Meaningful Assignments that Demonstrate Learning

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Why do we have assignments?

An "old" answer

- To modulate difficulty
- To distinguish between students' levels of achievement (and, therefore, grades)

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- Good assignments should be
    - "hard," and perhaps even a bit mysterious, so that students' performance will be distributed across a spectrum
    - graded (therefore, at least somewhat high stakes)

A better answer

- To create opportunities for students to practice the things they're meant to learn
- To create opportunities for feedback
    - For instructors, about where your students are
    - For students, to receive coaching from your instructors

↓

- Good assignments should be
    - transparent
    - sequenced, spaced, interleaved, and scoped to allow for growth
    - capable of producing authentic evidence of student learning

Our panelists

Allan Brandt, Amalie Moses Kass Professor of the History of Medicine in the Faculty of Medicine, and Professor of the History of Science (FAS)

Ingrid Katz, Associate Professor of Medicine (HMS)

Yasmin Escobedo Lozoya, Research Fellow in Genetics (HMS)
Kathryn Lehigh, Research Fellow in Genetics (HMS)
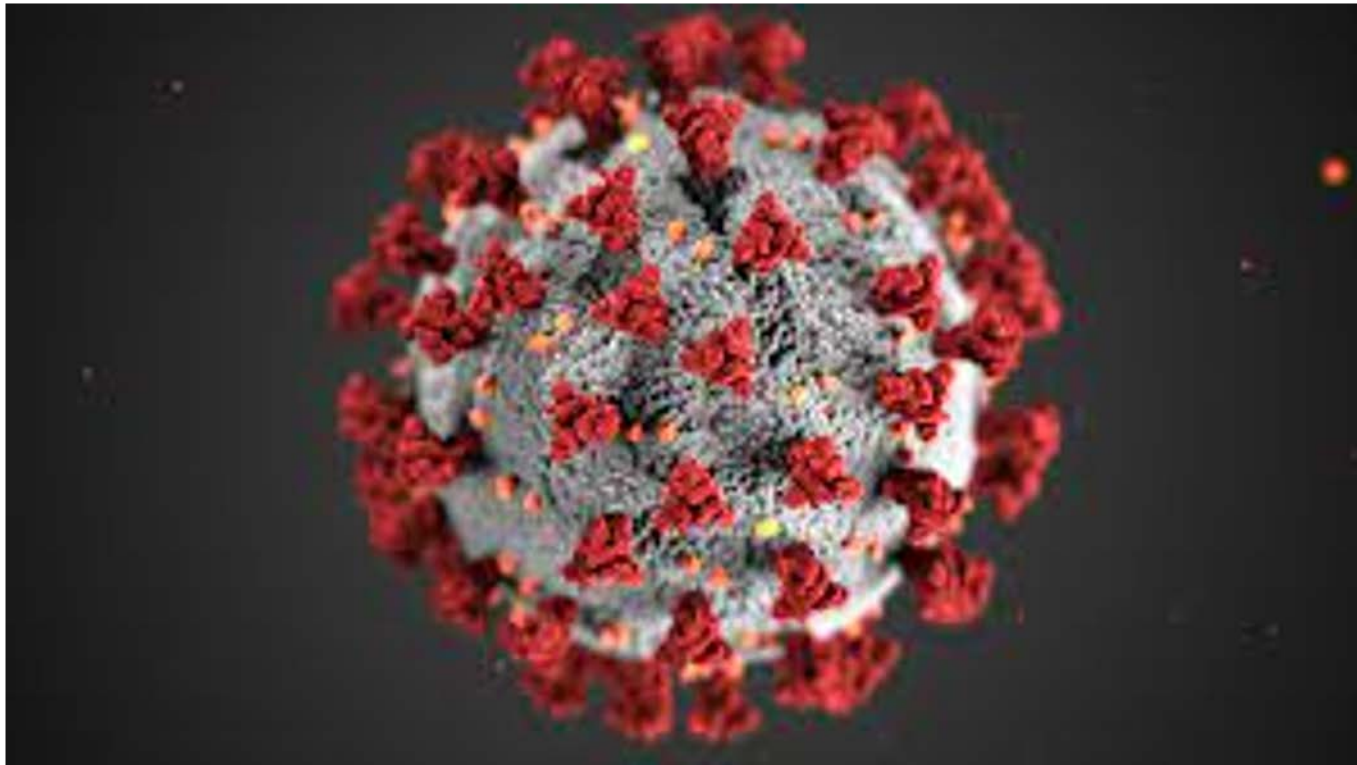
Leonie Marinovich, Instructor (DCE)

