# Site Editing Basics
CUNY Academic Commons Quick Guide

On sites you can add pages for static content or posts for more dynamic content. This quick guide briefly explains the following information.

Navigating through your Site

When viewing your new site you will see the default theme and the "Hello World!" message.

At the top of the page you will see the black admin bar. This bar is important for navigating from the "frontend" of your site (what site visitors see) and the "backend", also called the "Dashboard" where you will changes to your site.
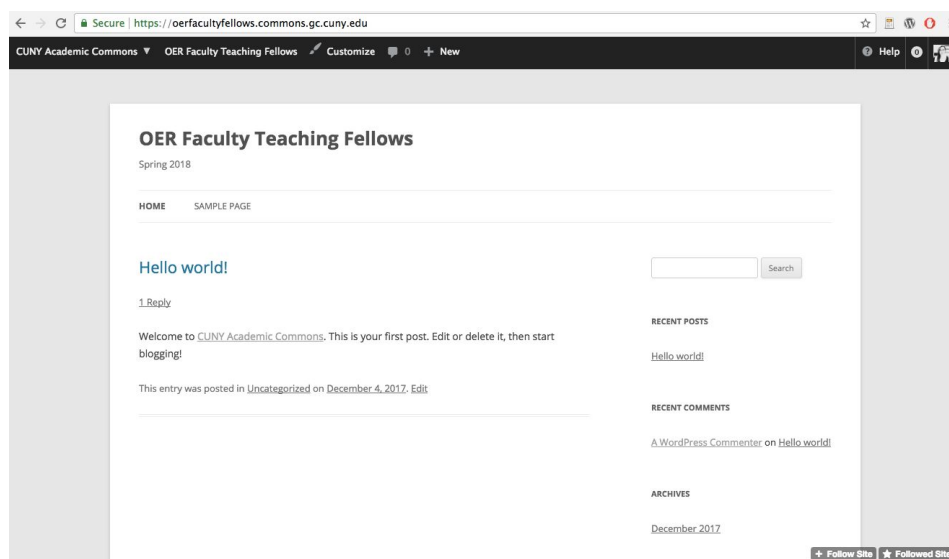

Front End: public facing, what visitors see (depending on Privacy settings)

From the black admin bar, you can create a New post by clicking "+ New" or click the title of the site (below: "OER Faculty Teaching Fellows") to go to the back end of the website where you will find all the site editing and design options.

Once you are on the Dashboard (backend, below), you will see the black sidebar menu on the left. This menu contains the options for editing, designing, adding content to your site.
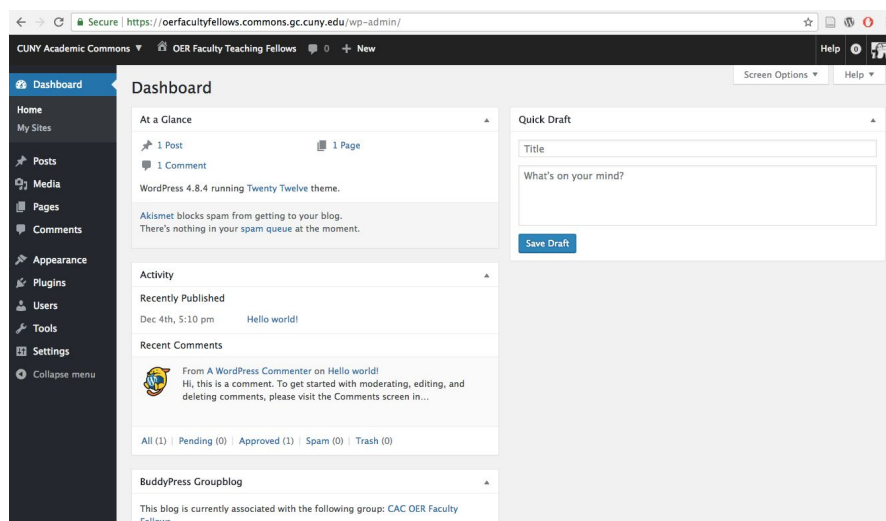
Back End: internal, what site Admins see

