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**35 Ways to Market Your Low-Enrollment New Academic Course**

You spent weeks developing a new course for your department, which you recently joined as a junior faculty member. Your chair wanted you to teach only introductory courses at the undergraduate level and core courses in your department’s master’s program, but you were persuasive, winning permission to develop and teach this new course in your area of research. Following accepted and standard advice, you figured that teaching in your area of research would be one way to minimize the time you spend on teaching so that you can focus on the research that will win you tenure. Unfortunately, when you offered the course, only two students enrolled. The chair let you teach it that way for the first offering, but warned you sternly that next year enrollment must meet the department average, and preferably exceed it. A lot is on the line for you with this course: you don’t want to lose your development time by having to prep a different course to replace this one, and you want to show your chair and colleagues that students are interested in your research area (i.e., that hiring you was not a mistake). Time to market your course! Here are 35 ideas for you to consider.

*Setting the Stage for Your Course*

1. It may be too late for this first step, but before you even design your new course, talk to your colleagues, chair, and school career director to make sure the learning outcomes and topic would be welcome to students. If you failed to do this step the first time around, do it now to see what you might tweak.
2. Seek to reduce possible negative aspects of your course. For example, if the textbook is expensive, can you find alternative, cheaper reading material that is just as good? Try to minimize course prerequisites as well. In short, reduce hurdles to enrollment.
3. Invest some time in good graphic design of your syllabus; standard, text-based syllabi do not make courses stand out. Then make sure your syllabus is easily available online to students via your department or school web page.
4. With your course scheduler, examine your department or school’s course schedule and find a time slot that will be convenient for students and that has few conflicts with other popular courses.
5. Talk to your colleagues, chair, or dean about getting your course listed as a prerequisite, affiliated, or recommended course in association with a set of popular or core courses.
6. Find out if your course might qualify as a component towards a certification (beyond or in addition to a program degree) in a certain area or professional specialization (e.g., project management), and include notice in your marketing materials.

*Creating Promotional Materials*

1. When creating marketing materials, don’t focus so much on content or topics of the course. Focus instead on student learning outcomes—what will students be able to do or what will they know because of taking your course? These outcomes are your selling points.
2. Come up with a catchy, compelling title or line for your promotional materials (see <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Advertise-My-Courses-How/129905>).
3. Showcase prior student work in your promotional materials, especially work that is visual and creative.
4. Get a decent professional, but welcoming, photo of yourself taken and include it in your promotional materials with a short bio that demonstrates your qualifications and, perhaps, your sense of humor or something about you—a hobby, a life experience—that might resonate with students. At a minimum, make sure your photo and bio are up to date on your department or school web page.
5. Add student testimonials to your web page and/or syllabus as well as other promotional materials.
6. Highlight in all your promotional materials what students will learn and what makes your course fun or unique.
7. Highlight how your course will position students to do well in subsequent courses taught by other professors in your department, school, or campus.
8. Work with the career director in your school to highlight the practical learning outcomes that will aid students on the job market, and highlight these outcomes in your promotional materials.
9. Gather testimonials from people working in fields that your students may be contemplating in which these people note how relevant the learning outcomes are in their work and how much they wish they had taken such a course when they were students.
10. Make sure that all your promotional materials are in place at least a couple weeks in advance of the registration period so that students know about your course.

*Identifying Marketing Channels*

1. Make a short, animated video (try <https://goanimate.com/>) or you-talking video as a trailer for your course (see <http://www.phillyvoice.com/universities-produce-videos-promote-courses/>). Put the video on your web page, your department web page, or your school’s YouTube channel.
2. Create a page on your website featuring your course or courses. Write a blurb about this new one.
3. Include a link to your course under your email signature.
4. Invite students to invite you to join their LinkedIn network (avoid inviting them through LinkedIn to join your network because that feels more like stalking). Then ask your LinkedIn contacts to spread the good word about your course.
5. If you are on social media, make sure your course is visible on your profile.
6. If you have 16 great topics to cover and only 15 weeks to do them in, video yourself delivering a mini-lecture on the 16th one, and post the video on your web site and on other channels available to you as a teaser of what students will learn in your course. If you use a short slide deck for this mini-lecture, post the deck as well.
7. Decorate the wall outside your office with notices about (or visual products of) your course.
8. Write to your colleagues and student advisors in your department, school, and across the university describing your course and asking for their help in telling their advisees and students about it.
9. Tell students in your courses that have higher enrollment about this other course, and note how the courses complement each other.
10. Ask colleagues who teach high enrollment courses if you can have 5 minutes of their class time to tell students about your new course.
11. Ask student organizations if you can speak briefly at their meetings to promote your course.
12. Ask your chair or dean to highlight your new course in a message to all students, in a newsletter, on the web page, or elsewhere.
13. Create a humorous but informative FAQ for the course that you post on your web page and elsewhere (consider the elevator bank in the building where you teach).
14. Create a flyer, poster, or infographic for your course and post it on your web page. Print copies and post them in the hallway, outside your office, by the elevator bank, and so on.
15. Ask former students to help you get the word out by telling their friends about your course. Ask for their ideas about how to attract students.
16. See if your administration will allow you to write to students newly entering your program, who may have a tougher time getting into courses than currently enrolled students. These students may be delighted to take a guaranteed-entry course.
17. Ask your career director for help in contacting popular recruiters who come to your department or school, tell them about your course, and ask if they might recommend it to students, either in person or by writing a blurb for your web page, syllabus, or other promotional materials.
18. Contact the staff at your university’s teaching and learning center to ask for their help in marketing your course, perhaps in conjunction with other new courses on campus.
19. Consider contacting the student newspaper or campus radio station to see if they might wish to interview you about your new course or, if not, if you might run a notice about your course right before the registration period.

Many of the ideas on this list are my own; I also drew inspiration from people writing about how to market online courses, such as Tyler Basu at <https://blog.thinkific.com/55-proven-marketing-strategies-to-increase-online-course-sales/>, and from university websites, such as this one at Cornell: <https://www.sce.cornell.edu/sce/handbook/course_promo.php>