

COURSE TITLE: Build Your Own Website Now!

NO. OF CREDITS: 6 QUARTER CREDITS
[semester equivalent = 4.00 credits]

WA CLOCK HRS: 60
OREGON PDUs: 60
PENNSYLVANIA ACT 48: 60

INSTRUCTOR: Michael Boll
michael@bollnet.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course meets OSPI's STEM requirements.

Today it is easier than ever to create a dynamic and powerful website that improves your personal brand, lets you build a personal business site, and enhances your ability to bring outstanding content to the world.

This course is loaded with my videos, tips, and tutorials to help you build a fantastic website using the most popular platform on the planet, WordPress.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of this course, participants will have:

- Build our own presence on the web
- Brand yourself as an educator or other entrepreneur
- Improve your look and ability to stand out from others, including as a job candidate
- Create and distribute ideas, lessons, products, videos, and audio podcasts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Completion of all specified assignments is required for issuance of hours or credit. The Heritage Institute does not award partial credit.

The use of artificial intelligence is not permitted. Assignment responses found to be generated by AI will not be accepted.

HOURS EARNED:

Completing the basic assignments (Section A. Information Acquisition) for this course automatically earns participants their choice of CEUs (Continuing Education Units), Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours. The Heritage Institute offers CEUs and is an approved provider of Washington State Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, and Pennsylvania ACT 48 Hours.

UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT INFORMATION

REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

Continuing Education Quarter credits are awarded by Antioch University Seattle (AUS). AUS requires 75% or better for credit at the 400 level and 85% or better to issue credit at the 500 level. These criteria refer both to the amount and quality of work submitted.

1. Completion of Information Acquisition assignments 30%
2. Completion of Learning Application assignments 40%
3. Completion of Integration Paper assignment 30%

CREDIT/NO CREDIT (No Letter Grades or Numeric Equivalents on Transcripts)

Antioch University Seattle (AUS) Continuing Education Quarter credit is offered on a Credit/No Credit basis; neither letter grades nor

numeric equivalents are on a transcript. 400 level credit is equal to a "C" or better, 500 level credit is equal to a "B" or better. This information is on the back of the transcript.

AUS Continuing Education quarter credits may or may not be accepted into degree programs. Prior to registering, determine with your district personnel, department head, or state education office the acceptability of these credits for your purpose.

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

REQUIRED TEXT

- **Required:** *Easy WP Guide* (Free and paid) by Anthony Hortin. Check out the free and paid [versions here.](https://easywpguide.com/download/)

None. All reading is online.

MATERIALS FEE

Texts, *Easy WP Guide* (Free and paid) by Anthony Hortin. Check out the free and paid (just .99 cents) versions and the optional text, *Stop Stealing Dreams* by Seth Godin (Free) There are a variety of download options here.

ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR HOURS OR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

A. INFORMATION ACQUISITION

Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments.

Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #1: Getting Started

Explanation

WordPress is a wonderful [open-source](https://wordpress.org) blogging/website platform. It is FREE and comes in two different flavors: wordpress.org and wordpress.com

WordPress.**ORG** is where you find the WordPress software that you can download and install on your own server or host. Don't worry so much about that for now. Just letting you know. ;-)

WordPress.**COM** hosts the WordPress software for free. What a deal! You can host your own website free of charge. Your address will be something like this: coolteacher.wordpress.com.

Assignment

1. Watch the video below so you can head to wordpress.com and create an account. There is a paid option there, but the free one is fine. You can always upgrade later.
2. Follow the instructions on the video and you will have a site ready to go.
3. Write a 250-word reflection on the following:
 1. What name did you pick for your website address and why?
 2. What are your reasons for developing your site?
 3. What are your initial thoughts/reactions to using WordPress?
 4. How can I be of assistance to you during this journey?

Frustration Alert

At this point, you may find all the choices and options in WordPress OVERWHELMING! That is normal. That is to be expected. That is a good thing.

Resources

https://www.youtube.com/embed/ElsIXMoAt_4

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #2: The Wordpress Dashboard

Explanation

Welcome to the WordPress dashboard. This is where it all starts and where you will continue your WordPress journey. The video resource below will better explain the dashboard as there is a ton of information that can be grabbed from the dashboard.

This includes:

- How many people have seen your site
- How many pages or posts you have made
- The latest WordPress news
- The temperature in Madagascar (kidding)

Assignment

1. Watch the video below in the resource section to learn about the dashboard
2. [Login to your WordPress](#) site and visit your dashboard
3. Check out your dashboard and revel in the power of it
4. Write a 250-word reflection on how the WordPress dashboard appears to you as a new user. Is it going to be an easy adjustment? Maybe a difficult one? How could they improve it?

