

GTA ORIENTATION FALL 2007 – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Below are answers to questions submitted by Graduate Teaching Assistants to the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning during their fall 2007 Orientation session. If you have other questions for CITL, please contact us at citl@gwu.edu or call 202-994-0485.

iTunes U @ GW AND COLONIAL CAST

Can students still listen to lectures without an iPod?

YES, students can listen to and/or watch podcasts that a professor has uploaded to the Apple iTunes U server on a personal or GW lab computer.

Is iTunes U free? How can we encourage professors to use it?

Yes, space provided on the iTunes U is free to GW faculty who request access to the service by emailing citl@gwu.edu. All of the GW community has free access to the public area of iTunes U. The decision to use iTunes U in a classroom depends largely on whether or not technology will enhance how students learn course content, as well as the amount of time faculty are able to commit to training and implementing the technology. The CITL is a primary resource for GW faculty who wish to learn how to use iTunes U in their courses.

How do students access iTunes U for a course?

Course content becomes available when a professor requests an iTunes U account and provides the CRN of a course to be added. Once this is complete, students can access course content that a faculty member has uploaded in podcast format. Only the faculty member has the administrative privileges to upload content to the server.

What does using iTunes U entail?

You can familiarize yourself with iTunes U @ GW at <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/pages/itunesu>. There are two components that make up how GW uses iTunes U. Those are: Colonial Cast and iTunes U. Colonial Cast is the system that captures the audio and/or video of a class session in specific rooms. The material captured is automatically uploaded to the second component, the iTunes U server, from which the GW community can access these audio/video captures of class sessions. However, podcasts can be created without the use of Colonial Cast and uploaded to the iTunes U server for use in a class. For more information and guidance, contact The CITL at citl@gwu.edu. A list of ColonialCast (iTunes U) classrooms is

available from Academic Technologies at
(<http://acadtech.gwu.edu/pages/itunesu>)

How do I download a lecture from iTunes U?

From within the iTunes program, click the “Get” button to download a single podcast. Downloaded podcasts will appear “iTunes Store” > “Downloads”. More advanced download options are available under “Edit” > “Preferences” > “Podcasts” in the iTunes program. For more tutorials, consult Academic Technologies resources on <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/pages/itunesu#tutorials>

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Do classrooms have wireless capability?

Some classrooms, and various other areas on the Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses, do have wireless access (“GWireless”) provided by Information Systems and Services (ISS). For more information on GWireless and a list of access points, see <http://helpdesk.gwu.edu/gwireless/index.html>. To find out about a specific classroom, search on <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/locations/> or contact the Academic Technologies Solutions Center at 994-7900.

How do I get help with technology in a classroom?

Contact Academic Technologies Solutions Center on either 994-7900 or <http://acadtech.gwu.edu> for classroom technology assistance. Classroom technology documentation is available on <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/tutorials/>

What other services does Academic Technologies offer?

Information about other services from Academic Technologies can be found on <http://acadtech.gwu.edu/> under the “Services” menu item.

What is a recommended way of planning for class in the event that technology is unavailable?

When using technology, it is essential to have a backup plan. If you are using Blackboard to record grades, it is recommended that you frequently download the Gradebook into Excel and save it to a hard drive and/or a form of external media (see http://citl.gwu.edu/bbtour/gradebook/Gradebook_Excel.html).

When scheduling an online test, for example, have an alternate test-taking plan ready, should network access be unavailable. If you are using a technology classroom to show a PowerPoint or share other media with students, it is wise to work “non-technology” class options into your class plan. For example, print PPT handouts to distribute, in the event that a computer is not functioning.

In terms of assigning homework or projects, keep in mind what types of technologies students may or may not have access to. For example, video

recording and editing resources are not readily available to all students. Remember that the instructional objective is not for students to have to find and then learn how to use a technology.

TEACHING TECHNIQUES

Where can I find information on teaching techniques?

The CITL website (<http://citl.gwu.edu>) offers free Instructional Guides, as well as Teaching Tips from seasoned faculty. Our site also has links to outside resources (“[Helpful Links](#)”) on areas such as plagiarism and class discussion. Our staff are available for one-on-one consultations, as well – call 994-0485 or email citl@gwu.edu.

How do you evaluate your effectiveness with instructional technology?

Measuring your own effectiveness depends on whether you are already familiar with a technology or just learning it. The most important evaluation is whether or not your students have achieved course objectives and learned course material through your use of instructional technology. You might measure this by getting anonymous student feedback after a technology-driven activity.

How do I find a balance between technology and effective instruction?

Rule of thumb: If you can teach something effectively without technology, it's likely that technology unnecessary. If you determine that an instructional technology has potential to enhance student learning, it's advisable to a) outline how you will use technology, b) do a dry-run before presenting it to students, and c) keep the process simple. It is crucial that the technology not eclipse the content.

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY AT GW

How should I decide which program to use?

There are myriad instructional technology options! The most important thing is to choose a technology that a) will not be time-consuming for you or your students and b) provide the clearest, most effective way of helping students learn course content. The CITL staff are glad to discuss which technologies you might use and how best to use them in a course.

How much technology do GTAs use in a course?

