

Why WordPress Is an OWI's Best Friend

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<http://guiseppegetto.com>

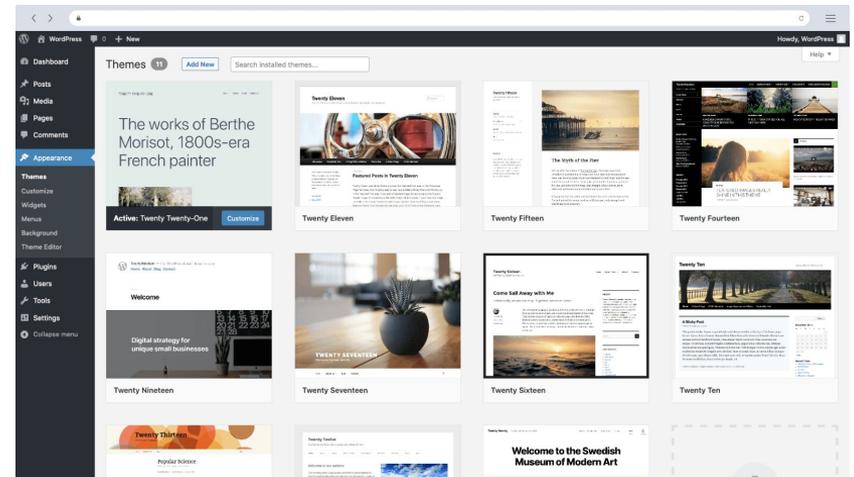




What is WordPress?

1

WordPress is an **open source content management system** or CMS. This means you can use it to build a **course website** that is relatively **easy to configure** and can **add features and content** as you need to.





Why use WordPress for course websites?

2

If you're going to use a website for your OWI course, WordPress is a good choice for several reasons:

- **Customization**
- **Collaboration**
- **Interaction**
- **Iteration**



Customizable
Designs



SEO
Friendly



Responsive
Mobile Sites



High
Performance



Manage
on the Go



High
Security



Powerful
Media Management



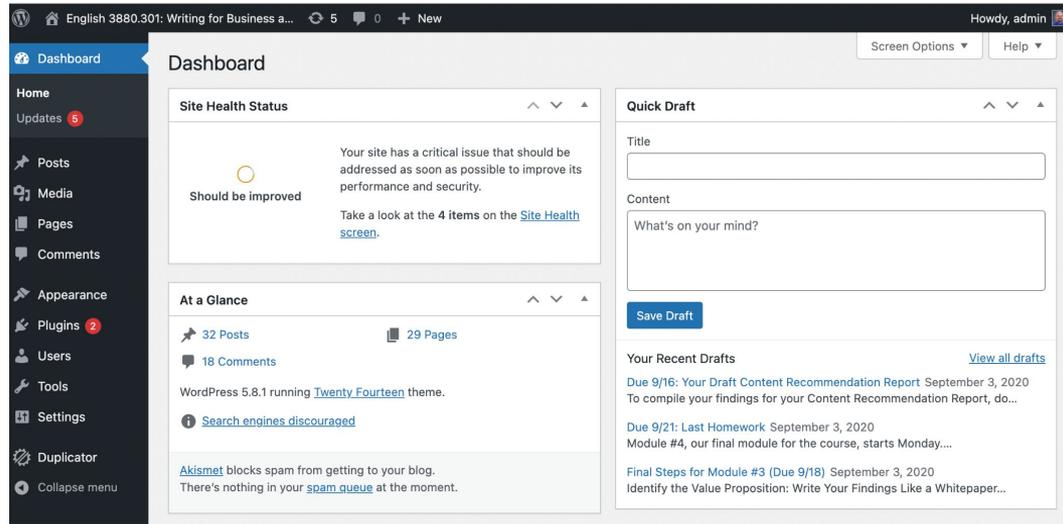
Easy and
Accessible



Customization

3

Once you install WordPress on a hosted domain (e.g., guisepppegetto.com), you get a robust **dashboard** that allows you to **configure all aspects** of your course website, including **updates, posts, pages, media, appearance, plugins, users, tools, settings, duplicator, and spam queue.**