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/RR0pD98KQOO>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #3: Creating Your First Post

Explanation

The WordPress journey truly starts with your first post! How exciting!

At the end of this lesson, you will have a place on the interwebs that has your "stuff" on it. Think of how famous you will soon be! Once you get your first post up and going, we can start talking about how to add photos, videos, famous quotes, etc. Watch out world, you have arrived.

Frustration Alert

Learning to create your first post is the first step toward an exciting future. It is sort of like learning how to add $2 + 2$ so you can start your journey toward calculus. You will likely find this part easy, but if you find it difficult, push on! Once you have this lesson under control, future ones will be easy.

Assignment

1. Watch the videos below that help explain how to create a new post
2. Create at least one new post with what you have learned. If you feel brave, add some photos, video, links, etc. If not, there are lessons for this coming up.
3. Write a reflection on the process of building your first post. Are you more in the "how does this all work?" phase? Or the "oh gee, what am I going to put on my website?" phase?

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/9YycUNYr8AM>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/VYdSnWHQSXg>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #4: Adding Photos and Images

Explanation

While text is a great way to communicate, images are what make the web popular and will draw people to look at your page. The eye will nearly always go to an image first before it goes to text. This is likely because back in the caveman days, the nerd that read all those stone tablets instead of looking for the lion that was sneaking up on him was eaten.

But I digress.

There are many, many options for how to display an image on your WordPress page. There are also a ton of [plugins](#) that support image creation and display. It might be a little early to talk about plugins right now; you will get to know them more later.

As teachers, we love to post images of things happening around the school, places we have been, or activities in our classrooms.

Frustration Alert

Photos and websites are a bit of a pain sometimes. There are all different kinds of sizes and shapes. Thumbnails can look weird or maybe the photo will get turned in the wrong direction. It can be hard to edit photos as well. Your photo skills will get better over time.

In the beginning, you may just want to stick with adding a single image and using the photo gallery. Turn up the heat and do more as you start to see yourself improve!

Assignment

- [Login to your WordPress account](#)
- Create a new post where we can test all the types of photos we will want to add
- Try out the multiple image options. See what works for you and what is really just too annoying!
- Write a short reflection on the power, joy, or frustration you felt going visual with images.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/vY5uEajHzMY>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #5: Creating a HyperLink

Explanation

Hyperlinks are what make the web work and so successful. Only by easily linking to the content created by yourself and others, can we truly share and communicate in a dynamic and powerful way.

Creating a hyperlink on your webpage is pretty easy and this should be one of the simplest lessons in this course.

Frustration Alert

Be sure to include the "http://" in any link you have. If that information is missing, your links won't work. In addition, it is a lot easier to copy and paste websites into the hyperlink box than to type them. This is especially true with links that are very long and complex.

Assignment

- If you have not done so already, log in [to your WordPress account](#)
- In a new or existing post create two different hyperlinks:
 1. One hyperlink to a website out on the big internet. It does not matter what site it is. You can use Disneyland if you like.
 2. One hyperlink that connects to a page within **your own site**. This will help you learn how to link to pages within your site.
- Write a short reflection of your thoughts on linking to other websites/people/things, etc. around the world could be a boost for you and your students.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/0bcsGPpc3gc>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #6: Adding Categories and Tags

Explanation

Using categories and tags is SO IMPORTANT. However, it is usually NEGLECTED by adults and students. By using categories you bring organization and structure to your website. This won't seem that important in the beginning when you don't have much content but will be a big deal later when you have a ton of content and it is all over the place.

Your typical school library uses a category and tag system already and has been doing so for years. You know what I mean right? When you walk into a library it is divided into sections such as biographies, science fiction, non-fiction, etc. In addition, your kind librarian lists all the tags (they call them keywords) that describe any given book in the library. Now when you go to the search catalog on the computer, it is easy to find a book!

Categories and tags let you do the same thing for your website content.

Frustration Alert

In the beginning, it can be very difficult to figure out what categories you should use. Tags are rather easy, but categories are more problematic. Don't worry too much though. You can always change the categories later, so feel free to experiment.