Confronting COVID-19: Science, History, Policy

GenEd1170, Fall 2020
Led by Allan Brandt and Ingrid Katz

HARVARD GLOBAL HEALTH INSTITUTE

Teaching about Covid in Real Time

Course Overview

Date	Session
Sept 3	COVID-19: Why Here, Why Now?
Sept 8	Reopening Harvard: How Did We Get Here?
Sept 10	What Is an Epidemic/Pandemic?
Sept 15	Outbreaks and Narratives of Contagion
Sept 17	Epidemiology and Modeling
Sept 22	Diagnosis and Testing
Sept 24	Stories from the Frontlines: Clinical and Hospital Responses
Sept 29	The Experiences of Patients and Caregivers
Oct 1	Treating COVID-19
Oct 6	Vaccine Hunters
Oct 8	Race, Racism, and Disease
Oct 13	Prisons and Incarceration
Oct 15	Masks: Science, Policy, Politics
Oct 20	Contact Tracing and the Problem of Transmission
Oct 22	Public Health Infrastructure
Oct 27	Political Impact and the Election
Oct 29	Global Governance and the WHO
Nov 3	Global Health, Global South
Nov 5	Mental Health
Nov 10	Gender, Family, Home and Work
Nov 12	Economic Impact/Economic Policy
Nov 17	The Future of Healthcare Policy and Healthcare Delivery
Nov 19	Culture and COVID-19: Art, Photography, and Performance
Nov 24	Reconsidering Cities: Urban Design in the Wake of COVID-19
Dec 1	TBD
Dec 3	Looking Back, Looking Ahead

- Integrating multidisciplinary framework

- 80 faculty from across the University

- Engaging students in intellectual discourse rooted in a wider socio-political context

- Promoting rigorous intellectual endeavor that promotes civic engagement beyond the classroom

Goal of Final Assignment

- Assignment with a social function beyond evaluation
- Provide an opportunity to utilize a different format beyond a traditional research paper
  - Podcast using ethnographic and oral history approaches and methods
  - "Solo commentary" style
- Goal to ensure current and future access through collaboration with Harvard archives

Podcast Assignment

Final Assignment divided into several smaller assignments:

- Assignment 1: Podcast topic proposal
  - Students chose & justified topic
  - Proposed 3 potential interviewees
- Assignment 2: Interview guide for one interview
  - Students wrote a semi-structured interview guide, grounded in scoping review / literature
- Assignment 3: Summary and reflection on one interview
  - Students engaged in a post-interview reflection exercise (written)
- Assignment 4: Final podcast

Rubric for Final Assignment

Domain^	Allocated Score*				
	0	2.5	5	7.5	10
Form / Clarity of Writing	No submission	Writing contains many errors in spelling and grammar^^ that interfere with comprehension	Frequent errors, but does not interfere with comprehension	May contain minor errors, but follows general spelling and grammatical conventions	Writing is clear and appears proofread
Incorporation of External Content	No submission	No mention of literature outside of course readings	May mention one additional reading, not well tied to argument	Makes reference to one or two external sources	Thoughtfully incorporates two or more external sources
Description of Topic	No submission	Confusion and lack of clarity on what the topic is	Presents topic in general terms, unfocused transitions, introduction and conclusion	Topic is clearly provided with coherent ideas & solid organization	Topic is clearly defined and bounded with strong organization and presentation of ideas
Choice of Topic	No submission	Topic decision unsupported	Topic decision loosely supported	Supports topic with justification, references and some sense of why the topic is relevant	Presents and justifies topic clearly, providing clear examples and references as to why the topic is relevant
Choice of Interviewees	No submission	Interviewee choices unsupported	Interviewee choices loosely supported	Interviewee choices supported with justification	Interviewee choices supported, showing clearly how individuals are positioned to contribute to the proposed topic

