

**SHAZIA SADAF:** Hello, everyone. My name is Shazia Sadaf, and I'm an instructor of human rights and social justice at the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies. Welcome to my online classroom.

Now, I'm not totally new to teaching online. I have taught hybrid courses before in another institution. At Carleton, this was my first time teaching a fully online course. I taught one during the summer of 2020, and that one was a seminar, of course. It had only 20 students, but I learned quite a lot preparing for that course.

And everything that I learned while I was setting up the cuLearn page and setting up all of the activities and adapting this course to online delivery I've utilized all of what I learned in preparing for the term that just started. So right now I'm teaching a fully online course, human rights 1001, which is the Introduction to Human Rights. And I'm teaching three sections, A, B, and C. There are 120 students in each section, so 360 students in total. And I have 6 TAs, two TAs per section.

So I'm going to draw from both of these courses to talk to you about what I have learned, the problems that I have faced, and how I have managed with the help of my wonderful partner from the EDC, Allie, how we have tried to either sort out the problems after they happened or tried to do something to stop them from happening in the first place. So I'm going to talk about both of these experiences. So I've had to adapt both of these courses from a regular format to an online format.

I think that the biggest challenge in teaching a human rights course-- and I think most of you are teaching either social sciences or humanities would face the same challenge. The biggest challenge that I feel that I have to deal with is the loss of an immediate response from students and the development of a spontaneous discussion about topics that are not only relatable, but they're also emotionally charged. So it's a topic where you really base where your lecture goes, you really base it in the kind of feedback that you're getting from the students.

And it's usually a very organic lecture, so I do have, obviously, points in mind that I discuss, but part of the lecture is always organic and very much dependent on how

the students feel and where the discussion goes. So that's the bit that I've had the biggest problem with in the sense that in an online format, because my lectures are asynchronous, I have lost that element to a certain extent.

So in creating my assessments-- and I think I'm going to focus more on assessments than anything else, so I have lots of experiences with TAs and with setting up cuLearn in different ways, setting up the page in different ways. But I think I'm going to focus on, in this session, the assessments and what I've learned from creating the assessments. So I've had to keep, actually, the TA hours in mind while deciding on my assessment methods, because although discussions are very important to my course, grading can be very, very time consuming for the TAs.

So I have asynchronous lectures which are recorded on Kaltura, and synchronous tutorials which are one-hour tutorials every week, and also synchronous office hours both for myself and for the TAs, because I wanted the students to know that they could actually reach out to myself or to the TAs. So the synchronous elements do help, but the lectures, of course, are recorded for such huge sections. And I need one cuLearn page for all of the sections instead of having three separate ones, because I'm basically doing the same thing with all three sections.

So all of the three sections are on the same page. So my assessment is a combination of forums, of quizzes, of three assignments, and two of them are scaffolding assignments that lead to the final essay assignment. And I have one final exam, which is through the quiz function. So I'm just going to talk a little bit about these assessment methods.

So I feel that the best option to generate a dialogue between students, if the classroom discussion is missing, is the forum function on cuLearn. So I have three forums in the fall term. I post a topic for discussion on each forum, and the students are supposed to respond to that, but I've restricted the forums through the cuLearn function so that only 30 students are interacting with each other at one time. So only groups talk-- groups are separated, and they talk to members of their own groups. And each student is required to make a minimum of three comments, one, an original meaningful post, and two responses to other students' original posts on each thread.

And I've anticipated some problems. Again, like I said, I was working with Allie from the EDC, and we were trying to think of issues that could arise. And usually students ask for extensions. Dealing with all of those emails, and answering them, and looking at all of those extension requests that come in eats up a lot of time.

So we worked out a possible solution in that the window that I've given them is a longer window, so they have from every Monday-- the week that they have the forum from a Monday 5:00 PM to the Friday midnight. But because they have to post one original one and students have to wait for some, at least, original comments to be posted for them to reply to those original posts, I've divided this time into two slots. So from Monday to Wednesday at midnight, they have to post their original comment, leaving the other two days for responding to what the other students have said.

