**OCW Scholar Standards**

Spring 2011

**Course Organization**

OCW Scholar courses may be organized in two ways: by units and by sessions. **Courses cannot be a mix of the two methods of organization**. The biggest consideration when selecting your organization scheme is that there are no longer artificial “buckets” in the leftnav. If you would like to divide your course into units and will be describing the nature of each unit (i.e., have context-setting content at the unit level), selecting Units as your organization scheme is the right move. If your unit pages would be nothing more than a list of links to each session page, select Session-based organization.

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| --- | --- |
| **Option 1: Units*** CHP
* Syllabus
* Unit 1
	+ Session 1
	+ Session 2
	+ Session 3
	+ Unit 1 Exam
* Unit 2
* Unit 3
* Final Exam

Units are Sections in CMS; Sessions are TLPs in CMS. Unit pages define the contents of the unit (topics covered, an overview of the overall unit topic, etc.), while Session pages contain activities and assets (see below).  | **Option 2: Sessions*** CHP
* Syllabus
* Session 1
* Session 2
* Midterm Exam
* Session 3
* Final Exam

In this case, Sessions are Sections in CMS, and there are no TLPs. |

**OCW Scholar CHP**

*Course Instructor(s)*

The “instructor” or primary content contributor should be placed under “Instructor” next to the CHP image as usual. If you need to thank or acknowledge additional content providers, do so on the Syllabus (see below).

*Course Description*

As with all courses on OCW, the Course Description should describe the overall subject of the course in a few sentences. Do not use this section to describe the course format or thank instructors.

*Course Format*

This section begins with a few standard sentences followed by a bulleted list of the types of activities (videos, course notes, etc.). This is the place to identify any vocabulary particular to your course (e.g., Homework Help Videos).

This course has been designed for independent study. It includes all of the materials you will need to understand the concepts covered in this subject. The materials in this course include:

Note that beginning with Fall 2011, the “Get Started” button will appear in this area, not at the top of the CHP.

*~~Acknowledgments~~*

If you plan to thank a team of content creators, do so on the Syllabus, not the CHP.

*About OCW Scholar*

This is a standard section and should always be the last item on a Scholar CHP:

OCW Scholar courses are designed specifically for OCW's single largest audience: independent learners. These courses are substantially more complete than typical OCW courses, and include new custom-created content as well as materials repurposed from previously published courses. Learn more about OCW Scholar [links to OCW Scholar course list].

**Anatomy of a Session Page**

Session pages are a collection of **Activities**.

**Session Overview**
Each Session page begins with a few sentences describing the objective of the session. Note that this should explain what the user should understand or be able to do upon completion of the session. It should not be a list of the session contents – in other words, this is the home for any Session-level learning objectives. The Session Overview is accompanied by a 100px by 100px image (Session Image). It could be a formula, a photograph, etc. Just like a CHP image, the purpose of this image is to provide visual interest, not to convey information.

Example:

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|  | What do babies think about when they’re gnawing on bunnies? What is the significance of the bunny? Upon completion of this session, you will understand the answers to these questions that have plagued mankind for centuries. |

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**Session Activities**
Following the Session Overview are the **required** activities for the session. These could be lecture notes, video clips, slides, etc. – the activities or materials that will accomplish the objectives noted above. These will all be collected under the heading, “Session Activities,” but can have subheads that identify each by content type (e.g., “Recitation Videos”). Make sure that each activity appears in the order in which a user should tackle it: if she should read the lecture notes before watching the video, place those first on the page.

Example activities in this section may include:

* Read a set of lecture notes / passage in a textbook
* Watch a video
* Review a handout

**Check Yourself**
This optional section is the location for a Session-level assessment of the material. Generally this will take the form of a radio button quiz. Note that while assessments are not required on each Session, Scholar courses are required to have both assessments and solutions sufficient enough for users to gauge their understanding of the material.

Examples of self-assessment activities:

* A radio button quiz
* A PDF of problem sets (solutions to the problem sets are required)
* An essay question (samples of how students answered the question are required)

**Further Study**
This is an optional section that provides links to extra information on the Session material. It could be materials created by the instructor, or it might be links to external resources. Either way, these are not materials considered “required” to understand the concepts covered in the session.

Examples of further study may include:

* PDFs and other resources created by the course instructor for this course
* Links to other courses on MIT OpenCourseWare
* Links to other OER resources
* Links to commercial resources

Note that these four sections will be identified with a prominent header, but will not include the expand/collapse functionality of the first generation of Scholar courses.

Note also that previous/next links at the Session level will be replaced with standard “previous” and “next” buttons beginning in Fall 2011.

**Syllabus**

*About This Course*

Use this section to describe in greater detail than on the CHP what the course is about. What topics will be covered? What should a user expect from the course? Who is this course for? What are the practical applications of it? There is no need to be completely exhaustive: the goal is less to “sell” the course or concept covered, and more to help the user know whether she has selected the right course for what she wishes to learn or understand. Note that this is the right home for any course-level learning objectives.

Intro videos are not required, but if a course has one, it will appear in this section, below the text.

*Prerequisites and Preparation*

Use this section to describe what a user should know – or which course a user should “take” – before undertaking this course. These could be a list of topics (e.g., “a basic understanding of high-school Calculus”) or a link to a specific course.

*Textbook*

If a textbook is mentioned on the Syllabus, the Amazon box will be placed next to it, not at the top of the page. This should be the **only** instance of the Amazon box on a Scholar course (i.e., don’t include the box on each Session page).

*Acknowledgments*

If you – or the instructor – wish to acknowledge those who helped prepare the course materials, this is the place to do so.

*Technical Requirements*

Use this optional section to describe any software or plugin requirements for use with the course.

*TLPs and Further Information*

If you would like to provide additional biographical information, further notes on the course pedagogy, etc., from the Syllabus page, please do so on a TLP, which will be displayed in the leftnav regardless of whether you have selected the Unit- or Session-based organization scheme.

**Previous Versions**

There is no rule for whether a previous version of a Scholar course (i.e., a “regular” course) should be unpublished when the Scholar version is published. This will be left entirely up to the course owner. However, if a “regular” course is unpublished because of a Scholar version, we will create a redirect at that old location so no user will receive a “Page not found.”

**Other Content Notes**

*Video*

Given the assumption that Scholar courses are complete courses intended to help an independent learner master the course material and concepts without outside intervention, it is expected that most Scholar courses will include video. However, **video is not required in OCW Scholar courses**.

If you choose to include video as part of a Scholar course, think carefully about the resources displayed in “Session Activities,” as users will need to be able to find all related materials in this section (i.e., if there are handouts referenced during the video, a link to these materials must be placed near the video itself). Note that as of April 2011, Prod is working on video display for the Fall 2001 crop of OCW Scholar courses. Details about video display are forthcoming.