Similar to weekly response papers, domains are presented in separate rows within this table to provide a point of reference, the cumulative score
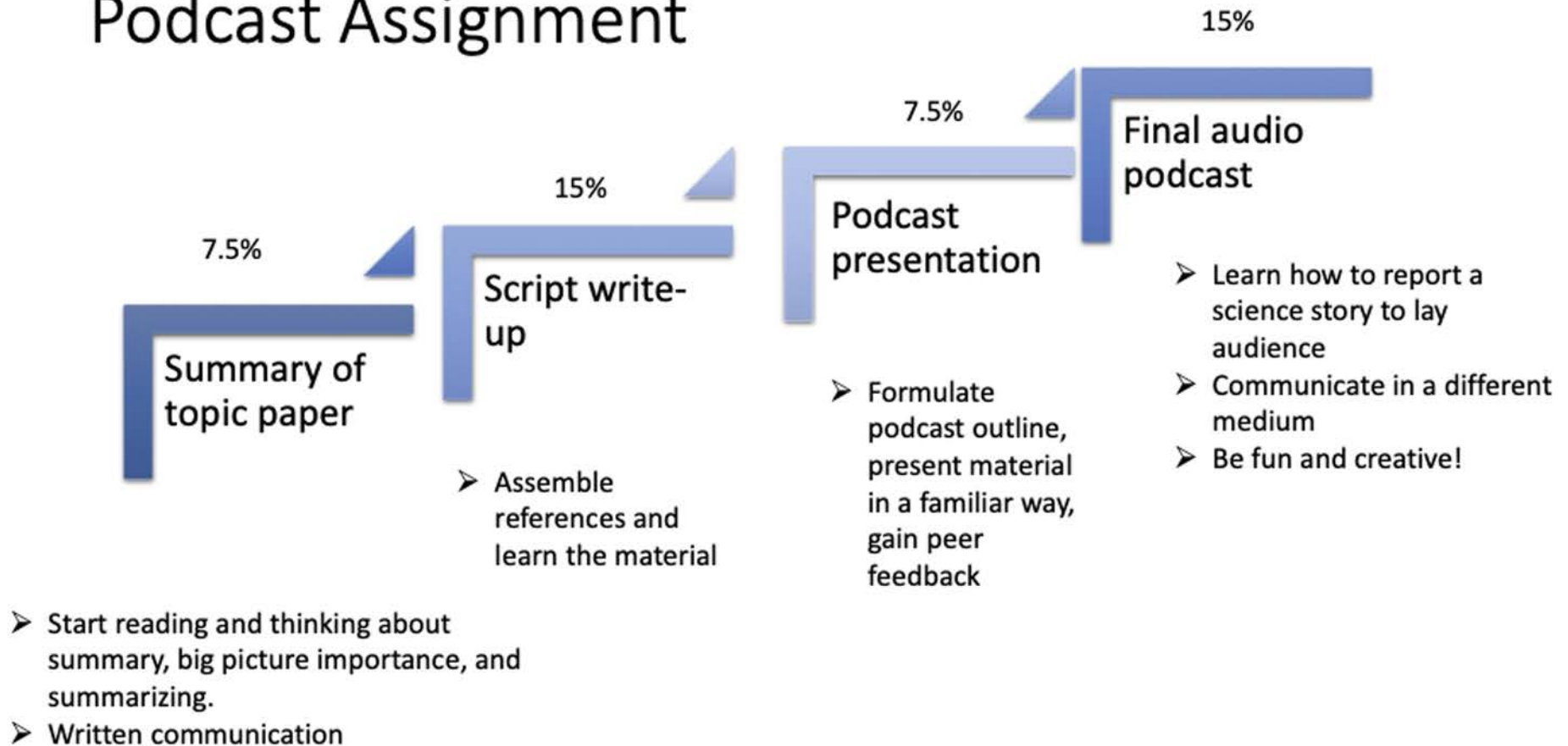
Example Topics

Reflections

- Goal of situating an ongoing global crisis within socio-political contexts
- Engaging with a broader community; interdisciplinary approaches
- Being part of a larger discourse; the social values of scholarship
- Audience beyond class faculty and teaching fellows

Course Goals and Objectives

• Use touch processing to explore basic neurobiology principles

• Increase scientific literacy and abilities to understand and critically evaluate primary literature articles

• Create science communication media to share informed opinions about current work in the field of touch with a broad audience.

Podcast Assignment

7.5%

Summary of topic paper

- Start reading and thinking about summary, big picture importance, and summarizing.
- Written communication

15%

Script write-up

- Assemble references and learn the material

7.5%

Podcast presentation

- Formulate podcast outline, present material in a familiar way, gain peer feedback

15%

Final audio podcast

- Learn how to report a science story to lay audience
- Communicate in a different medium
- Be fun and creative!

