Wordpress Basics
Creating a Website Workshop, February 11 and 12, 2013

Setting up your Wordpress site
1. Sign up for an account, if you don’t have one already. You can also choose to buy a domain name at this time (you can also use a domain name you have already bought, or you can use the free default Wordpress domain name, which will be [your username].wordpress.com).
2. Verify your account (a link will be sent to the email address you provided).
3. Choose a theme. Wordpress has many free themes, or you can choose to pay for a theme. “Twenty Ten” is a popular, basic theme that is compatible with all of the instructions below, so it might be a good place to start until you know your way around Wordpress.
4. Wordpress will then lead you through a number of steps to customize your site. You can edit design aspects such as the background image, header color, and so on. If you don’t get your page looking exactly how you want it, don’t worry! You can change it later.

Customizing design
You can return to the customization page at any time by finding “Appearance” on the left-hand Admin menu, choosing “Themes,” and clicking on the “Customize” button that appears under the description of the theme you have chosen.

If you’re interested in further customization, there are many more advanced options for adding social media and promotion tools. You can find many of these under Appearance > Widgets. There are also paid upgrades that let you customize more aspects of your site; see the “Upgrades” section below.

Creating pages
Wordpress pages are exactly what you might expect—separate webpages on your site that you can use to organize different types of material. These will automatically show up in your site’s navigation menu, i.e. the links to various pages at the top or on the side of your site. You may want to set up different pages for various professional materials, such as bio, photos, recordings, and news.
To create a new page, select New from the Pages tab on the left-hand navigation menu of your Admin panel. You will see options for a title and text. Also of interest is the “Order” box on the right-hand side—this determines the order in which pages show up in your site’s navigation menu. (If you leave all of the “Order” boxes for your pages set to 0, the pages will show up in alphabetical order on the menu.)

You may not want to allow a comment box on many of your pages. You can disable comments by following these steps:

1. From the Pages tab on the left-hand navigation menu, select All Pages. Choose the page you want and click Edit.
2. In the top right-hand corner of the page, you’ll see a box that says “Screen Options.” Click and make sure that the box for “Discussion” is checked.
3. Scroll down and you will see that Discussion options for the page have appeared. Deselect the boxes next to “Allow comments” and “Allow trackbacks and pingbacks on this page.”
4. Publish the page. The comments box should have disappeared!

Once you’ve done this with one page, the Discussion options should appear when you edit any of your pages, so you can simply repeat steps 3 and 4 with any other pages on which you’d like to disable the comment box.

**Front page display**

Many Wordpress themes offer two options for what first appears when someone visits your site:

- Blog. Write blog posts to keep people updated about your recent accomplishments (or whatever you want, really!). This is the default setting.
- Front page. Have a static home page set as the first thing visitors to your site see.

Not all themes support a static front page, but if the theme you’ve chosen does, here’s how to set one up:

1. Create a page that you want to serve as your homepage. (You might name it “Home.”)
2. On the left-hand menu, find Appearance. Select Themes. From this page, click the “Customize” button that appears under your selected theme.
3. If the theme you’re using supports a static front page, you will see an option on the right-hand menu for “Static front page.” (If this box doesn’t appear for the theme you’ve chosen, you’ll have to pick a new theme in order to set a static home page.) Click “Static front page.”
5. In the drop-down menu for “Front page,” choose the page you created in step 1.
If you still want a blog, but don’t want it to show up as your home page, you can designate a separate page on which blog posts will appear. Create a new page (maybe titled “Blog” or “News”) and follow steps 2-3. Then find the drop-down menu for “Posts page” and select the page you’ve created for your blog.

Upgrades
Wordpress offers the following upgrades that will allow you to customize other aspects of your site:

- Registering your own domain (i.e., getting to choose your own website name) via Wordpress and using it to host your site costs $18/year. Using a domain you have already registered elsewhere to host your site costs $13/year.
- The Videopress upgrade allows you to host and play videos directly on Wordpress instead of embedding them from another site. This costs $60/year.
- The Custom Design upgrade allows you to change fonts on your site and even edit the CSS to change its appearance for $30/year.
- The No Ads upgrade removes all ads from your page for $30/year.
- There are a variety of Space Upgrades, starting at 10GB for $20/year. When you purchase a space upgrade, you are allowed to upload audio directly to Wordpress.

All of the above upgrades are also offered as a bundle at a discounted price of $99/year.

Is it worth it to purchase these upgrades? You might consider buying your own domain name and removing ads to make your site look more professional, but you can host your recordings and videos for free on sites like Soundcloud, YouTube, and Vimeo—and then embed those recordings and videos on your Wordpress site. The convenience of storing all of your materials on Wordpress probably isn’t worth it for most students on a limited income. But if you don’t mind paying the extra money, then go for it!