

UNIVERSITY OF  
PITTSBURGH

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**OLLI** at **PITT**

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A learning community of adults age 50 & better



**INSTRUCTOR  
HANDBOOK**

**Welcome to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Pitt!** The program is very fortunate to have so many talented and accomplished instructors share their expertise and passion with our members.

This handbook will help acquaint instructors with basic OLLI procedures and policies. Additionally, helpful tips and insights for teaching OLLI at Pitt members, and older adults generally, are offered. Everyone at OLLI wants instructors to feel successful, satisfied, and energized with their teaching experience.

## OLLI PROGRAM STAFF CONTACTS

### Primary Instructor Contact:

**Pat Szczepanski**, Program Coordinator; Ph: 412-624-7912; Cell: 412-621-2015; Email: pjs27@pitt.edu

### Additional OLLI Contacts:

**Sharon Gretz**, Director; Ph: 412-624-7072; Email: sharon.gretz@pitt.edu

**Chelsea Fillippa**, Program Assistant; Ph: 412-624-1314; Email: cnf22@pitt.edu

## Roles and Responsibilities – Administrative

### OLLI Staff Responsibilities:

- ⇒ Obtain a classroom for the course
- ⇒ Provide a training session in your assigned classroom on using the AV equipment
- ⇒ Duplicate student materials
- ⇒ Order copies of required texts through The University Store, University of Pittsburgh
- ⇒ Communicate with enrollees regarding any required texts, materials list, and assignments for the first class if submitted with AV request form.
- ⇒ Help you with any problems
- ⇒ Provide access to your course roster.
- ⇒ Facilitate course evaluations through the Office of Measurement and Evaluation of Teaching office.

### Course Instructor Responsibilities

- ⇒ Instruct the course as proposed in your course proposal; inform the OLLI office of any major changes in the course.
- ⇒ Notify the OLLI office immediately if you are unable to meet a class or have any deviation from the schedule.
- ⇒ Make sure you can access your course roster. If it is necessary to cancel a class, you will be asked to assist in contacting the class members.
- ⇒ Get release forms signed by the members of the class if requested by OLLI staff— collect them, verify they have been signed, and return the signed forms to OLLI staff.

## 1. Before Your Course Begins...

- ⇒ Complete, sign, and return applicable forms, and any information (required text, materials lists, etc.) required of enrollees, by the deadline provided.
- ⇒ Schedule an audio-visual training session in your classroom, if necessary, with OLLI staff.  
***Please remember*** that you must provide your own laptop if you need one for your class.
- ⇒ Submit any materials for duplication to the OLLI office at least seven business days prior to the date the materials are needed. Follow the OLLI guidelines for duplication of materials.

## 2. Once Your Course Begins...

- ⇒ Pick up any materials duplicated for a class session at the OLLI lounge.
- ⇒ Plan to arrive 10 minutes before the class begins. Classrooms will be available 10 minutes prior to the class start time. If another class is using the room, quietly wait outside. At 5 minutes before the course, the instructor only should quietly enter the room to speak with whomever is leading the class.
- ⇒ Run the A/V equipment
- ⇒ Contact the OLLI office immediately to resolve any A/V issues. Be prepared to continue the class for a short period of time until OLLI staff arrive to help.
- ⇒ Take attendance during class sessions, using a sign-in roster provided, if requested by OLLI staff.
- ⇒ Schedule a break during the class period. Breaks should be a maximum of 10 minutes.
- ⇒ Wear a microphone when requested.
- ⇒ Do not allow food in the classroom. Members may have a covered beverage in the room, EXCEPT if the class is in a nationality room or newly remodeled room.
- ⇒ Do not allow guests of class members to attend the class.

## 3. After Your Course Ends

- ⇒ Return any A/V cords to the OLLI office.
- ⇒ Follow up with OLLI staff to provide feedback on the course, classroom, etc.
- ⇒ Review your OMET surveys when they arrive.