Podcast Grading

Introduction→ storytelling, engagement with target audience, clear purpose

Conceptual understanding→ accuracy, summation and evaluation of material

Delivery → well-rehearsed, effective enunciation and engaging style of speaking

Use of literature and pertinent resources → Relevant and broad use of sources to make arguments; correct citations in script

Production and music→ appropriate length, quiet background and ability to understand recording, music used as enhancement not distraction

Meaningful Assignments that Demonstrate Learning

DGMD E-9 : Fundamentals of Digital Photography

Leonie Marinovich

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Course Overview & Goals

FALL

TECHNICAL FOCUS

AESTHETIC FOCUS

LECTURES 1 - 6

LECTURES 7 - 15

Goals

- Learn to Look & See the Light

- Present their work in an aesthetically pleasing way :

  - Document and record their progress → Learning Portfolio

- Apply professional standards and practices in their work

  - Including Asset Management

- Develop a visual literacy that also includes industry practices, ethics & appreciation for image-making and a language for discussing photography

Assignment scaffolding

Assignments

- Challenge : How do you give students an opportunity to succeed in a field that is normally assessed in a very subjective way.
    - Identify aspects that can be quantified / qualified
    - Then: Break down each component in a descriptive, defined way
- Scaffolded approach
    - Start with low-risk technical skills development
        - Assessment criteria
            - Complete / Incomplete (familiarize with Canvas, workflow and deadlines)
            - Introduce simple rubrics
    - Culminates in technically demanding projects
        - Still Lifes ; documentary assignment
        - More complex rubric that builds on the previous experiences
        - Include Reflections
- Rubrics
- First Build confidence and then challenge the students

Grading

Assignments

"Minor" Assignments 30%

"Major" Assignments, incl. portfolio 60%

Discussions Quizzes 10%

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DGMD E-9 Fall 2021
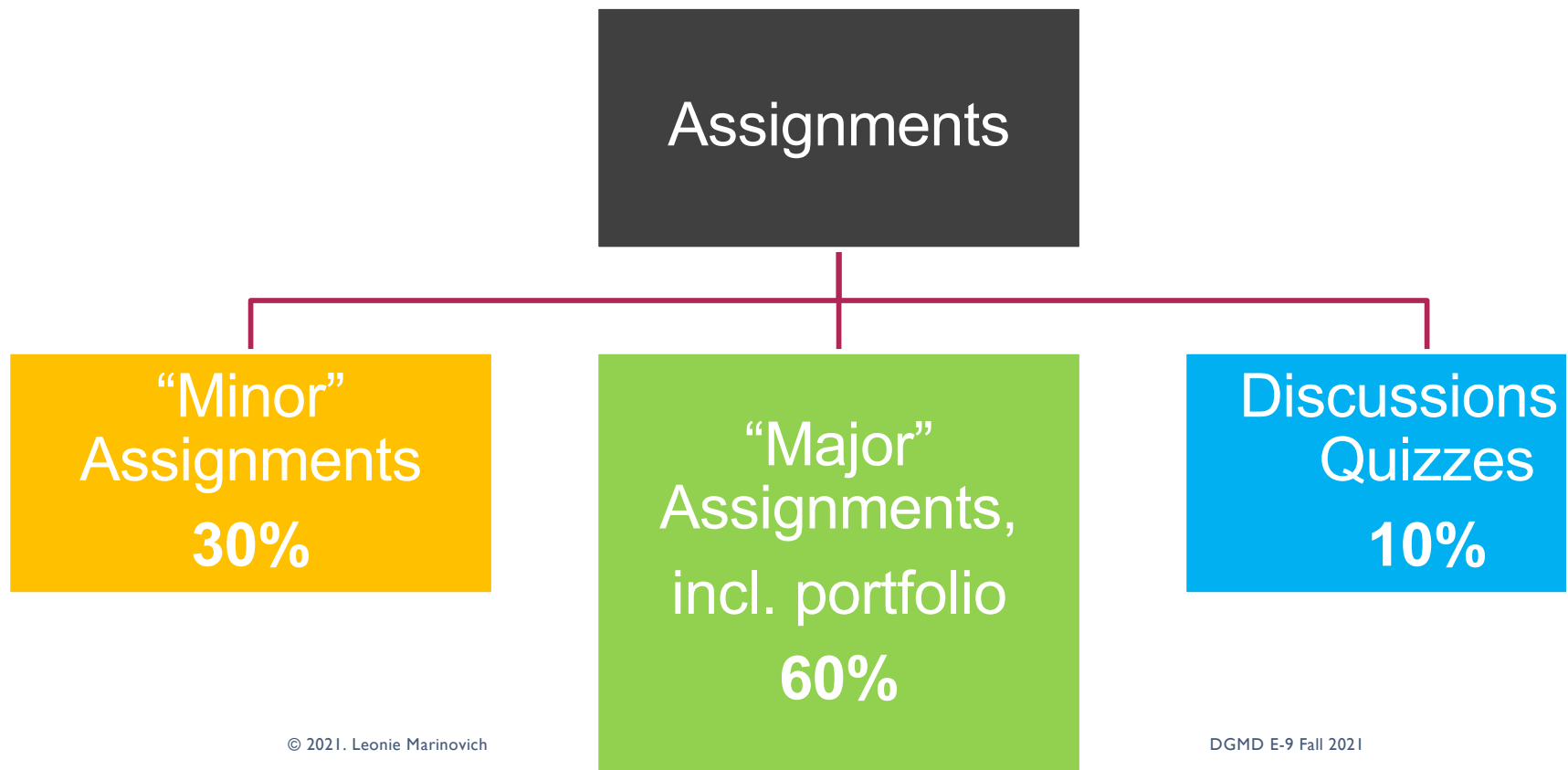
Other tools

