

## Teaching the First Day of Class

When it comes to teaching on the first day of class, paying attention to these small things can go a long way:

- Talk about your passion for your craft
- Pique students interest
- Set class expectations
- Create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment

As you plan out your first day of class, here are some things to consider:

1. **Spark Curiosity & Relevance.** Don't just jump straight into the course outline. Think about ways that you can spark students' interest by creating curiosity and letting them know how the course is relevant to them. For example:
  - Describe transferable skills. Explain what students will be able to do better and how those skills might be applied to other contexts.
  - Let students know how the course will help them develop their craft or how it will help them post-graduation.
  - Ask students what they want to get out of the class
2. **Share the course outline.** It's a good idea to go through the course outline and highlight the following:
  - Learning outcomes
  - Course content and required materials
  - Assessment
  - What's the best way for students to contact you
3. **Share how you teach.** Let students know how you structure your course, your expectations, and what ways you will use Google Classroom. Let your students know about our Learning Strategist who can help students who have disabilities or need help with time management and study skills.
4. **Tell students a bit about yourself.** For example, let them know about your craft, what you love about your craft, and your favorite thing about teaching. Let them know your preferred name and if you're comfortable, your pronoun. For example, "My name is Sita Fox. You can call me Sita. I use she/her pronouns." To learn more about pronoun use, click [here](#).
5. **Territorial acknowledgement.** At the beginning of the first class of semester, you may want to consider starting with a territorial acknowledgement. It's a sign of respect to acknowledge the land that you stand on, it helps to create awareness of Indigenous land rights in everyday life, and is an act of reconciliation. Territorial acknowledgement should

be meaningful; in this regard it's a good idea to personalize it. To learn more, read [How to do a Territorial Acknowledgement](#). The territorial acknowledgement used by NBCCD is:

*NBCCD acknowledges that we live, work, and create on the unsundered and unceded traditional Wolastoqey land. The lands of Wabanaki people are recognized in a series of Peace and Friendship Treaties to establish an ongoing relationship of peace, friendship and mutual respect between equal nations. The river that runs by our college is known as Wolastoq (Saint John River), along which live Wolastoqiyik – the people of the beautiful and bountiful river.*

6. **Plan an activity that helps students get to know each other and you.** Maybe create an activity that taps into their previous knowledge or experience with the course content. Or perhaps create a task where students need to work in pairs to solve a problem. Maybe try an icebreaker?
7. **Teach something.** You have a three-hour class, so it won't take the whole lesson to go through the things above. Plan out what you will teach and what activities students will do to actively participate in the lesson. To learn more about lesson planning, click [here](#).

## Resources

Lang, J. (2019). How to teach a good first day of class. *Chronicles in Higher Education*. Retrieved from: [How to Teach a Good First Day of Class \(chronicle.com\)](#)

Smith, G. (2008). First-day questions for the learner-centered classroom. *The National Teaching and Learning Forum*. 17(5), 1-4. Retrieved from [https://d32ogogmya1dw8.cloudfront.net/files/introgeo/firstday/first\\_day\\_questions\\_learner-ce.pdf](https://d32ogogmya1dw8.cloudfront.net/files/introgeo/firstday/first_day_questions_learner-ce.pdf)

Yale's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning. *Teaching the First Class*. Retrieved from [Chapter 1: Teaching the First Class | Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning \(yale.edu\)](#)