Course Map Best Practices

General Notes

- Font size and style should be consistent across the document. Recommend using "Normal" or "Body" as standard.
- Use Grammarly to review the document and catch any spelling or grammatical errors.
- Do not include extra credit opportunities.
- If AI work is recognized, try to "humanize" the language by removing non-essential words and varying the sentence structure.
- Use "plain English" throughout the document. Prompts and expectations can be copy edited by the ID to ensure a positive learning experience for students. Basic copy editing is expected; larger content and conceptual changes should be discussed with the developer.

Front Matter Section

- List all textbooks in MLA, APA, or Chicago Manual of Style format, depending on department expectations.
- If proctored exams are used, indicate whether they can use notes/open book/scratch paper.
- Grade weights should add up to 1000 points.
- Indicate any department assessments.

Assignment Expectations

- This section should be written using bullets with student-centered language.
- Each activity section should include a purpose statement.
- Each activity section label should match the grade weights, assessment alignment summary, and entry in the course outline. The labels should be the briefest version and used consistently across the course (i.e., "Discussion 1" instead of "Discussion 1: Social Work Challenges").
- All activities should be designed to meet the expectations of each department.

Discussions

- Identify whether a graded/ungraded Introduction Discussion is required, as well as initial post/response expectations.
- Indicate whether students are required to cite any sources in their posts (and how many).
- Indicate whether the course will use the "Must Post First" setting.
- Indicate the number of graded/topical discussions and points per activity.

- Indicate initial post expectations (word count, due date is usually Wednesday or Thursday).
- Indicate response post expectations (number required, word count, due date is usually Sunday or Saturday of Week 8).
- If Video Note is to be used, indicate so and the video length expectation.

Assignments

- Indicate length expectation (word count, slide count, or minutes). Convert page numbers to word count.
- Length expectation is reasonable based on the activity type and level of course and department expectations.
- Indicate citation expectation (number and format).
- Indicate due date (i.e., Due by 11:59 pm CT Sunday of Week 2).
- Indicate points (i.e., Worth 125 points. A grading rubric will be provided.)
- Indicate method for submission if other than Dropbox (i.e., Connect, Bongo, etc.).
- Identify any templates to be used for the activity.
- Indicate whether TurnItIn will be enabled and if students will be able to see feedback.
- Consider scaffolding larger activities to provide opportunities for revision and improvement.
- Final projects should not simply be a compilation of previous work, unless it is a portfolio and requires revision of previous work.

Quizzes/Exams

- Explain what information is covered, how many points each quiz/exam is worth, how many attempts are allowed, and the time limit to complete each attempt.
- Identify quiz open and close dates.

Late Assignment Policy

- Include standard language for discussions: "No points will be awarded for late Discussion posts."
- Include standard language: "No assignments will be accepted beyond the last day of the course, regardless of circumstance."
- All other policies need to make sense and be easily calculated by the instructor.

Schedule of Due Dates

- Activity labels are consistent with other areas in the course.
- Number of points matches assignment expectations.
- If activities are ungraded, they are marked "N/A".
- The due dates match the assignment expectations. (Activities in Week 8 are due on Saturday instead of Sunday.)

- Ensure that points are distributed throughout the entire eight weeks. For example, do not require two 200-point assignments in Week 8, loading the end of the course.

Course Outline

Weekly Titles

- These should focus on the content to be covered in the week, not the activities to be completed. (For example, Week 1 should not be labeled "Introduction to Class and Communication Models.")

Learning Objectives

- Learning objectives use Bloom's Taxonomy verbs and are written in the following format:
  - "1.1 Evaluate how intersectionality functions as both a critical inquiry and a metaphorical framework for understanding social relationships."
- In general, the following verbs are not used because they are vague or unable to be measured: "Understand," "Demonstrate an Understanding," and "Explore."
- All weekly objectives align with the course learning outcomes. Holistically, every course outcome is hit at some point throughout the course.

Readings

- Textbook chapters are listed.
- Any external links or articles are listed using descriptive text or modified APA format, not including URLs. For example:
  - [Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics](#) or
  - Crenshaw, K. (1989). [Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics](#). University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1(8), 139-167.
- All external sources include a link or indicate whether a PDF will be provided in the course.
- Any videos or resources mentioned in an activity are listed in the required resources.
- Ensure the amount of reading is reasonable and consistent throughout the course. For example, if each week has two chapters assigned but Week 6 has five chapters, consider redistributing or eliminating some chapters.
- Supplemental resources do not need to be listed at this point.

Topics

- These should be generic potential topic titles. Keep in mind these might be altered during the build, or the titles might be adjusted.
- Each week should include 2-4 potential topics (the goal is to hit 500 words; usually, at least two make it easy to hit that target).

Discussions

- Ensure prompts are written to encourage meaningful, thoughtful engagement and foster interaction among students.
- Avoid prompts that simply summarize or define.
- Ensure students can realistically respond in the word count expectation. (For example, if a prompt resembles an essay prompt, students might not be able to be brief enough in their responses.)
- Consider using the following formula:
  - A lead-in (set the stage for the students)
  - A discussion (and activity if necessary)
  - A reflective piece (this is what diversifies the responses to ensure it's not just the same answer over and over)
- Do not include any optional tasks, as this can confuse students.

Assignments

- Anything included in the Assignment Expectations section can be left out of the week-by-week prompts. (For example, you do not need to repeat word count expectations and citation requirements if it is consistent across all activities.)

Quizzes/Exams

- In the prompt instructions, note what information is covered, how many points it is worth, how many attempts, and the time limit to complete the quiz. For example, "This quiz covers information from Chapters 1-6. It consists of 20 multiple-choice and true/false questions. You will have one attempt, with a 60-minute time limit to complete the quiz."