this week's lesson you should be able to:

☐ **Easily navigate the OWL website for this course to find the tools that you need**

☐ **Develop class expectations with your peers and instructor.**

☐ **Clearly articulate your learning goals for the term.**

☐ **Access and use Microsoft Teams.**

RECOMMENDATION: Divide your weekly content into collapsible **sections** for an added layer of organization. These sections could be split according to the **instructor** teaching the section or by **topic** as shown in the Appendix.
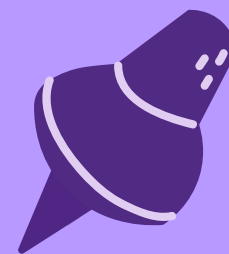
Tip #5: Include a weekly schedule with estimated time commitments in your main lessons page
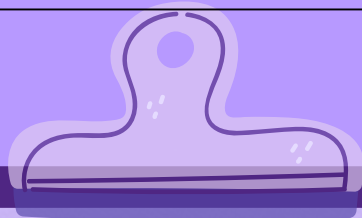
Recommended Weekly Schedule

Date	Topic	Estimated Time Commitment
Sept 9	Introduction to Animal Biology	1hr
Sept 10-21	Taxonomy	3hrs
Sept 22-30	Habitats	3hrs
Oct 1-14	Diseases	2hrs
Oct 15-21	Behaviour	2hrs

7 THE FINAL OWL SITE
CHECKLIST

Woo! You've upgraded your course site!

OVERVIEW PAGE

- HEADER BANNER (NAME + CODE)
- COURSE DESCRIPTION
- LEARNING OUTCOMES
- INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO
- MEETING INFO (eg. Zoom link + password, async, etc.)

"START HERE" PAGE

- ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PAGE
- COURSE MATERIALS
- COURSE ROADMAP *
- WELCOME VIDEO *

optional, but recommended
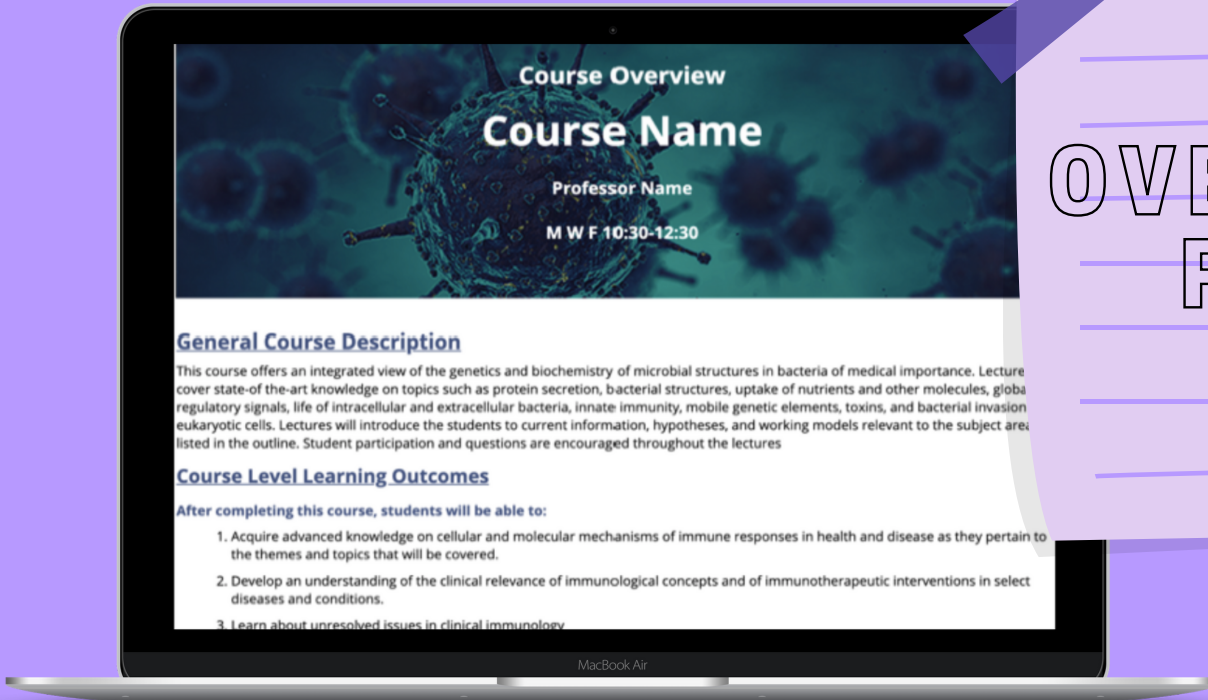
WEEKLY LESSONS MAIN PAGE