Assignment

- Watch the video in the resource section
- If you have not done so already, [login to your WordPress account](#)
- Create a new post, or edit one of your existing posts.
- Create a category that is appropriate for your post and categorize it
- Create a tag, actually a bunch of tags, that are appropriate for your post. Don't worry, you can never have too many tags. Only too many categories. ;-)
- Open a Word or Pages document.
 - Write a short reflection about how you will use categories and tags. You might want to discuss:
 - How you will use categories and tags
 - What you still feel you need to learn about categories and tags
 - Your summer vacation (optional)

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/EsGxaXIAIwI>
<https://www.youtube.com/embed/KaetGM1DAM0>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/d1gY65DcJi8>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #7: Changing Your Theme

Explanation

One of the first things you will want to do on your WordPress site is explore and change your theme. The theme dictates how your page will look, where the images go, what color your text is, the size of your fonts, the type of fonts, etc.

Some themes have "theme options" which let you change how it looks in a few or a bunch of different ways. Themes are easy to install, use, and easily allow switching from one look to another without losing all your content.

Themes run the gamut from basic to complex. Depending on how deeply you want to get into it, you can have a theme that has a ton of different options and settings. The standard themes that come with WordPress are usually fairly simple. However, at some point, you might want to check out premium WordPress themes from companies like [Woo Themes](#) and [Themeforest](#). Even if you would rather not hassle with premium themes right now, they are fun to look at for their wonderful design ideas.

One piece of advice: There is always a better theme out there. In other words, you can suck up a lot of time changing themes. If you enjoy this, awesome, but if it drives you crazy, you might want to stick with one of the basic themes.

Oh and don't be afraid to head to the [WordPress theme section](#) of WordPress.org to see all the wonderful free themes out there.

Frustration Alert

Sometimes when you change your themes, your website won't behave in the way you want it to. It might change how menus look, fonts, etc. Some themes are harder to work with than others. This is a good thing in that they increase the options you have. However, if a theme is too hard to work with right now, just find another theme!

Assignment

- Watch the video in the resource section below
- If you have not done so already, [login to your WordPress account](#)
- Test out a few themes. Test them on your site. Have fun! Go crazy. Take some risks.
- Write an awesome reflection. You may want to include:
 1. A list of some of your favorite themes from the [WordPress bank of themes](#)

2. Your challenges or “easies” that you encountered while trying themes
3. What you like to see in a theme. What appeals to your eye.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3vEGwAiCV4>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #8: Adding a Title, Tagline and Launching your Site!

Explanation

Playing with your settings is not a very exciting part of WordPress, but it will answer many of your questions about how to make small changes to your site. For example, this includes the title and tagline at the top of your website, and... how to launch your site. You have to launch your site to allow the world to enjoy it.

The two videos below explain how to change your title, tagline and launch your site.

Frustration Alert

When you look at the settings section and watch the video below you may find that you have little to no interest in most of the things it is talking about. That is TOTALLY OK. Don't feel like you need to understand most of what is in the settings. The point of going over the setting is to let you know where to find it.

As you get more into WordPress you will find yourself wanting to make some changes to how it functions. Settings are the place to go for that.

Assignment

- Watch the videos below
- If you have not done so already, log in to your WordPress account
- Change the title of your site
- Change the tagline of your website from the standard one (usually something like “Just another teacher site”) to something more interesting such as “changing the way education is done.”
- Launch your site
- Write a short reflection about what you found in the settings tab.
 - You might want to discuss:
 1. The reason behind your choice of site title and tagline
 2. How you feel about launching your site
 3. How you plan to share or market your site

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/9jtynKo9pig>

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/HJ8PX8sCoY8>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #9: Editing an Existing Post

Explanation

Once you start producing content, you are going to find yourself needing to go back and make some changes from time to time. These changes might include privacy settings, category changes, photo changes, text changes, color changes and more.

Frustration Alert

Using “edit” or “quick edit” can be confusing in the beginning. I don't recommend using “quick edit” until you feel confident about all the selection options. Sticking with “edit” is likely a safer bet in the short term. “Quick edit” will be your friend in the long term.

Assignment

- Watch the video in the resource section below
- If you have not done so already, login to your WordPress account
- Edit one of your existing posts using the “edit” feature.
 1. Add or change a featured image
 2. Change categories if needed.
- Write a short post about your impressions of WordPress so far.
 - You might want to discuss:
 1. The best parts of WordPress
 2. The biggest concerns about WordPress
 3. How WordPress will contribute to world peace.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/B2y4pNDaMXU>

Assignment #10: Creating a Page Instead of a Post in WordPress

Explanation

This course has mostly focused on creating posts and NOT pages. Posts show up only on the front page and in chronological order. Each new post pushes the old one down until it falls onto the second page. If you plan to have your students create blogs, I REALLY recommend that you have them ONLY use POSTS and not pages. This will make more sense later on when they have a ton of content up there. As long as they categorize and tag it they can take advantage of some of the tricks they can use to organize their site.