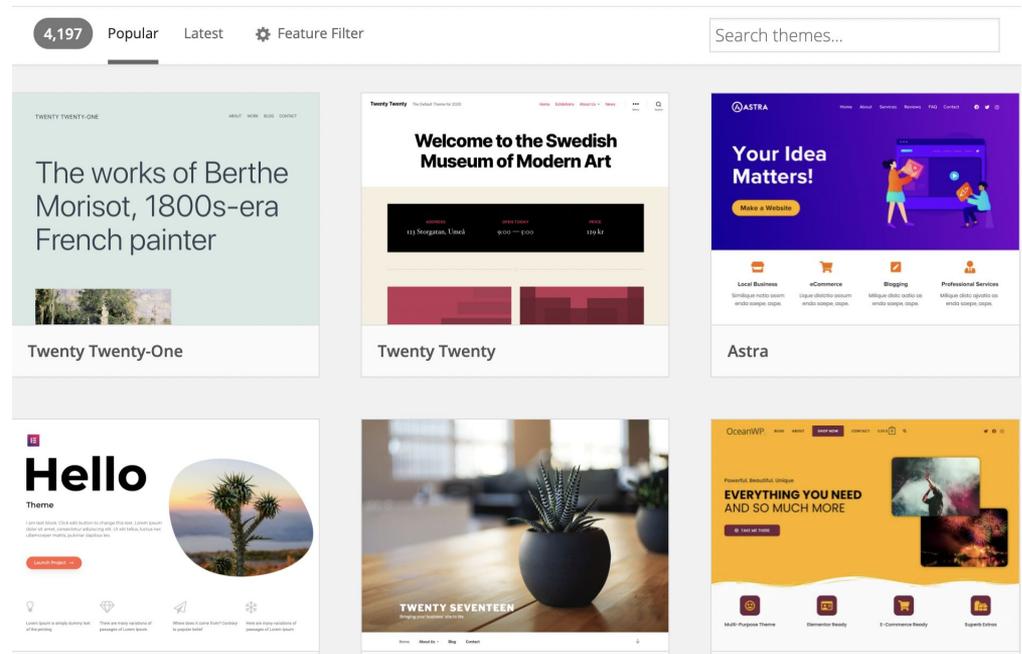




Customization

4

WordPress comes bundled with thousands of **free themes, or layouts** (<https://wordpress.org/themes/> or Appearance > Themes from your dashboard menu). These themes allow you to **quickly build a website** that will suit almost any situation **without using code**.





Customization

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After setting up your site, **posts** and **pages** will be the features you use the most. Posts being **blogs or announcements** and pages **being permanent elements** of your course like your schedule, syllabus, etc.

The screenshot displays two sections of a course management interface. The top section is for 'Posts', featuring a search bar, a 'Bulk actions' dropdown, an 'Apply' button, 'All dates' and 'All Categories' dropdowns, and a 'Filter' button. Below this is a table with columns for 'Title', 'Author', 'Categories', 'Tags', and a comment icon. One post is visible: 'Next After Module #1: Homework #3 Due 9/14/21' by 'admin' with 'Teacher Announcements' and 'featured' tags. The bottom section is for 'Pages', with a similar control bar and a table showing 'Cover Letters' by 'admin'.

Title	Author	Categories	Tags	
<input type="checkbox"/> Next After Module #1: Homework #3 Due 9/14/21	admin	Teacher Announcements	featured	—

Title	Author
<input type="checkbox"/> Cover Letters	admin



Customization

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You also have access to **plugins** (<https://wordpress.org/plugins/> or Plugins from your dashboard menu) that allow you to **add features** to your site. There are tons of **education-focused** plugins.



WizIQ
★★★★☆ (11)
Tags: teaching, online teaching, education, elearning, virtual classroom, training, online classes, live online classes, live classes, e-learning, onl ...

authorGEN Technologies Pvt. Ltd
100+ active installations



BU Learning Blocks
★★★★★ (1)
BU Learning BLocks is a plugin to facilitate online learning.

Boston University: Web Applications
Fewer than 10 active installations Tested with 5.7.3



LMS Plugin – eLearning, Online Courses by Attest
★★★★☆ (4)
Attest is a WordPress LMS Plugin, good for Tutors, that helps create free Online Courses and Lessons with a Gutenberg-ready interface.

