DEIDRE BUTLER: Hi. I'm Deidre Butler. I'm a Professor of Religion at the College of Humanities here at Carleton University. I'd like to welcome you to my online asynchronous classroom for Religion 2110, Judaism, where I have 100 students, and usually 1 TA.

So I had a really positive experience of turning my regular face-to-face lecture course into an online course intentionally, with the time to design it right. And then the first semester that I offered it was last winter, and like everyone else, I suddenly also had to turn my other face-to-face class into an online class.

And I was in a really good position to do so, because I had the tips and tricks and strategies already in my back pocket, ready to do so. And so what I want to do with you today is share some of those tips and tricks and strategies so that your own online teaching can be easier. And I'm going to focus on asynchronous issues, just because I think those are some of the more challenging ones-- and that's what I have most experience with.

So we're going to talk about cuLearn setup as a path to learning, a bit about course design and course structure, how we put all the pieces together, something about assignment options and how we can connect with students weekly, and increased student engagement. And throughout we'll talk a little bit about minefields and tips. And all of this is to set us up for our group discussion that we're going to have online together on June 25. But if you miss that session, hopefully you'll still find some resources and tips useful from this video.

So first, I encourage you to think of cuLearn as the place where you're really meeting your students. And you want things to be as accessible and clear as possible, because students will misunderstand you in really amazing ways. So the first step towards success for this is really to use the EDC template, which has already considered the issues around accessibility, but also has something that's really aesthetically pleasing and nicely organized, and it has all the elements you need so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.

I also want to draw your attention to some of the asynchronous minefields that can happen, and that we face as online professors, and some strategies that might help.

So thinking about how you're going to manage your email, thinking about what you're going to do with students who get off track-- they start to miss your deadlines, and they write to you after the midterm that they didn't do the midterm, and is there anything they can do? And what your answer to that question is going to be.

Thinking also about how students can recover if they get behind, if they start to do badly. What have you built into the course to think about that question? And finally, always thinking about your workload, and their workload online, and how those are going to work together without you losing your mind.

So before the student even starts the chorus, I set them up in a Start Here section, which welcomes them to the course with a video from me that talks a little bit about me as a professor and what I care about, as well as an intro to the course, and basically how to navigate the course. It's a really short video.

The next thing I ask them to do is a short, automatically-graded online quiz-- which they have to get 70 on-- 70% on-- in order to proceed to go through the material. And what I have on my quiz is something on academic integrity, something on the syllabus itself-- making sure they understand what the course requirements are and what the expectations are and what deadlines are-- as well as having a section on citations. And I do that particularly in the religion program, because we use Chicago Manual of Style notes and bibliography, which many students aren't familiar with. And because it's a requirement, I want to signal that to them very early.

So you should think about your own course. What message do you want to send early? And this is a great place to do it. Obviously you're going to give them the course outline, which should correspond fully to whatever you have actually online in your course, and may have other details as well.

I also have a how to get an A in this course document. And this is a document that I started with when I first started teaching online, and I kept adding to, actually, through that first semester based on the kind of questions that I was getting, and the sort of things that I was seeing in their assignments in terms of misunderstandings or help that they needed. And I encourage you to think about creating this kind of document.

Mine has writing tips. It has things about citations. It has things about how to cite particular sources in my own field, things about how to find those sources. There's a little bit of everything in that document, and students find that very helpful.

The other thing that I alert students to very quickly is what the course rhythm is. And I run it both ways. I run it where there's a weekly rhythm, where they complete a module per week-- and I did that during the winter semester. And in this early summer semester, for the first time, I've run it so that they can move through the whole course as fast or as slowly as they want.

And I find that students actually like that better, but you may have reasons to want to structure it more. I structured it more that first time, just because I didn't have all the content prepared on the first day of class to put all 12 modules up. So for a weekly module model, students would have content-- which would include mini lectures, videos, readings.

Then they would have a quiz, which would be automatically graded. Nice, low workload for us as professors, and the students get really quick feedback, which is good. And then they have a participation challenge, which is a riff on the material that we're covering this week, but allows them to go off and do some sort of research or talking about something that they're interested in that's relatable.

And then I also have a bonus marks assignment, which I use in two ways. 1, because students love them, and 2, if a student gets behind on quizzes or participation challenges, I can always point them to the bonus marks assignment as a way to catch up. Sorry, one last thing.

