

INSTRUCTOR'S HANDBOOK

DavidsonLearns seeks to enhance the intellectual life of adults by providing a selection of challenging, diverse, and relevant courses and, in so doing, form a community of learners. Our volunteer instructors are motivated by their desire to share their knowledge and facilitate thoughtful discussions on academic topics.

The following guidelines have been created to help you be successful as a DavidsonLearns instructor and to create the best environment for your students.

Registration Waitlist

Students are encouraged to add their names to the Parks and Rec waitlist if a course is full, as DavidsonLearns adheres to our course waitlists. If your course is full, and someone asks you personally to be allowed to take your course, please contact the Executive Director executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org

Locations and Audio/Visual

DavidsonLearns holds classes in a number of [locations](#). The audio/visual capabilities generally include a white board and Internet access. The location of your class will be determined by your audio/visual needs, day and time preferences, and class size.

Prior to First Class

If this is your first time teaching in one of our locations, we will schedule a time with you to see the site and become familiar with the building and parking. The day before your first class, we will email you a class roster with the names of students taking your course.

Course Materials

If some material is critical to your course and available to the public, please describe it in your course description as “required.” If, instead, some material would serve as background for students who are less familiar with the topic, but you do not intend to cover it explicitly, then describe it as “suggested.” If material is available on the internet, directing students to the URL is the most cost-effective method of distributing it, but please take care not to link to an unauthorized (pirated) copy.

Copyright

DavidsonLearns respects the rights of copyright owners. Copyright law requires that you obtain permission from the copyright owner before using or distributing copyrighted material; however, there are exceptions. Two common exceptions are works in the public domain and United States government documents. Instructors at nonprofit educational organizations may also qualify for exceptions for in-class performances/displays and for distributing limited materials under the principle of “fair use.” You should only use or distribute materials (on paper or by any electronic means) that fit within these exceptions.

Below are links to three websites that will help you evaluate whether your use of material fits within any of the exceptions. The first, from the Davidson College website, provides

- a brief introduction to copyright (“copyright basics tab”)
- the definitions of public domain and fair use (under the “copyright basics tab”), including an explanation of four factors you should take into consideration in determining whether your material is covered under the fair use exception
- information on how to obtain permission to use material (under the “getting permission” tab).

<http://davidson.libguides.com/c.php?g=349319&p=2357359>

The second, from the Baylor University website, is a Fair Use Analysis Worksheet. This checklist walks you through an evaluation of the four factors you need to weigh as you determine whether your material is likely to be covered under the fair use exception.

<https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/68621>

The third, from the University of Minnesota, addresses the Classroom Use Exemption.

<https://www.lib.umn.edu/copyright/teaching-good-news>

As you evaluate course materials for compliance with the copyright law, the DavidsonLearns Curriculum team can assist you in the evaluation process. If you have printing requests or other questions about course materials, please contact the Executive Director (executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org).

The DavidsonLearns Copyright Policy can be found at [ADD HYPERLINK].

First Class

A DavidsonLearns member will be at your first class session to welcome your students, introduce you to the group, and deliver the nametags and class attendance sheet. Our adult learners have stressed their desire to meet their fellow classmates, so please allow time at the start of the course for brief introductions. If necessary, we can also have someone present to help with technical needs; however, we encourage you to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Nametags & Attendance sheet

As students arrive, please ask them to initial the attendance sheet and pick up their nametags. We encourage you and your students to wear the nametags during each class. At the end of class, please remind students to bring their nametags with them to subsequent class sessions. We will ask someone to collect the attendance sheet at the end of each class and to redistribute it at the start of the next class. At the end of the course, a DavidsonLearns member will collect the attendance sheet.

Communicating with Students

During the first class, we recommend you establish a protocol for communication. This becomes especially useful if a class needs to be cancelled (see below).

- Email is an easy, effective way to communicate, but make sure all class members use email. If you communicate by email, please enter addresses in the “Bcc” field to protect everyone's privacy.

- It may be necessary to use phone calls or a phone tree for students who do not have access to email.

Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather, our Executive Director will notify you and your students of a class cancellation as soon as possible. In addition, we will post an announcement on the DavidsonLearns.org homepage. The Executive Director will work with you to schedule a make-up session. Generally, we add a session to the end of the course, but other arrangements can be made.

Other Class Cancellations

If you find it necessary to cancel a class, it is your responsibility to notify the Executive Director (executivedirector@davidsonlearns.org) and class members as soon as possible, using the email list or phone list you established the first day of class. The Executive Director will work with you to schedule a make-up session.

Ethical Behavior

Instructors may not promote the use of specific products or services during the class session or through their course materials. No instructor may promote specific religious, political, or philosophical beliefs or discriminate on the basis of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, national origin, age, gender, or sexual orientation. No instructor is to solicit any business or referrals and/or use the student contact information provided in class lists for purposes other than class business.

Adult Learners

The characteristics of adult learners are different from those of a typical undergraduate. It is rare that you have to cajole class members to talk! The life experiences that adults bring to a class are rich and varied and often well worth sharing. However, you may find the need to temper individuals who tend to dominate discussions.

There is no typical DavidsonLearns class, and it is this variety of learning experiences that will make for a rich intellectual environment. Most of our students are quite comfortable with technology and use it well, but our adult learners prefer the dynamics of live interaction. Since adult learners are highly motivated, it works well to provide your students with links to course resources and let them view those on their own.

Course Feedback

Our objective is to continually improve our participants' learning experience. Therefore, please allow a few minutes at the end of the last class for students to complete a course feedback form. A DavidsonLearns member will distribute and collect those forms, along with the attendance sheet.

We are equally interested in your experience and evaluation. Our Executive Director will thus email you an Instructor Feedback form the last week of class, requesting that you return that form by email, snail mail, or at the end of the last class.