WP Attest
60+ active installations Tested with 5.6.5



Lyon Site Activity
☆☆☆☆☆ (0)
A simple, lightweight plugin that gives site administrators an at-a-glance view of recent content edits.

Wheaton College
Fewer than 10 active installations Tested with 5.3.8



Collaboration

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It's also easy to scaffold a WordPress website for **collaboration**, including **discussion**, **peer review of student drafts**, and hosting **multimedia** experiences (such as photos, images, or even webinars).



Live updates from Excel
★★★★☆ (5)
Display live updating data from your desktop Microsoft Excel spreadsheets in your WordPress blog. No file saving or importing required.

ipushpull
300+ active installations Tested with 5.6.0



eRoom - Zoom Meetings & Webinar
★★★★☆ (34)
Remote type of work requires powerful tools to make sure all the business processes correspond to the level and are done without any loss.

StylemixThemes
10,000+ active installations Tested with 5.8.1



Accordion Toggle
★★★★★ (1)
Display Your FAQs & Improve User Experience with Accordion/Toggle block.

WPDeveloper
900+ active installations Tested with 5.6.5



Multicollab - Google Doc-Style Editorial Commenting for WordPress
★★★★☆ (5)
This plugin serves the commenting feature like Google Docs within the Gutenberg Editor!

multidots
80+ active installations Tested with 5.8.1



Collaboration

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Discussion is easy as every post on your website natively comes enabled with **nested comments**. Students **can talk to each other** fluidly and autonomously or you can **scaffold more direct forms** of discussion. This helps facilitate an authentic sense of **community**.

RECENT COMMENTS

Noah on [Upcoming Job Fair!](#)

ZacharyV on [Student Introduction](#)

Brenna on [Introducing Connor](#)

Zachary on [Upcoming Job Fair!](#)

Christyn on [Student Introduction](#)

Write:

1. Make a substantive comment on a recent post on the course website. Try to say something meaningful about the information there to the rest of the class. You are also encouraged to respond to any other comments you find on that post. Alternately: post something you think might be interesting to the rest of the class, such as a news article or local announcement.

NEWS ITEMS

UPCOMING JOB FAIR!

[AUGUST 23, 2021](#) [GRIFFIN](#) [3 COMMENTS](#) [EDIT](#)

There is no better way to network than a job fair!

This upcoming Thursday (8/26/2021) ECU will be hosting its first job fair of the fall semester! From my experience it is definitely worth attending if you have not attended one yet. This falls job fair will be hosted online through Handshake. I feel that online job fairs are a little bit more casual as well as personal. It is an incredible way to get some one on one time with an employer. If you are not in the market



Collaboration

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You can even do **peer review** by having students post drafts of their writing and asking their peers them to **respond to a specific question** (or questions). If you're concerned about **privacy**, there's a plugin for that:

<https://wordpress.org/plugins/password-protected/>.

Each module, I will ask you a research question, which you must post a response to as a comment on the posts of each of your peers. Your research question for this module is the following:

- Looking at this author's review article: what are connections you see between the two articles reviewed that the author doesn't mention? Does it make sense why they chose the articles they chose to review, why or why not? Based on the homework for this module, do you feel they have identified a particular type of research problem, research question, or research method common to TPC? If so: please describe what makes you think this way.

Category Archives: Student Drafts

STUDENT DRAFTS

ARTICLE REVIEW DRAFT

🕒 SEPTEMBER 8, 2021 👤 CAITLIN 💬 7 COMMENTS ✎ EDIT

[MYNES.ENGL6702.GETTO_REVIEW-ARTICLE-DRAFT](#)

DOWNLOAD

STUDENT DRAFTS

H.MIDDOUGH/MOD 1-DRAFT

🕒 SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 👤 HONORIA 💬 17 COMMENTS ✎ EDIT

[Research-Review-Article-Middough-draft](#)

DOWNLOAD



Collaboration

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Finally, **students can be added as users** to the site, giving them full access to all of WordPress's features (except breaking the site - I recommend the "author" role). This includes a **robust editor** that allows them to create **multimedia content**.

Create a brand new user and add them to this site.

Username (required)

Email (required)

First Name

Last Name

Website

Password

Send User Notification Send the new user an email about their account.