- Virtual Walkabout (optional) or during class time

- Assignment linked

Minor Assignments

SET 1

BLURRING AND FREEZING MOVEMENT

How to Shoot the Shutter Speed Assignment

03:37

Step-by-step instructions on how to shoot the first part of Assignment 2.

1/15s (f18 ISO 320)

1/30s (f13 ISO 320)

1/60s (f10 ISO 320)

1/250s (f5 ISO 320)

1/500s (f3.2 ISO 320)

1/1000s (f2.8 ISO 320) - The exposure changes here to slightly under. My lens only opens to f2.8, if I had a

Simple Rubric

Basic Criteria for Assignments

Criteria	Ratings			Pts
Execution of Assignment Assignment is executed as specified in the instructions. The correct number of images are submitted, instructions were completed satisfactorily. Images are shared as DNG files in a Lightroom Album.	**4 pts** **Full Marks** The correct number of images are submitted. Instructions were followed and executed satisfactorily.	**2 pts** **Almost Complete** Either the correct number of images was not submitted, OR the instructions weren't followed correctly OR images are not in DNG format.	**0 pts** **No Marks** Submission is missing.	4 pts
Organization of Images Images are organized in a way that makes it apparent to the grader what the intended outcomes are as set out in the assignment. Images are named to reflect the purpose/contents of the image. Eg. f4.0 (1/60s ISO 200) for the aperture exercise to indicate the exposure settings of each image. Headers and sub-headers are used.	**4 pts** **Full Marks** Headers or sub-headers are used to organize images in a way that allows it to be easily interpreted by the grader. Images have titles that reflect their content.	**2 pts** **Almost Complete** Any of the requirements weren't completed. Either the work isn't well organized OR images don't have titles that reflect the content.	**0 pts** **No Marks**	4 pts
Metadata & Reflection Each image submitted has the correct metadata added to the caption information AND it's visible to the grader. A reflection is included.	**4 pts** **Full Marks** Relevant metadata is visible and a reflection is included.	**2 pts** **Almost Complete** EITHER the metadata is missing, or it isn't visible to the grader, OR a reflection is missing.	**0 pts** **No Marks**	4 pts

Total Points: 12

Major Assignments

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Advanced rubric

Still Life Rubric - Graduates						
Criteria	**Ratings**					**Pts**
Completion of assignment The assignment was completed satisfactorily. A reflection is provided on the page. The final delivery is according to the assignment requirements.	**5 pts** **Full Marks** All aspects of the assignment were completed as per the instructions.	**4 pts** 4 Most of the aspects of the assignment were completed as per the instructions.	**3 pts** 3 pts Some of the aspects of the assignment were completed as per the instructions.	**2 pts** 2 > There seems to have been some misunderstanding in the interpretation of the instructions.	**0 pts** No Marks	5 pts

	5 pts **Accomplished**	4 pts **Skilled**	3 pts **Developing**	2 pts 2>	0 pts No Marks	
Visual Appeal : Technical Ability Images are appropriately exposed for the scene. They are neither over- nor under-exposed. - There are no "clipped" highlights or blacks - Focus: Does the image have focus in the appropriate place? - Is the Depth-of-Field adequate? - Shutter Speed: Blur wasn't introduced through camera shake. - WB & Color: There is no inappropriate strong color cast in any of the images. The expectation is that none was added - ISO: There is no unnecessary noise in the images resulting from a high ISO.	**Accomplished** Accomplished photographer. The majority of the images are well presented.	**Skilled** Skilled - minor mistakes were made that affected the final outcome in some of the images.	**Developing** Developing - major mistakes affected the final outcome.	**2>** Needs review and targeted practice.	**No Marks**	5 pts
Visual Appeal : Creative Vision - Composition adds to the appeal of the image. - Light was used to the advantage of the image. (The light is falling on appropriate elements in the composition)	**Accomplished** Accomplished. Ticked all the boxes.	**Skilled** Skilled. Ticked most of the boxes in the criteria	**Developing**	**2>** Needs review and targeted practice.	**No Marks**	5 pts

