Checklist for Designing an Online Course

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**Key Ideas:** Clarity, Consistency, Collaboration

- Key areas in course are clearly defined on main course page
  - Syllabus
  - Course Expectations
  - Discussion Forums
    - General Announcements
    - Tech Help (for students to support each other)
    - Virtual Café or Water Cooler (for off-topic discussion)
    - Course Topics
- Modules begin and end on the same day of each week (e.g., Tuesday-Monday)
- Deadlines always fall on the same day of each week
- Module content is organized with a logical flow; clear and detailed instructions; no dense text
  - Header graphic with title and date range (use color; be creative here)
  - 1-2 sentence introduction
  - Brief opening lecture
    - Audio only (MP3) if under 5 minutes
    - Screencast (SWF) with slides for 5-9 minutes
  - Links to reading material
  - Interactive multimedia element (e.g., simulation, VoiceThread, YouTube video, web tool)
  - Link to discussion forum with participation requirements
  - Collaborative inquiry project
  - Method(s) of assessment (may overlap with above)
  - Concise list of tasks and deadlines (recap)

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**Sample Course Outline**

**Week 1:** Introductions and Virtual Icebreaker
**Week 2:** Establish Format of Learning Modules
**Week 3-6:** Instructor-led Forums
  - Collaborative Inquiry Projects
**Week 7-13:** Student-led Forums (Entire Class or Small Groups)
  - Collaborative Inquiry Projects
**Weeks 14-15:** Final Projects and Presentations
  (Schedule Synchronous Online Meetings)