It is up to you of course how you wish to set up your website. If you plan to use your site to display information that stays fairly static (does not change much) then pages will work for you. If you wish for your site to be more dynamic (always changing) then posts or a combination of posts and pages will work best for you.

Frustration Alert

Posts or pages? What do I do? This choice is tough sometimes and you may not have the answer you want until after you start building your site. In general, as I mentioned above, I find pages work well for teacher sites and posts work better for student sites. I actually like to use a combination of posts and pages. In other words, I have a page (like homework) that has all the homework posts on it.

Remember though, you can always switch back and forth between the two methods until you feel comfortable with your decision.

Assignment

- Watch the video below about how to create a page. It helps us to understand the difference between a post and a page.
- If you have not done so already, open up your WordPress site
- Create at least one page
- Write a short reflection about the use of pages in your WordPress site. You might want to include:
 1. If you plan to use pages or posts or both for your site
 2. Some thoughts on how you plan to design your overall site now that you have some content on there.

Resources

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/stLNJvJnJAE>

Want to check out all the resource videos in one place? [See here.](#)

Assignment #11: STEM Career Choices

Overview

The future of work, as you know, is shifting. Even education which is often one of the last structures to change embraced remote learning for certain courses or entire programs. And don't get me started about virtual teaching! ;-)

Some sort of STEM-related skills are becoming nearly mandatory for access to a middle-class or above lifestyle.

Assignment

Take a read of the two articles below. One discusses the future of work and how it is (no surprise) embracing remote workforces. The other lists the top 30 STEM careers of the future. This list, of course, will end up changing over time but for now, it is a starting point.

After reading the articles, pick one or more of the 30 careers and in 250 words or more, speculate how the five changes of the future (fluid gigs, decentralized workforces, motivation to work, lifelong learning, artificial intelligence) will impact the career you choose. For example, if I choose the career of web developer, what would my career look like based on the five future changes in how we work?

Resources

- [The Future Of Work: 5 Important Ways Jobs Will Change In The 4th Industrial Revolution](#)
- [The 30 Best STEM Jobs](#)

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED FOR UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT

B. LEARNING APPLICATION

In this section, you will apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you do not have a classroom available to you, please contact the instructor for course modifications. Assignments done in a course forum will show responses from all educators who have or are taking the course independently. Feel free to read and respond to others' comments. Group participants can only view and respond to their group members in the Forum.

Assignment #12: Mapping Out Your Website Design

Explanation

Depending on your [learning style](#) you may want to complete this assignment earlier in the course. You might find it helps you relate to the other assignments. In this lesson, you will get a chance to take a deep dive into how you would like your website to look. What features you would like to have on it now and what features you might like to have in the future. You will get to use your creative juices and shoot for the moon here. In the next lesson, you will actually have to build it though. ;-)

Frustration Alert

You want me to design my entire site when I am new to this whole thing? Seriously?! Perhaps you are feeling this way right now. When I first started putting together websites for my classes I had a very limited idea of exactly what I wanted. I just knew I wanted to do it. I felt empowered knowing I did not have to completely finish the website design all in one session. That my initial map was just a start and that I would add to the map and the website along the way. The best way to build a site is to just do it. At this point in the course, you have the skills or at least a reference to all the skills you will need. As Mr. Nike says, "JUST DO IT."

Assignment

1. Grab a free mind mapping program. My personal favorite is [Xmind](#) or [Canva](#). Feel free to do it by hand if you prefer. I like big whiteboards for this sort of thing too.
2. Map out your web pages. Start with the top level such as class subjects, or similar, and then start listing the topics that are underneath.
3. Add some notes to each of the web pages so you will know what content goes there later when you start building
4. Upload a copy of your web map. You can do this as a picture, PDF or link
5. Write a reflection (250 words minimum) about your finalized map. You might want to discuss:
 1. The size or intensity of the task you have before you
 2. The most enjoyable aspects of deciding how your website should be designed
 3. The difficulties of designing a website; perhaps for the first time

Assignment #13: Build Out Your Website

This is it! Time to take all the skills you have learned and actually build a website. At the end of this assignment, you will have a website you can be proud of, use in the classroom (or wherever) and share with the world.

Are you ready?

Frustration Alert

Going from learning how to build a website to actually putting it together is a big step. It requires that we try, learn, fail and learn again. Please note it is ok to make mistakes and, actually, is a sign that you are pushing yourself in a new direction. Websites are dynamic tools and you can make all the changes you need along the development path you are now starting. Just go for it!