That will depend on the nature of your responsibilities, course content, and your faculty member's objectives for the course. For example, a GTA leading a discussion section might use Blackboard's online discussion board for students to post and respond to questions posed during the face-to-face session.

Who determines what classroom technology is to be used ? Prof or TA?

This is a question that professors and GTAs should discuss together and decide upon when planning the course talking. Another factor to consider is the type of technology available in a classroom, if the course is delivered face-to-face. Additional considerations include: the types of technology readily available to your students, and whether or not technology will enhance content and learning.

How can I assist students who are unfamiliar with certain technologies?

You will come across a wide range of technology experience among students. You might survey your students at the beginning of the semester, to find out the extent of their technology proficiency. Keep in mind that levels of proficiency will also depend on what instructional technologies you plan to use. It's also good practice not to overuse technology in a course, since that can entail more work on your part and that of students; and it might not communicate course content effectively. If you wish to use a particular technology, you might use only one at a time and also provide students with a brief guide on how this technology should be used to complete an assignment.

What statistical software is available at GW?

SAS statistical software is available to GW instructors at the CITL lab in Gelman B05a. You will need to bring three blank CD-ROMS. For more information <http://citl.gwu.edu/pages/sas.html>

Where can I get SAS training?

Consult the SAS website for [SAS online documentation](#)

For problems with a SAS installation:

Contact CITL: 202-994-0485 or citl@gwu.edu.

For assistance with SAS usage:

Consult with course professor, in particular with regards to SAS functions required for the course.

Does GW have Mac-compatible software?

For compatibility information for software from ISS, please see

<http://helpdesk.gwu.edu>

Please consult the CITL website (<http://citl.gwu.edu/pages/sas.html>) for details on SAS software compatibility with Macs

Does GW use anti-plagiarism software programs?

Although GW as a whole doesn't utilize any specific electronically-based program for detecting plagiarism, some departments subscribe to the service individually. In general, copyright issues have been cited as a drawback to the service. For assistance on procedures for dealing with plagiarism, individuals and departments can consult with the Office of Academic Integrity

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/>

BLACKBOARD

How do you upload quizzes/set time restraints in Blackboard?

From within a course Control Panel, create a quiz or test, then add it to the “Testing” Content Area. Choose the option to Modify the Test Options. For more detailed instructions, consult the CITL’s [BbTour website](#).

How do I upload files to Bb as a TA?

From the Control Panel, click on the Content Area to which you will upload the file. Click on “Item” and enter a title, a brief description; then click “Upload a file” to choose a file from your computer. Click “Submit” to complete the upload. More advanced options include the ability to set dates and times for making a file available to students, and to track the number of views for that file.

What is the best way to ensure that students do their own work on Bb?

There is no 100% guaranteed way of ensuring students do their own work outside of a face-to-face environment. It will be up to you to recognize when, for example, several students’ “written” exercises are exactly alike or when an essay appears to have been copied – in part or in whole – from another source. Consult with <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/> or links to plagiarism on <http://citl.gwu.edu/pages/educationalresources.html>

How can I best use Blackboard in my course?

Blackboard’s online “anytime, anywhere” accessibility provides a number of conveniences. For instances, students can always find and download your syllabus and other materials. Online discussions or chats outside of the face-to-face classroom environment and anonymous surveys for assessing class progress are additional tools to enhance teaching and learning. For more information, check out our [workshop offerings](#) or speak with a CITL staff member (994-0485 or citl@gwu.edu).

Can students see their standing in a course?

The Blackboard Gradebook permits a student to see only his or her assignment grades. An instructor can change settings in order for students to view the overall class average.

OTHER QUESTIONS

How can I register for a CITL workshop?

Please be aware that CITL workshops are for GW instructors only. From our [Workshops and Events page](#), click on “Register Me” at the top. Choose the option for “New Users...” to create your account. Once your account is created, the workshop listing will appear, and you can click the “Register” icon

to sign up. If you need to withdraw registration, log back into our [Workshops and Events page](#) and click the “Cancel” icon.

How can I use technology tools, such as Webcasts or Webquests?

There are myriad technologies out there that can be leveraged for instructional use. Currently there is a great deal of interest in using “Web 2.0” technologies (e.g., wikis, blogs, podcasting, etc) to enhance learning. A good place to begin learning about these technologies in the classroom is the “Seven things about...” series from Educause (<http://www.educause.edu/7ThingsYouShouldKnowAboutSeries/7495>).

How can students obtain computing support?

The CITL is tasked with directly supporting GW faculty, enabling them to enhance their own teaching and the learning experience of their students. Our services, including the lab, workshops, and Blackboard support, are available only to faculty. Students with Blackboard questions – or other technology questions in general – can call Student Technology Services (<http://gwired.gwu.edu/sts/?url=sts>)

Are there VHS-DVD restrictions (e.g. if item can't be checked out the library)?

Please contact the Gelman Library via <http://www.gwu.edu/gelman/ref/askus.cfm>

Thank you for your questions! We hope that the CITL can be of service to you during your GTA teaching experience. Contact us at:

<http://www.citl.gwu.edu>

citl@gwu.edu

202-994-0485