Why course design?

“In my 15 years at FIU, I have created new courses and retooled old ones more times than I care to remember…All too often, the results of my efforts have felt like rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic: no matter how much work I put in, a new or revised class would still sink under the burden of my own and my students’ competing expectations…”
The Course Design Workshop...has changed everything for me. Now that I understand both the purpose and the process of backwards course design, I am able to begin designing a course that makes sense from start to finish.

Now that I understand how to teach to big, conceptual, skill-based, life-enhancing goals..., I can make all the parts of my courses articulate not only with each other but also with a specific vision of what higher education in my discipline should provide.”

Kirsten E. Wood, Department of History
Why focus on course design?

This area is arguably the “most crucial in determining whether or not students have a significant (rather than a boring or trite) learning experience.”

L. Dee Fink, author of *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*
Let’s dream a little…

- In your deepest, fondest dreams, what kind of impact would you most like to have on your students?

- What would you like the impact of this course to be on students, 2-3 years after the course is over? What would distinguish students who have taken this course from students who have not?
Back to reality for a minute...

- How do your actual learning objectives compare to your dreams?
- Why are they different?
Fink’s Taxonomy of Significant Learning

**LEARNING HOW TO LEARN**
- Becoming a better student
- Inquiring about a subject
- Self-directing learners

**CARING**
- Developing new...
  - Feelings
  - Interests
  - Values

**HUMAN DIMENSION**
- Learning about:
  - Oneself
  - Others

**FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**
- Understanding and remembering:
  - Information
  - Ideas

**APPLICATION**
- Skills
- Thinking:
  - Critical, creative, & practical thinking
  - Managing projects

**INTEGRATION**
- Connecting:
  - Ideas
  - People
  - Realms of life
The right side

- Resembles Bloom’s taxonomy

![Bloom's Taxonomy Diagram]

- **FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE**
  - Understanding and remembering:
    - Information
    - Ideas

- **APPLICATION**
  - Skills
  - Thinking:
    - Critical, creative, & practical thinking
    - Managing projects

- **INTEGRATION**
  - Connecting:
    - Ideas
    - People
    - Realms of life
The left side

- Fink’s main contribution
- Corroborated by neuroscience, biology, & cognitive science research
- Most recently, by neurobiology
Significant Learning is Interactive
Use the questions (and sample verbs) in your handouts to draft learning goals in the human dimension, caring, and learning-how-to-learn areas.
Next Steps

- Continue refining new goals & determining how to assess them

- To use the rest of Fink’s framework, you could…
  - Apply for the Provost’s Course Design Institute (which we facilitate)
  - Use Fink’s self-directed guide (which we can email you —just ask: teach@fiu.edu)
  - Schedule a 1-on-1 consultation: teach@fiu.edu
  - Buy Fink’s book *Creating Significant Learning Experiences*