Role

Search

Blocks Patterns

MEDIA

Add title

Type / to choose a block



Next, any kind of **interaction** can be scaffolded into your WordPress website, including **teacher - student**, **student-student**, and **student-teacher**. The easiest way to do this is by categorizing your posts.

CATEGORIES

News Items

Student Announcements

Teacher Announcements

Teacher Responses to Student Writing



There's a **widget** (Appearance > Widgets from your dashboard menu) that comes enabled with most WordPress themes that allows you to **display posts by category** on your website's homepage so students can **easily navigate to different forms of content.**

CATEGORIES

News Items

Student Announcements

Teacher Announcements

Teacher Responses to Student Writing



Interaction

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You can then ask students to **categorize their posts** in specific ways and use that to keep interaction following. You can create **as many categories as you want**. You can also **monitor and quickly edit categories of posts** to make sure your site stays organized.

3. Before you post your introduction, be sure to select the category “Student Announcements” on the right-hand side of the screen.

The screenshot shows a user interface for managing categories. At the top, there is a 'Bulk actions' dropdown menu and an 'Apply' button. Below this is a table with columns for 'Name', 'Description', and 'Slug'. The table lists five categories: 'Class Notes', 'News Items', 'Student Announcements', and 'Student Questions'. To the right of the table, there are two user profiles: 'admin' and 'Christyn'. The 'admin' profile is associated with 'Teacher Announcements' and the 'Christyn' profile is associated with 'Student Announcements'. A minus sign is visible next to each profile name.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Name	Description	Slug
<input type="checkbox"/>	Class Notes	–	classnotes
<input type="checkbox"/>	News Items	–	news
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Announcements	–	student-announcements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student Questions	–	studentqa

admin Teacher Announcements –

Christyn Student Announcements –



Interaction

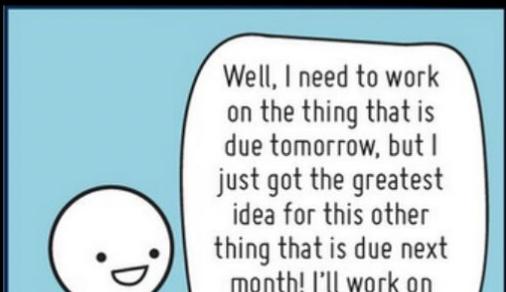
Finally, you can **tag** any post with the **featured tag** to display it in the **featured area of your site's theme**. This puts **important, time-sensitive content** (e.g., announcements) in your theme's featured area (which varies by theme). I like to use Twenty Fourteen: <https://wordpress.org/themes/twentyfourteen/>.

English 3880.301: Writing for Business and Industry

Service-Learning Section

RECENT POSTS

- Next After Module #1: Homework #3 Due 9/14/21
- Project Teams for Rest of Class
- Final Steps on Module #1: Due 9/9 by Midnight
- Next Up: Eli Reviews by 9/7 at Midnight
- Introduction for Bryce Fowler



TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEXT AFTER MODULE #1:
HOMEWORK #3 DUE 9/14/21



TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROJECT TEAMS FOR REST OF CLASS



TEACHER RESPONSES TO STUDENT WRITING

FINAL STEPS ON MODULE #1: DUE 9/9 BY MIDNIGHT



Iteration

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Another reason I like WordPress is how quickly you can **iterate** your courses by **cloning existing WordPress websites** to build new ones. This is really handy if you're **constantly teaching in different formats** (i.e., face-to-face, hybrid, fully online, etc.).

English 3880.301: Writing for Business and Industry

HOME SCHEDULE MODULES COVERLETTERS FINAL PROJECT SYLLABUS

Service Learning Section

RECENT POSTS

Course Introduction

RECENT COMMENTS

CATEGORIES

Teacher Announcements

META

Login

Entries RSS

Comments RSS

WordPress.org

GUIDEPPE'S TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION TWITTER LIST

"Technical Communication"

COUR

English 3880.301: Writing for Business and Industry

HOME SCHEDULE MODULES COVERLETTERS FINAL PROJECT SYLLABUS

RECENT POSTS

Need After Module #1: Homework #3 Due 9/14/21

Project Teams for Rest of Class

Final Steps on Module #1: Due 9/7 by Midnight

Next Up: Eli Reviews by 9/7 at Midnight

Introduction for Bryon Fowler

TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEXT AFTER MODULE #1: HOMEWORK #3 DUE 9/14/21

TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

PROJECT TEAMS FOR REST OF CLASS

TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

FINAL STEPS ON MODULE #1: DUE 9/7 BY MIDNIGHT

RECENT COMMENTS

Neah on Upcoming Job Fair!