Technical Delivery	5 pts	4 pts	3 pts	2 pts	0 pts	
Captions are complete, they include: Filename, Date & Place, Camera Settings, Copyright is asserted as a watermark on the image. Images are named, and the names are visible.	Complete	Mostly Complete	Incomplete	Absent	No Marks	5 pts

| Thematic Approach

- The theme for the still life/s was clarified in the introduction to the image/s.
- Set of Flat Lay Still Lifes: Objects are enigmatic and beautifully presented. Composition is strong and it appears that the scene was assembled with care.
- Vanitas still life: Comprehensive explanation of the symbolism of objects in the scene is provided and it relates to the idea of the precariousness/fleetingness of life. The style of execution is representative of the style of lighting used in these still lifes.
- "Dissection" Still Life: Context is provided for the composition of the still life. The set is beautifully composed, and the viewer understands the significance of items in the set. The set is evocative of what is claimed to be represented by it. | 5 pts
Very accomplished | 4 pts
Minor Shortcomings | 3 pts
Developing | 2 pts
2>
It's not clear what the theme of the still life is. | 0 pts
No Marks | 5 pts |

Vision v Execution	5 pts	4 pts	3 pts	2 pts	0 pts	
The execution of the final image/s in terms of objects, composition, lighting and thematic underpinning, shows great correlation with what the photographer set us up to believe or experience. The most successful image/s will evoke an emotional reaction in the viewer.	**Very accomplished**	**Minor shortcomings**	**Developing**	**2>** The execution falls short of fulfilling the vision.	**No Marks**	5 pts
					Total Points: 30	

Assignment Design & Implementation

- Some just don't work as you envision – adapt/change/discard
    - Admit when it doesn't work out
- Get student feedback
- Timing & expectations of student growth (be realistic)
- What works for one group doesn't necessarily work for the next
    - Have alternative assignments ready to use
- Successes:
    - Students (and I) feel accomplished by the end of the semester
    - The rigor of Harvard is maintained : Balance between technical and intellectual

Principles for Meaningful Assignment Design

Alignment and Clarity

Set expectations for the assignment's importance and provide examples of how to do it well

Encourage Reflection

Ask students to submit more typically annotated academic products with your assignment, such as a bibliography or "artist's statement"

Structure Groupwork

Don't leave group dynamics to chance: ask students to draft a group contract, and build work time into class

Principles for Meaningful Assignment Design

Scaffolding

Use earlier assignments and in-class activities to create opportunities for students to practice each of the skills they'll need for your capstone project

Hackathons

Don't separate the telling from the doing: put on a hackathon where you can watch your students as they work and coach them in real time

Rubrics

Help students appreciate the relative importance of the different components of your assignment by sharing a rubric

Your Turn: Design Challenge

Each group will work together to create their own meaningful assignment.

What You'll Get	What You'll Do

A pedagogical challenge to solve
 	
A guided worksheet to complete
 	
12 minutes
	Establish the objectives
	
	Choose the assignment modality
	
	Decide on:
	
	  • the implementation plan
	  • the scaffolding needed
	  • the assessment plan

Your Turn: Design Challenge

- Click on the following link in the Zoom chat to open a folder of worksheets:

  https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1QwtOPbl-XZcLOboLsl0ntKftQ71cC-Jh?usp=sharing

- Go to your breakout room

- Open the worksheet that corresponds to your group number

Name ↑	
📄	Group 1 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 2 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 3 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 4 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 5 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 6 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...
📄	Group 7 | Worksheet | Meaningful Assignments that Demon...

Debrief and Feedback

Let's hear from 2–3 groups about the assessments you designed, and collate some takeaways!

- What will students be doing in the assessment your group built?
- What was challenging about creating a meaning assignment? What questions do you still have?

HILT | Harvard Initiative for Learning & Teaching

Thank you!

Resources from the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

Guidance on Non-Traditional Forms of Assessments

FAQ on Non-Traditional Forms of Assessments

Examples of Non-Traditional Assessments

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