And I learned this the hard way because students usually wait till the last moment to post, so if I hadn't done this, then the students would have posted, say, 10:00 PM on Friday, not allowing a lot of time for other students to comment on what they had said. So this came from an experience that I had with the forums before that. And each discussion is graded up to 15 points, five points for each comment.

Students always want clarity on how they'll be marked on a forum discussion. And my advice to everyone would be please provide not only a clear rubric for this, but a clear rubric for all of the assignments, or at least a marking guide for all of the assignments, on the cuLearn page. So I have a separate section marked rubrics in which I have all of these rubrics available for them.

And I won't go into detail about this rubric, but for the original comment-- and I have a slightly different vision of this for the replies to other posts-- I give my TAs something like this and my students as well so that they know what their forum will be graded like when they're posting something. So they have a certain clarity about what they're required to do.

I also have a mandatory course outline quiz, and that is because there's usually the problem. I call it a problem. I shouldn't be calling it, really, a problem. It's an issue that students keep emailing and asking about the elements of the course, even when you have a very detailed course outline made available to them.

So this mandatory course outline is worth 1% of the grade, and it's based on students' knowledge of the course. So if they've read the course outline, they would know the reading requirements, assignments, deadlines, penalties, et cetera. They have actually unlimited attempts to complete the quiz. And unless 100% is achieved, all of the other quizzes cannot be accessed.

Now, this can be done on cuLearn. You can make the other quizzes dependent on having received 100% on this first quiz. And what that does is it curbs the number of emails you will get asking these questions. I won't say it will stop all of the questions, but it will curb the questions about the course outline, and students will be forcefully made to go to the course and actually read it to answer these questions.

Then the quizzes that I have are every third week there's a quiz, which the questions are from the content of the class readings, the three-week class readings, and the lectures together. And I just have 10 multiple choice questions in them, each one is worth 3%. And again, I have a larger window to give them for them to complete it, so from Monday 5:00 PM to Friday midnight to attempt the quiz.

Why do I include quizzes in my course? I normally wouldn't, because human rights is not a kind of course where quizzes work really well. However, in this case, I have chosen to have courses because it cuts down on the marking time for TAs, because the TAs have a very tight marking time.

It also prepare students for the online exam, which is in a quiz form at the end of the year, so this prepares them. And also, it's a good way to test if students are actually getting the main concepts or not, so it's very good feedback for me in whether they're understanding the concepts. And also, this is the only way for me to test that the students are doing their readings and actually watching the recorded lectures on time.

Then the assignments that I have, like I said, they're scaffolded, so assignment one, two, and three. So the final essay requires for them how to write a thesis statement and how to do research and find out material in the library. So instead of expecting them to do it in the final essay, I've created two assignments, one in the fall term and the other in the winter time before the final essay is due, in which they are doing something that builds up to writing the essay.

So in assignment one, they choose the essay topic. They choose a title. They create an annotated bibliography of four academic sources. In assignment two, they write the essay outline and the first paragraph with the thesis statement before they arrive at the third and final essay.

For attendance, since the lectures are asynchronous, the attendance is for the tutorials. There is a problem that I'm anticipating is students log in, but we are never really sure whether they're actually present. They could walk out of the room and not be there, just log in.

So the possible solution to that is that the weekly tutorial participation grade is not just based on logging in. It's logging in for the session and taking part in the discussion, whether it's speaking over the microphone, having your camera on, or contributing to the discussion in the chat function, but they have to contribute, otherwise they'll get a zero, even if they have logged in. I think this was very good advice from Allie in the EDC. I'm happy I included that.

And then another problem that I anticipate are students emailing and requesting the attendance marks without actually attending in the sense that they come up with excuses. We've all seen and heard that. So one possible way to curb and stop that is that I've set up the cuLearn grade book so that only the eight highest grades count towards 10% for each term. So if the student has attended eight out of 10, they will still get the full 10%. So they have a leeway with two of the attendances.

So that brings me to the end of my slide show. I'm hoping that there will be questions that all of you who come to the session will have, and I will go into more detail about some of these issues when we're together on Zoom. So bye till then.