

# Creating Relevant Assignments in a Gen Ed Course

Kris Bovy, Chair, Dept. of Sociology & Anthropology

## APG 202: Intro to Archaeology

- A2: Social Science
  - Emphasis on how archaeologists construct arguments about the past.
- C2: Global Responsibilities
  - Highlights accomplishments of past people around the world.
- 120 students
  - ~10% Anthropology majors
  - ~65% first/second year students
  - ~35% juniors/seniors
- Changing modality:
  - Fall 2019 (in person 3 days/week)
  - Fall 2020 (online w/ 1 Zoom meeting)
  - Spring 2022 blended (2 days/week)
- Format includes lecturing, small group activities and discussions, Brightspace content & short online videos.

## Course Changes

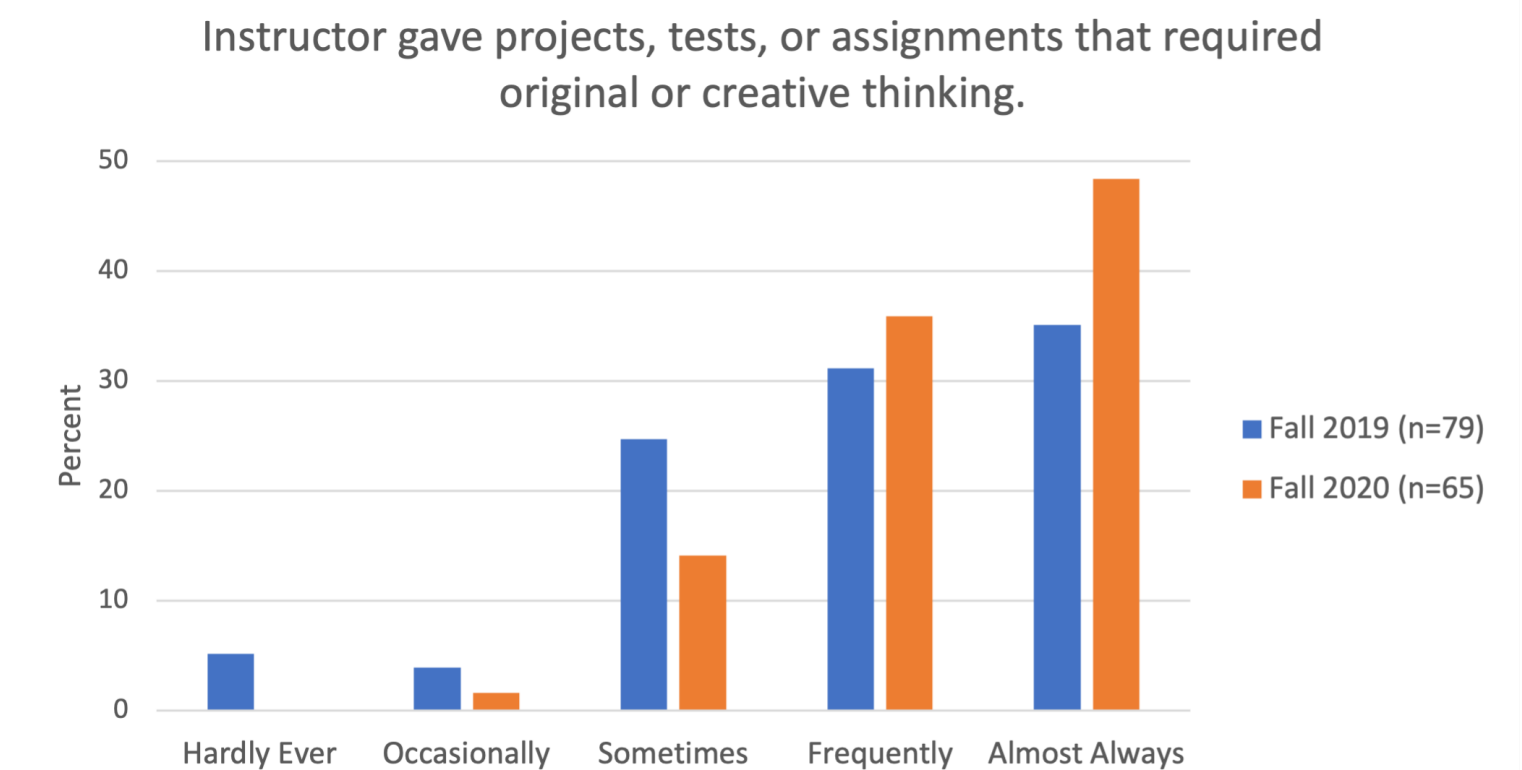
### Challenges in Fall 2020:

- How to engage 120 students online?
- How to ensure exam security?

### Solutions:

- Work with Heather Johnson (Director, Writing Across URI) to create real-world assignments for the end of each unit (in lieu of exams).
  - **Machu Picchu Tour Guide Script**  
Explain to American tour group how archaeologists reached interpretations.
  - **Becoming Human Slideshow**  
Relate key transitions in human history to own lives through quotes & original photos.
  - **Google Earth Tour**  
Create Google Earth Tour of archaeological sites around the world.
- Replace multiple choice midterms with weekly (open-note) quizzes to test key concepts and common misconceptions.

## Results



### Quotes from students (2020):

- *Lots of interesting assignments that helped me apply what I was learning.*
- *I also appreciate the tasks we had to do they were a lot more creative and interesting than a lot of other course work I had to do.*

**Conclusion:** Creating relevant and creative assignments helped with student engagement.

**New Challenge:** Need to develop strategies to reduce grading burden.

THINK BIG  WE DO<sup>SM</sup>