- COURSE ROADMAP BANNER
- WEEKLY CONTENT SUBPAGE BUTTONS
- OPTIONAL: RECOMMENDED WEEKLY SCHEDULE
- OPTIONAL: DIVIDED WEEKLY CONTENT SECTIONS BASED ON TOPIC OR INSTRUCTOR

WEEKLY LESSONS SUBPAGES

- HEADER (date, topic)
- TO-DO LIST
- SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES
- LECTURE VIDEOS/RECORDINGS
- CHUNKED LECTURE PARTS (collapsable tabs+time estimate)
- LECTURE CHECKPOINT QUESTIONS
- LINK TO QUIZZES/ASSIGNMENTS
- LINK TO FORUMS

OWL SITE EXAMPLE
APPENDIX

Check out these exemplary OWL site designs from instructors and the DMI team!

OVERVIEW PAGE

Course Overview
Course Name
Professor Name
M W F 10:30-12:30

General Course Description

This course offers an integrated view of the genetics and biochemistry of microbial structures in bacteria of medical importance. Lecture cover state of-the-art knowledge on topics such as protein secretion, bacterial structures, uptake of nutrients and other molecules, globa regulatory signals, life of intracellular and extracellular bacteria, innate immunity, mobile genetic elements, toxins, and bacterial invasion eukaryotic cells. Lectures will introduce the students to current information, hypotheses, and working models relevant to the subject are listed in the outline. Student participation and questions are encouraged throughout the lectures

Course Level Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Acquire advanced knowledge on cellular and molecular mechanisms of immune responses in health and disease as they pertain to the themes and topics that will be covered.

2. Develop an understanding of the clinical relevance of immunological concepts and of immunotherapeutic interventions in select diseases and conditions.

3. Learn about unresolved issues in clinical immunology

MacBook Air

Reach out to your DMI intern to create a header for your course page!

Calendar

		June 2021			month week day	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
	Due: Josh's Fa	Due Catherine's Assignment				
	Due: Priya Qu					
	Due Vivian's A					
6	7	8	9	10	11	
13	14	15	16	17		
20	21	22	23	24		
27	28	29	30	1		
4	5	6	7	8		

Weekly Time Commitments

Mondays
10:30-12:20 pm
Virtual Classroom on OWL

10:30-10:45 AM PGC Sharing
10:45-11:00 AM Pre-work Refresher
11:00-11:30 AM Discussion
11:30-11:50 AM Case Study
11:50- 12:00 PM Wrap-up
12:00-12:20 PM Group time

Tuesdays
Office hours (optional)
9:30-10:30 AM

Next week's module
available at 5pm on OWL

Wednesday-Sunday
Continue the conversation on Teams
Complete next week's pre-work on OWL on own time
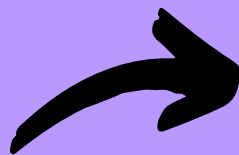(approximately 2 hours)

9 OWL SITE EXAMPLE
APPENDIX

Check out these exemplary OWL site designs from instructors and the DMI team!

ANATCELL 3309 Mammalian Histology
FALL SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Taken from Anatomy and Cell Biology 3309's course OWL site

"START HERE" PAGE

Course Roadmap Banner Examples

Med Sci 4200B Overview

Taken from Med Sci 4200B's course OWL site
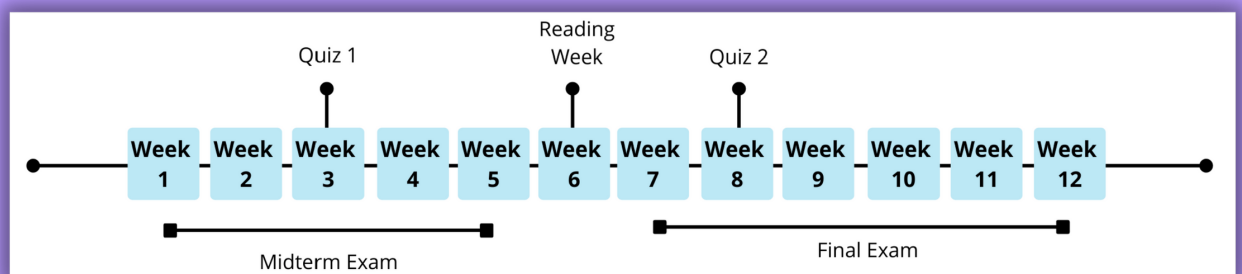
10 OWL SITE EXAMPLE
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Check out these exemplary OWL site designs from instructors and the DMI team!

Part I Lesson Objectives

After completing this review you will be able to:

☐ **Define immunity and immunology**

☐ **List the general differences between the innate (natural) an** acquired (adaptive) immunity

☐ **List the cellular, biological, and chemical components of the** immune system, innate and adaptive.