### Who Are OLLI Members?

OLLI at Pitt members enroll in courses because of their desire to learn and their interest in the topic. In other words, they are taking the course because they want to, not because they have to. This fact is often rewarding to our instructors—knowing that the individuals in the class truly want to be there.

OLLI students, though they may be as old as 90, may also be as young as 50, and are lively and intellectually curious. Many members are quite sophisticated as well, having lived accomplished or even extraordinary lives.

## Expectations and Responsibilities—Teaching/Leading the Class

### Course Instructor Responsibilities

#### Be Prepared and Organized

- ⇒ Take advantage of early arrivals. Get acquainted. Ask the class members about their expectations.
- ⇒ Do introduce yourself to the class.
- ⇒ Begin class on time.
- ⇒ Have clear objectives for each class and share those objectives with the class members.
- ⇒ Provide ground rules for classroom discussion
- ⇒ Briefly review the previous week's course concepts and overview this week's objectives at the start of each class.
- ⇒ Use all of your class time. Do not end class early and also do not extend class past your ending time, as another class will be in the classroom.

#### Keep the Course on Track

- ⇒ Do not have a large class introduce themselves.
- ⇒ Match your teaching to the description in the OLLI catalog. If you listed your course as a lecture course, the students will be expecting primarily lecture, with the instructor sharing most of the information. If you described your course as discussion oriented, that is what will be expected.
- ⇒ Retain control of the topic/discussion. Intervene early if a class member attempts to monopolize discussion or “grandstand”. It is your responsibility to ensure that no one monopolizes class time or leads the course topic and content astray.
- ⇒ Start the class with your expectations (i.e.—that no one monopolizes discussion or goes on tangential paths with group discussion).
- ⇒ Avoid spiraling off of the topic or excessive digressing.
- ⇒ Allow time for questions & answers but retain control of the flow and timing of your class. It may be best to defer questions until the end of your lecture, rather than being interrupted throughout.
- ⇒ Ask members to turn off their cell phones at the start of the class.
- ⇒ Remember that OLLI courses have no homework, tests, or grades. You may suggest assignments for at-home learning but these should be described as optional. While many, if not most, of our members enjoy verbally participating and sharing ideas, classroom participation is also optional. Please do not require anyone to speak up.

## Using Audio-Visual Materials

- ⇒ Provide class members with some form of organizer, be it a simplified syllabus, one page course outline, study guide, map, timeline or other advanced organizer. This helps class members re-orient each week and enables them to have context and reference points as you teach.
- ⇒ Use AV materials to provide a framework for understanding, not for whole ideas. If using PowerPoint:
  - ⇒ Keep slides simple, uncrowded, and easy to use.
  - ⇒ Avoid text-heavy slides
  - ⇒ Display slides with a large enough font (no smaller than 28 pt.) to enable people at the back of the room to read easily.
  - ⇒ Use bullet points vs. complete sentences. Always avoid using paragraphs.
- ⇒ **AVOID reading** your A/V material to the class!
- ⇒ Remember that older adult learners, just like their younger counterparts, take in information differently. In your class are visual learners, auditory learners, etc. Be mindful of this, and prepare course materials and presentations with this in mind.
- ⇒ Be sensitive to declining vision by providing easily readable handouts and visual materials.
- ⇒ Provide bibliographies or resource lists.

**Note:** *We will not duplicate a PowerPoint presentation in its entirety for the class. We recommend selecting only those slides critical for the class members to have, such as a map, timeline, reference list, or glossary. Instructors may share their PowerPoint electronically, if they chose.*

## Tips for Teaching Our OLLI Members and Older Adult Learners

Following are some tips to keep in mind when teaching older adults. Additionally, the tips are gathered from past course evaluations and OLLI member feedback about what makes for an excellent class experience.