Assignment

- Take the map you designed for your website and put it into action.
- Create a website with at least 10 pages or posts. You do not have to populate every page with content, but you should have the pages up and ready to go. This will motivate you to add content to the pages.
- Include a graphic/picture or photo gallery on every page. We all are attracted to visual images and it really will enhance the look of your site.
 - Don't forget the featured image on your posts (not pages)
- Upload/embed at least one video. (Embed by copying and pasting a YouTube, Vimeo or similar. [See here](#) for help.
- Write an awesome reflection on the process of designing a website. You may want to discuss:
 1. Include a link to your website
 2. Your hopes and dreams for the website
 3. Obstacles to using the website for your students, parents and other teachers.
 4. How you will overcome these obstacles
 5. Future development and design plans. Go "blue sky" with this one and discuss what you hope to see happen even if it is unrealistic at this point.

Resources

[?](#)Find all the videos from this course [here](#).

Assignment #14: Research Assignment Assignment

Complete ONE of the following

Option A

Create a 30 minute or longer presentation to be given at a professional development workshop. It should relate to the themes discussed in this course. Upload your presentation below.

OR

Option B

A communications revolution has come to the entire world.

Even teachers.

As educational practices shift, the ability to communicate with virtually anyone on the planet will surely influence our abilities to reach out to a much wider group of people to help us collaborate and learn.

It also influences how we relate to people and how we can now operate in a virtual world where we never see each other in person, but trust each other with our thoughts, ideas and even money!

Check out the videos in the resource section (or find some of your own) and write a 750 word paper where you discuss the communication revolution, both current and future.

Suggested ideas:

- What is its impact on education?
- Where will the revolution lead humanity?
- What are the upsides and downsides of the communication revolution?
- What impact will our behavior today (adult and student) impact our digital reputation in the future? What, other than going off the grid and the Internet, can we/should we do about it?
- Any other thoughts you would like to discuss.

Resources

- [Suggested TED videos](#)

Assignment #15: (500 Level ONLY)

Option A: A communications revolution has come to the entire world; even to teachers. As educational practices shift, the ability to communicate with virtually anyone on the planet will surely allow us to access a much wider group of people to help us collaborate and learn. It also influences how we relate to people and how we operate in a virtual world where we never see each other in person but trust each other with our thoughts, ideas and even money!

Check out [these TED videos](#) (or find some of your own) and write a 750-word paper where you discuss the communication revolution, both current and future.

Suggested ideas:

- What is its impact on education?
- Where will the revolution lead humanity?
- What are the upsides and downsides of the communication revolution?
- What impact will our behavior today (adult and student) impact our digital reputation in the future? What, other than going off the grid and the Internet, can we/should we do about it?
- Any other thoughts you would like to discuss.

Post your paper as a .doc, .docx, or .pages file into your [online response box](#).

OR

Option B: Create a 30 minute or longer presentation to be given at a professional development workshop. It should relate to the themes discussed in this course. Drop the PowerPoint, Keynote or PDF into your online response box.

OR

Option C: Create another assignment of your own choice with the instructor's prior approval.

C. INTEGRATION PAPER

Assignment #16: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)

SELF REFLECTION & INTEGRATION PAPER

(Please do not write this paper until you've completed all of your other assignments)

Write a 400-500 word Integration Paper answering these 5 questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

INSTRUCTOR COMMENTS ON YOUR WORK:

Instructors will comment on each assignment. If you do not hear from the instructor within a few days of posting your assignment, please get in touch with them immediately.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

Michael Boll is an Apple Distinguished Educator and former Technology Coach at international schools in China and Thailand.

Now based in the United States, Michael is an enthusiastic instructional designer and presenter. He works to make his courses and presentations information-packed, slightly provocative, and fun.

Michael has an adult son with profound autism and is keenly interested in the special needs community and its population of diverse learners.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Build Your Own Website Now!

Hortin, Anthony. "Easy WP Guide » An Easy to Follow Guide for Updating Your WordPress Content." Easy WP Guide RSS. N.p., n.d. Web. 24 July 2022. <<http://easywpguide.com/download/>>.

"My aim for the Easy WP Guide was to write something that was easy to read and that covered the basics in regards to editing & updating your site content. You'll find that some topics within the guide are only touched upon lightly. My intent wasn't to cover setting up your WordPress site or editing theme files, there's plenty of information on those topics within the WordPress Codex and on the web.