Zachary on Student Introduction

Brianna on Introducing Cannon

Zachary on Upcoming Job Fair!

Chloe on Student Introduction

CATEGORIES

News Items

Student Announcements

Teacher Announcements

Teacher Responses to Student Writing

META

Site Admin

Log out

Entries feed

Well, I need to work on the thing that is due tomorrow, but I just got the greatest idea for this other thing that is due next month! I'll work on

YEAH, IF YOU COULD MAKE US #1 ON GOOGLE OVER THE WEEKEND

CAUTION, CAUTION, CAUTION

TEACHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEXT UP: ELI REVIEWS BY 9/7 AT MIDNIGHT

© SEPTEMBER 3, 2021 & ADMIN LEAVE A COMMENT #F EDIT

5) 9/7/21 by midnight >>

Review of Draft of Consulting Proposal is due to [Eli](#)

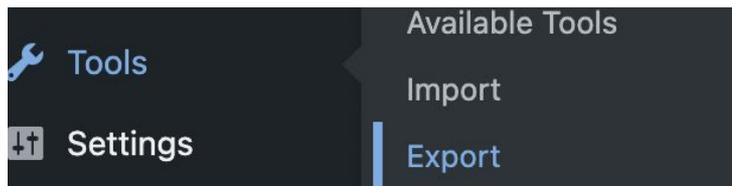
Remember: the key to a good review is to indicate what is successful and also what needs work. Doing only one of these things will not help the people you review.



Iteration

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WordPress allows you to **export all your content into an XML file**. This XML file can then be **imported into any new WordPress-based website** and will bring with it your **content, layout,** and even your **media** if you so wish.



Export

When you click the button below WordPress will create an XML file for you to save to your computer.

This format, which we call WordPress eXtended RSS or WXR, will contain your posts, pages, comments, custom fields, categories, and tags.

Once you've saved the download file, you can use the Import function in another WordPress installation to import the content from this site.

Choose what to export

All content

This will contain all of your posts, pages, comments, custom fields, terms, navigation menus, and custom posts.

Posts

Pages

Media

[Download Export File](#)



Iteration

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For me, the main crux of this iteration is my **learning modules**. When I'm developing a new course website, the first thing I think about is: **what are the main thematic sections of the course?** This helps me think about **what learning outcomes I need to scaffold into the new course.**

MODULES

[General Evaluation Criteria](#)
[Explanation of How To Do Cover Letters for Modules](#)

A lot of the writing work for the modules will be done through the following site: <http://www.elireview.com/> (sign up for an account, enter the code "islet750livers" in the "Join a Course" box on the Eli for Students tab on your dashboard, then choose the six-month access option).

[Module 1: Business 2.0 and Social \(ly Responsible\) Organization](#)
[Module 2: A Million Channels: The Rise of Digital Marketing](#)
[Module 3: Content Is Still King: Content Strategy and Content Marketing](#)
[Module 4: Presenting to Clients and Other Important People](#)

MODULES

[General Evaluation Criteria](#)
[Explanation of How To Do Cover Letters for Modules](#)

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[Module 1: Technical Communication](#)
[Module 2: Content Strategy](#)
[Module 3: Digital Marketing](#)
[Module 4: User Experience](#)
[Module 5: Showcasing Your Work](#)



So... why is WordPress an OWI's best friend?

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In conclusion, WordPress is a **flexible tool for building interactive and collaborative course websites**. It allows you to design a very **customized learning space** for students and to **iterate future sites** efficiently. If you like to use course websites in your teaching, I highly recommend you give it a try!





Additional resources

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My complete WordPress guide: <http://bit.ly/2mnL9EF>

WordPress.org: <https://wordpress.org/>

My course websites, all designed with WordPress:
<https://www.guiseppetto.com/course-websites/>



Book a free, 30-minute consultation call with me:
<https://guiseppetto.appointlet.com/s/30-minute-zoom>