- ⇒ Manage your time well. Don't try to cover too much in a short time. Conversely, do pace yourself to get through the material and topics described in your course objectives and overview.
- ⇒ Allow a slightly longer period of time for a response to questions and for group discussion.
- ⇒ Briefly review the previous week's course concepts.
- ⇒ Consider providing your email address to class members for questions/comments between classes. (Note: this is not an expectation, nor a requirement)
- ⇒ Speak slightly slower than your conversational speaking rate.
- ⇒ When taking questions, repeat the question before you answer it.
- ⇒ Be sensitive to possible declined hearing ability. Check regularly to be sure everyone can hear. Wear the microphone if you receive that request.

## Guidelines for Course Material Duplication

The OLLI staff will photocopy materials for use in an OLLI course. However, to ensure that the work is done efficiently, follow the guidelines below. All materials can be submitted by email to [pis27@pitt.edu](mailto:pis27@pitt.edu) or brought to the OLLI office suite, Room 1437 in Wesley W. Posvar Hall. If Program Coordinator, Pat Szczepanski, is not in the office, please ask OLLI staff to place your materials on her desk.

### Deadlines:

- ⇒ Materials to be copied must be received 5-7 **working** days before they are needed. Materials for duplication will not be accepted the same day that they are needed for a class. At the beginning of the term, allow more time for duplication as many people will be making requests.
- ⇒ It is preferred that all materials for the course be submitted for duplication at one time so that they can be collated into one packet.
- ⇒ Copies requested for the first class will be brought to the first class by OLLI staff. Do not request that copies be completed the week before the first class. OLLI cannot guarantee completion times.
- ⇒ Copies requested for subsequent classes will be left under the instructor's name in the OLLI Lounge, Wesley W. Posvar Hall. The copies will be in the faculty filing cabinet in a name labeled folder. Instructors will be contacted by e-mail or phone when their copies are ready. The OLLI lounge is open Monday – Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m to pick up copied material. The lounge may close early on the last business day before a holiday, so plan for picking up course materials.

### Guidelines:

- ⇒ Suggested materials: OLLI members appreciate lists of outside readings or reference materials, websites that provide additional information, lists of course-specific terms, and possibly timelines.
- ⇒ If teaching a literature course, OLLI staff will work with the instructor regarding the volume of sheets to be copied. It is highly recommended that literature instructors use an inexpensive book that contains much of the material for the course, using copies to supplement the readings.
- ⇒ OLLI will not duplicate entire PowerPoint presentations. Instructors may request copies of a few necessary slides/pages.

### Quality of Materials:

- ⇒ Materials to be copied should be high quality and copy machine ready. Instructors who want information copied from a book or any other original source must be willing to leave the source with the OLLI office or submit a good quality copy of the information.
- ⇒ Materials to be duplicated should not have significant black areas, such as illustrations or photos, unless they are integral to the class. If materials are received with such photos, the photos may be redacted to assist in the duplication process.

- ⇒ Oversize copies, large maps, website information with advertisements, etc. included, or poor-quality originals will not be accepted.
- ⇒ Articles from websites should be in the “printer-friendly” version, without ads and excess materials. Do not request website copies with ads, excess photos, and other extraneous and unnecessary information.
- ⇒ Instructors requesting copies of material from a website are responsible for downloading the information either in the printer-ready version, or as text copied and pasted into a Word document.

## Alternatives to Paper Copies

- ⇒ **Box Files**—*Box* is a cloud-based storage platform. OLLI staff can set up a Box Folder for an instructor within the university system. Instructors can then upload files for their class and share the folder link with class members.
- ⇒ **Email** — About ten days before a course begins, instructors will receive access to their current course roster via email. Additionally, instructors can email students information and electronic files. **PLEASE** use the bcc line in email so that class members do not view each other’s email addresses.
- ⇒ **Generally** — Please consider the amount of necessary material when sending electronic files. Some OLLI members may not read large amounts of materials online or print it out. Also, if there are materials an instructor wants class members to have in hand during class, that material should be considered for duplication of hard copies.

## Questions?

Please feel free to contact OLLI Program Coordinator, Pat Szczepanski at 412-624-7912 or pjs27@pitt.edu. She will be happy to assist with any questions or issues that may arise.