

Tech Snacks: Creating with Canva

Have you ever seen a beautifully designed slideshow or poster and thought to yourself, “Wow, I wish I had the talent and time to make something like that!”? These days, visual design matters a lot, and many of us feel woefully behind the curve. Luckily, there’s an online program that was created precisely for those of us who don’t have the money or mental bandwidth to invest in complicated graphic design software.

Canva Overview

Canva is a popular online graphic design program that allows users to create visually appealing images for a variety of contexts and purposes.

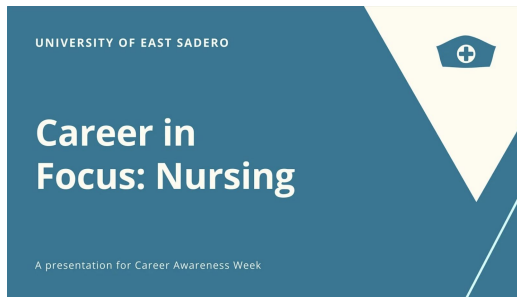
Advantages for instructional purposes:

- It is extremely user-friendly and allows you to create modern, attractive designs without expensive, intimidating design software. You can use Canva’s existing design templates and alter them quickly by changing colors, moving objects, and searching for additional images to integrate into your design.
- It has tons of attractive templates and designs that you can use to create slideshow presentations, tables and charts, worksheets, course promotion flyers, event flyers, eye-catching images for your program page on social media, etc.
- It allows live collaboration between users.
- The “Education” section of the site, which includes lesson presentations, worksheet templates, etc. has many designs that also might give you some teaching ideas.
- You can use it for your own course design, but your students can also use it if they want to improve the aesthetics of a project for your course and don’t know where to start.
- If you’re a club advisor, your students can use it to promote their events.

Disadvantages:

- The “Free” account gives you extensive access to templates and features, but you need a paid “Pro” account to access ALL of them. However, the majority of the templates in the “Education” section are accessible with the free account. You can also easily switch between the Pro and Free version without losing your projects.
- You cannot create vector files in Canva in the “Free” version. (If you know what this means and why it matters, you probably already know how to use Adobe Creative Suite.) Images are downloadable as .pdf, .jpg, and .png. There are also .mp4, .gif files if moving images are involved.

Creative Presentations



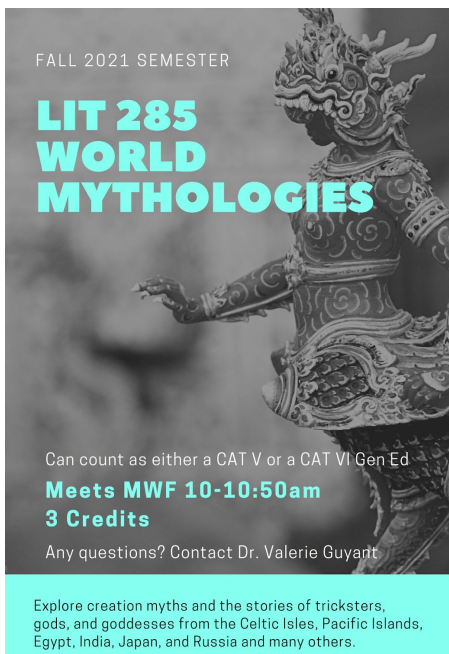
Canva makes it easy to quickly create attractive, modern slideshow presentations without designing them from scratch as you might with PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi. Once you've chosen a template, you can search for specific images to integrate and create custom graphs, tables, and diagrams within presentations.

Note: For full functionality (with animations, etc.), the presentation must be run from within the Canva platform, which requires an internet connection. To run it offline, you would need to download it as a pdf file.

Worksheet Templates

One of the template sections in Canva offers a wide variety of worksheets to use in a classroom. All of these worksheet templates are available to all users (a Pro account is not needed), and they can be adapted to instructors' own lessons.

Faculty can use these as a starting point for worksheets or handouts. Students in certain programs, such as Education, might also find these templates (e.g., lesson plans) useful for their own work.



Marketing & Social Media

Canva is also useful for marketing products or events. All users have access to templates for social media posts (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok), print or electronic flyers, posters, logos, brochures, business cards, and certificates (among many others). Faculty and their respective colleges might consider using these templates to promote courses, programs, or events on campus or online.

Marketing templates could also be useful for students in any course that involves the creation of public-facing communication. Students in the Business program, for instance, could use these templates (or create their own designs) for marketing projects. Students in Writing courses could use blog templates.