



## DEVELOPING A COURSE TRAILER

A course *catalogue* offers the nuts and bolts of a class; a course *trailer* brings those nuts and bolts to life by adding the faculty's expertise, personality, and teaching style to the description. When delivered with modest enthusiasm, a good course trailer provides depth to the subject matter *and* reveals what interests the faculty—and may interest the student—about the course itself.

A [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) article by Daniel A. Gross notes that

“Course trailers take many forms. Some resemble short TED talks, featuring slide shows and brief explanations from faculty members. Others mimic film trailers, using dramatic music and snappy slogans. Production quality varies widely, from fuzzy clips shot on iPhones to professionally edited high-definition montages.”

**Though they can vary, Course Trailers should incorporate a few key components:**

1. A brief course overview
2. A little about the instructor & why you are passionate about the topic.
3. A sample of how the course might be taught and will be engaging. This includes a general explanation of assignments, activities, and projects *without being TOO specific & locking yourself in to specific assessments.*)
4. How the course fits within a program--and/or may be valuable to non-majors.
5. An enthusiastic delivery--looking directly into the camera
6. Engaging visuals (could include stock photos/videos, presentation slides, past student projects, etc.)
7. Overall duration of 1-3 minutes.

The [Digital Media Cookbook](#) offers additional insight into creating course trailers, which includes some examples from other institutions. Here's a [trailer for Carleton's POSC 204/304](#) that Dann Hurlbert and Barbara Allen produced in 2020.\*

This “[Instructional Video Starter Doc](#)” gives some general insights into creating instructional videos—including a storyboard, which can be used to plan course trailers, too.

*\*Unfortunately, Dann and Carleton's PEPS and Academic Technology teams generally don't have the bandwidth to produce course trailers, but he and his student staff can be consulted (and sometimes provide equipment and software) to help faculty create their own. In the past, internal grants such as FLTG and CELT have allowed faculty to collaborate with Dann to produce instructional content--which has included course trailers.*