☐ **Describe the morphological characteristics of the cellular** component.

☐ **Identify the different functions of each cell type and** understand the collaboration of different cells, systems and tissues to provide immunity to the body.

☐ **Describe the mechanism of action of the complement system** in the immune response.

☐ **Describe the structures and functions of lymphocytes,** including all subtypes.

Taken from Pathology 3500's course OWL site

WEEKLY CONTENT SUBPAGE TOOLS

Effective Learning Outcome Examples

Lessons Page with Collapsible Sections

Weekly Overview ☰

Asynchronous Content ☰

Synchronous Content ☰

After Class Work ☰

11 OWL SITE EXAMPLE
APPENDIX

Check out these exemplary OWL site designs from instructors and the DMI team!

Checklist

- ☑ Read the assigned text [Renal Reading #4]
- ☑ Renal Lecture 4.1 [10 min 21 sec]
- ☑ Renal Lecture 4.2 [12 min 6 sec]
- ☑ Answer Checkpoint question
- ☑ Renal Lecture 4.3 [12 min]
- ☑ Download the PPTX/PDF of the tubule (blank diagrams) for practice
- ☑ Renal Lecture 4.4 [17 min 39 sec]
- ☑ Review Case Study Answers in Review Posted [Case Study]

Study Guide and Lecture Slides

- 3120 Renal Lecture 4 2020.pptx
- Renal Reading 4.pdf
- Case Study

Ask Questions in the Forum

- Renal System

Lecture Videos

- ✓ Renal 4.1
- ✓ Renal 4.2
- ✓ Renal 4.3
- ✓ Renal 4.4

WEEKLY CONTENT SUBPAGE

Courtesy of Dr. Anita Woods's Physiology 3120 course OWL site
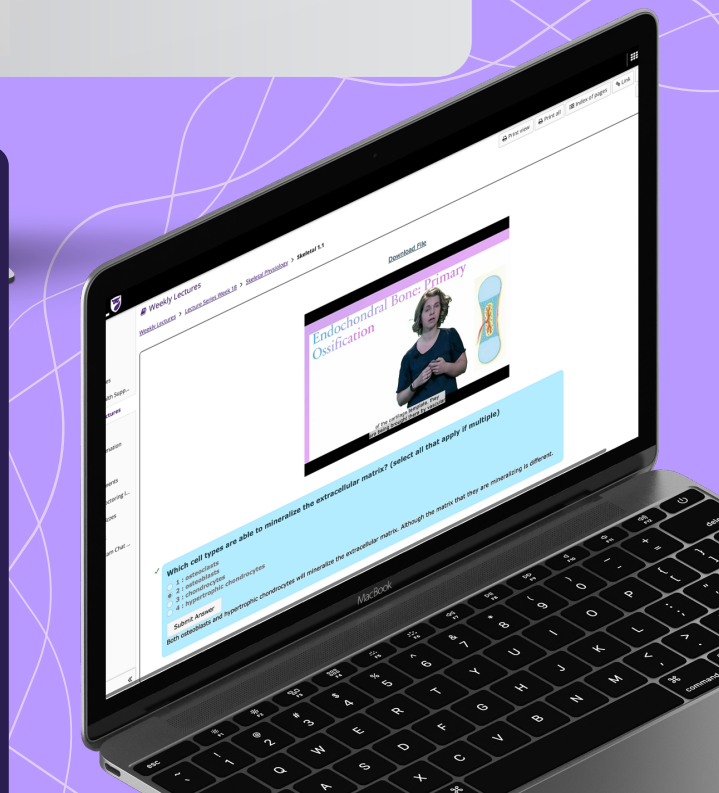
Resources mentioned in this OWL guide:
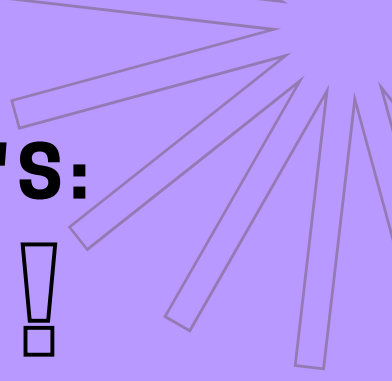
DMI workshop recordings

Weekly roadmap template

Daily roadmap template

H5P Western

Writing Learning Objectives

ON BEHALF OF THE DMI'S:
THANK YOU!

Congrats! You've updated your course site!

Thank you for taking the time to read through our OWL 101 Organization Guide from a student perspective. We hope you can takeaway these key aspects and implement them into your own courses. Do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the Digital Media Intern team as we are happy to help with your OWL needs!

Sincerely,

Eastelle Ding,
Nancy Liu,
Priya Modi,
Michelle Yeschin,
and the 2021 Digital Media Intern Team

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