FIRST DAY OF CLASS
Two purposes

- To clarify all reasonable questions students might have relative to the course objectives, as well as your expectations for their performance in class.

- To give you an understanding of who is taking your course and what their expectations are.

8 concrete objectives
1. Orchestrate positive first impressions

- Your attire.
- The physical environment.
- Your use of the few minutes before class.
2. Introduce yourself effectively

- Your qualifications.
- How formal/informal you want to be.
- How available you will be to the students (e.g., phone, email) and your office hour preference (e.g., set hours, open door, make an appointment).
- Research interests as they relate to the course.
- Trying to determine whether you are a harsh or easy grader, and how flexible you will be with deadlines.
3. Clarify learning objectives & expectations

- Describe the prerequisites.
- Highlight main aspects of the syllabus: objectives, their alignment with assessment, instructional strategies, reasons for choosing the textbook or other materials.
- Consider a quiz on the syllabus.
- Explain your expectations for student behavior.
- Communicate your commitment to the students’ learning experience: Share some advice for success in your course (e.g., attendance, participation, keeping up with the readings) and let them know you are confident in their success as long as they put in the required effort.
4. Help students learn about each other

- Icebreakers or activities in groups

5. Set the tone for the course

- Whatever you plan to do during the semester, do it on the first day (if possible).
6. Collect data about...

### Baseline knowledge
- Relevant courses
- Ungraded pre-test
- How confident they feel about particular knowledge and ability to apply it

### Motivation
- Why
- Expectations
- Challenges

If inadequate prior knowledge/expectations, give alternatives… or not!
7. Whet students’ appetite for course content

- Short reading about the course
- Generate hypothesis about the course contents
- Connect course to current events
- Reveal misconceptions
8. Inform students of logistics

- Classroom changes
- Materials
- Switching teachers
- Administrative procedures
- Others
References