Creating Course Videos

Preparation

1. ***Create an Outline*** – Before jumping into to recording your video, it's helpful to draft an outline for the topics you will want to cover. Creating an outline will help you cover everything you think is essential for students to know about you and your course, and ensures a logical flow of information.

    A. An average video should be 5-7 minutes. An introductory video can be fairly short, approximately 1 minute. Guidelines
    B. Some information that you may want to consider for an *Introductory video*
        a. Welcome message to students
        b. Introducing yourself and any TA's working with you on the course
        c. Some personal information about you, your background, interests
        d. What you love about the course you are teaching.
        e. Some potential pitfalls that could occur during the course, and how you'll help
    C. *Course Introduction*
        a. Expectations for student engagement
        b. Special instructions related to quizzes or assignments
        c. How the course is organized, and what students can expect

2. ***Writing your Script*** – this is your fleshed out version of your outline, including what you plan to say while recording. Think of ways to *show* rather than *tell* the information.

3. ***Setting up your Webcam*** – it can be external (add-on), or internal (built into your laptop). Sit near the camera, maintaining a close distance so the student viewing can see expressions and nonverbal cues. Notice what's in the background, and remove distracting elements or arrange the shot so they are unobtrusive.

4. ***Lighting and Space*** –
    - Diffuse lighting is best. Don't point a light at your face, but instead use overhead lights or bounce light off a wall.
    - Avoid backlight (for example having a window behind you). The camera exposes for this brighter light and not you making your face a silhouette.
    - Find a quiet place to record, public spaces rarely make for a good recording location unless the location is a part of the message. Listen for ambient noise like ventilation fans or traffic sounds, and minimize them.
    - Wear clothing that contrasts with the background, this will help with the quality of the video. Avoid tightly patterned fabrics (tweed).
        - Solid, bold colors work best
        - Stripes or checks can interfere with the camera
        - Do not wear green if you are working in front of a green screen
        - Consider your background

5. *Recording Your Video* – this step can be initially uncomfortable for some people. We're not used to hearing and seeing ourselves speak in a recorded format, and it's easy to fall into being critical of ourselves. Instead, try to focus on areas you can improve, like removing repetitive words (e.g. um).
    - Use your voice – vary your tone, and don't be shy about showing emotion and excitement. Avoid monotone deliveries.
    - Image you're talking to a person sitting across from you. This helps set the volume and the size of your gestures.

- If you tend to talk with your hands, try to slow your gestures a bit, since it may appear blurry. Try to constrain hand movements so they stay in the frame most of the time. This may mean making smaller gestures.
- Be prepared – use your prepared script and post it near the camera so you can maintain eye contact.
- Speak concisely and not too slowly. Students can rewind if they miss something.
- Save your video to: see Uploading your video

Uploading Your Video

There are several places that can host your course's video. A lot of their features overlap, but there are some differences that might be key to your course.

- Kaltura in Blackboard: this is a good choice if your other course materials will also be in Blackboard. By default your videos will be restricted to students enrolled in your course.
  (link to: http://videohelp.cit.cornell.edu/posting-video-online/)
- YouTube: YouTube is a great way to allow an audience larger than your class to view your videos. If a video is posted as public, it can be searched for and shared by anyone. Links to other YouTube videos will be presented on the page with your video, so students may be tempted to get off course. YouTube delivery is restricted in several countries.
- Vimeo: similar to YouTube but a little more serious in nature.

Recording Audio with PowerPoint

If you lecture in the classroom using PowerPoint (or other) slides, recording the slides with an audio narration is an easy first step to creating lecture content. The initial thought might be to record your 50 minute lecture, but it would translate better to the online environment if you could break the lecture down into smaller concepts that are presented individually in sequence. This will also help to keep the videos shorter (3-5 minutes). Optimally students will have the opportunity to review or use the concept before moving on to the next one.

- Panopto: integrated into Cornell's Blackboard, Panopto records the screen along with your audio (and optional video), and creates an index presentation.
- Office Mix: A free plug-in for PowerPoint that allows recording a presentation (https://mix.office.com/)
- Camtasia: a powerful screen recording tool (not free) that integrates with PowerPoint
- Captivate: similar to Camtasia

Usable Media for Online Courses

Kent State University: http://onlineteaching.kent.edu/library/tutorials/Usable_Media_for_Online_Courses.pdf

Building Accessibility into your Video

A captioned video contains text that transcribes the narration and provides descriptions of the sounds and music that are present. The assumption is often that this is for use by people with hearing difficulties, but captions also benefit people who aren't native speakers of the language used in the video, for those unfamiliar with the vocabulary of a discipline, and sometimes to allow interactive searches within the video. There are two ways to caption a video: *open captions* and *closed captions*

See: http://videohelp.cit.cornell.edu/captioning-videos/