

# Teaching Non-Majors

There are courses that we teach in which each student is a major and motivated to engage in your field from day one. And then we have other courses in which many students are taking it to fulfill a core requirement or ... wait for it ... It was the only course that fit in their schedule. This one-pager will provide you with tips for teaching non-majors in your class.



**Take time to find out students' interests and future goals.** Find out about students' interests / hobbies, major or minor, and what they plan on doing after graduation. Getting to know your students as people can help set a positive classroom environment. In addition, you will be able to use their interests/hobbies, major and minor information, and future plans in instruction, assigned readings, or assignments. (Dhamii, 2022; Ruel, 2023).



**Share your experiences.** It is unlikely that you took only courses in your major in college or use only content in your field to get through your daily life. When it works, share with your students how you, too, bring in other disciplines to do your work and live your life.



**Make content relevant.** Now that you know about students' interests / hobbies and future goals, be explicit about how your course content and skills acquired can be applied to their life inside and outside of the classroom, in their future profession, and in life (Dhami, 2022; Ruel, 2023). Speak with colleagues in other departments about how a particular course may help support their majors' professional goals. This may lead to conversations around how scheduling impacts majors and non-majors in the course.



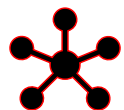
**Provide space for varying perspectives.** Set aside time to allow students to engage in case studies, analysis activities, or other projects during which they take on the perspective of their major (and then perhaps another major). If you're in an art class, for example, how would an artist look at the sculpture? How would a chemist look at the sculpture? How would a poet look at that sculptor?



**Invite guest speakers.** Guest speakers who have used some of the skills in their career can really help motivate students. Dhami (2022) even recommends having a former student who was a non-major speak to your students and suggests a star alum can be really inspirational for students.



**Help students connect with campus resources.** Help your students know where they can go for help (e.g., The Learning Zone, tutors, High Library) or career guidance early on in the semester so that they feel supported (Dhami, 2022). Combine the last two tips by having a guest speaker present on ways they can be supported.



**Return to Current Events.** Remember Current Events Friday in middle school? An adaption on this approach is to have students bring in connections from their intended major to the course content. In this way, they are looking for connections outside the classroom walls.