First of all, don't be scared, when you're making your videos, of going backwards if you have to-- like I just did. Students are very forgiving. What I wanted to say to you is that the assignments are always due, in my course, Sunday at midnight. And I do that for consistency.

Now, some professors will choose another date. It really doesn't matter. What you're trying to do is make the student feel comfortable, and have some sense of mastery of knowing where they're going and what they have to do each week. You just want to be consistent.

So in my course, to be consistent, what I do is I chunk my material. And so I start with a video from me that introduces things. Then I ask them to go off and do a reading, do a task, do a video. Then there's another video from me. Then they do a reading task, maybe another video online, then another video from me-- like that.

Now, sometimes I might only do two prof videos and two sets of content, and I've done up to four. The more you can chunk the material, the better, but it's really driven by content, knowing that student interest drops off after about 5 to 7 minutes. So unfortunately I've never managed to do the 5 to 7 minute video. I usually end up around 10 to 12, but I've gone up to 20. And that's OK, especially if you alert the students why you're going longer.

So again, we've got this module structure of content that has a rhythm, and also that there's a rhythm to their assignments, or the tasks that they have to do. One of the things I want to draw your attention to are the minefields that you might face-- or that you will face-- if you're teaching about a topic that's contentious and fraught, and you're using forums.

So the way a forum works is basically you set it up so that you ask a question, and students have to respond to that question. And there's more you can do than that, but that's the basics of it. Now, if I set up a really open-ended question on a contentious subject-- like, for example, Israel, because that's part of teaching with Intro to Judaism-- I might end up with students going off to talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. And that's not the subject of the course, and that's not actually the material I'm teaching.

So it's in my interest to structure my question carefully, maybe give a checklist. Certainly give really guided questions so that I'm having them engage the material or the question that I want them to engage. And I'm doing this not because I want to control the students, but because I'm asking them to work with my material.

And students come with preconceived assumptions and biases about some topics that maybe I need to interrupt. Students are also often in echo chambers or bubbles-- as we all are-- and that can be reinforced in the forum. And because I can't be there all the time, the more that I can structure those questions, the better I can address those issues.

The other thing I wanted to talk to you a little bit about is about making engaging teaching videos without losing your mind. So I'm using Kaltura, which has the benefit of videotaping me, as well as videotaping my screen-- so the slides that I'm making. And when I first started making these, I was very self-conscious about how I looked, and it was making me do retakes again and again and again.

So I think it is worth investing your time to have that intro to the course video with your face, but if that's stressing you out, you can move to just your voice and your PowerPoint slides, and then move back to videos when you feel comfortable again. So after doing a whole course of these videos, I'm less self-conscious. I look how I look, and I'm OK with that. But it's really important that you feel comfortable, and you get this done in a timely way without making you crazy.

So again, recommend that you chunk the material, that you think about your PowerPoint as a roadmap to the content. And sometimes you can offer new content. For example, I often have quotes or images from primary sources that are important that aren't in the readings or in other material, and this is a way that I can not only give it to them, but also give them the citations to find it.

I spend a lot of time thinking about things being visually interesting and appealing, and using Google images has been really important for finding those sources. Again, you should cite those as much as you can-- which I've done a little bit in this video, but probably not as much as I should. I got a little behind.

The last thing I would say for less retakes is reboot your computer before you start. Make sure everything else is shut off, especially if you have an older computer. The newer your computer is, the less likely you're going to have problems with it. But Kaltura actually is a really good system if you can get through that first learning curve.

So when I first started to teach online-- or rather, to design my course, even before I taught online-- I kind of felt like the people who were trying to save the astronauts on *Apollo.* I had all of these pieces. I had too many pieces. I had too many parts to use.

And so I think it's a good idea to think about what's the rhythm of your course? How

do you want to break down your course into modules? And what pieces do you actually need? Because there's an embarrassment of riches through EDC, and that can be tremendously overwhelming.

So just be strategic. Know that you can always add more another time. Students know that this is not an easy thing for us all to be teaching and learning online, and they're incredibly forgiving.

So I end all of my online lectures with this slide, which is "Shalom." "Shalom" means not only hello and goodbye, it means peace and wholeness-- which we all need as students, or as professors teaching online. Good luck, and I hope to chat with you on my online meeting on June 25. And if you've missed that, I hope you found some of this useful. And please do reach out if I can be of any help.