

Tips For Creating Effective Course Reading Lists

Many instructors struggle over creating their reading list. An effective reading list supports course content and assignment. Readings are typically assigned to be relevant to student learning and to support coursework. When students can see how readings support their coursework and are not overwhelmed by the amount or level of the content, they are even more motivated to complete them.

Relevance

- Assign and prioritize assigned readings that are critical for students to understand course content and to complete assignments.
- Make the key readings explicit and recommended readings might be included in a separate bibliography.
- Note: Students are often confused by the difference between required and supplemental readings, especially if listed in the syllabus weekly. Discuss this difference in class and/or include additional readings in a separate bibliography.

Course Design

- Assign readings when they will support course assignments.
- Consider using the same readings when modeling academic writing skills, such as, for example, to model academic research questions, summarizing research, or referencing styles.

Amount of Assigned Reading

- Organize readings with consideration for your students' workload throughout the term. For example, instructors often organize fewer readings when students are studying for a midterm.
- Review your reading list with consideration for your students' workload for the entire course. Consider balancing longer with shorter readings, or include supplementary excerpts from complex readings.

Student Reading Level & Discipline Knowledge

- Select readings appropriate to your students' reading level and discipline knowledge.
- Discuss reading comprehension strategies with students with key readings. Model best practices in reading and note-taking as an exercise or assignment.

Instructor Support:

Support for Course Design: <http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/course-assignment-design>
UTSC Library Course Reserves: <https://utsc.library.utoronto.ca/course-reserves-requests>