Adding Pages and Posts

Pages and posts serve different purposes on your site. **Pages** are best used for static information, like syllabus details or basic course information. Posts are better if you want to create multiple entries on various topics (i.e.: resources, student weekly responses). **Posts** can be organized using "categories" to sort them into specific topics areas. **Posts** are blog entries or short pieces of writing and **Pages** are for more basic information about the site.
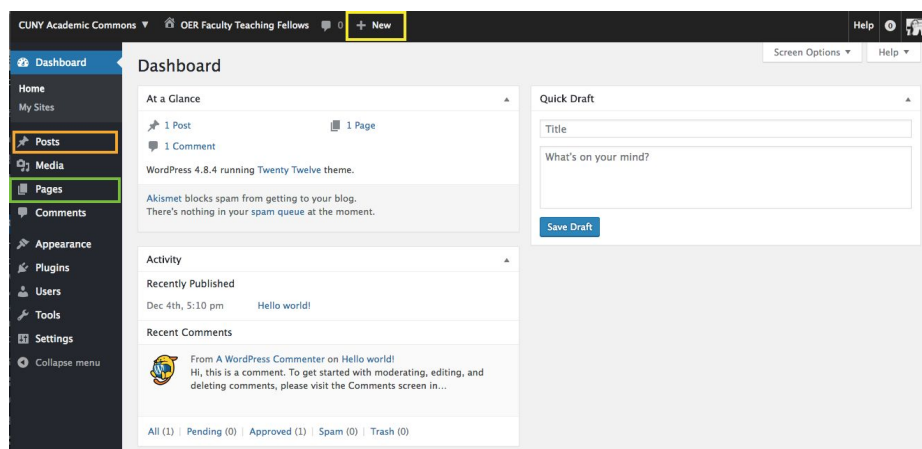
Dashboard: 'Posts', 'Pages', '+New' highlighted above

You can create pages and posts in two ways:

1. In the dashboard, visit the "Pages" or "Posts" area and click the "Add New" button on the top left.
2. When viewing the "front end" of the site, hover the mouse over "+New" and select Page or Post.

Editing Pages and Posts

Once you are in the Page/Post editor the screen will look the same (it will tell you if it's a page or post at the top of the editor).

Use the editor to write the title and content of your page/post. When you are ready to make your post live (add it to the site), hit the **Publish** button on the right.

If you are creating a **post**, you may want to "**Categorize**" your post so that these posts can be filtered into a specific area with the other posts in that category. **Categories** can be created by visiting "Posts> Categories" through the Dashboard. Posts can also be categorized using the **Category** box in the right sidebar when editing the post. A good rule of thumb is one (maybe two) category per post.

Tags can be added to a **Post** to specify keywords you would like associated with that post. Many tags can be associated with a single post to link it to various ideas and themes. These tags can be displayed on the site using a tag cloud (located and setup through **Appearance> Widget** area).
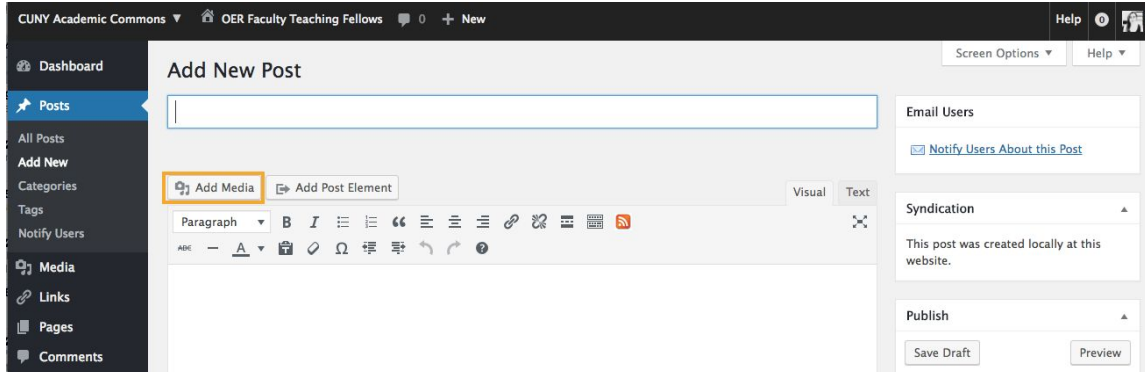
Categories and tags cannot be created for pages.
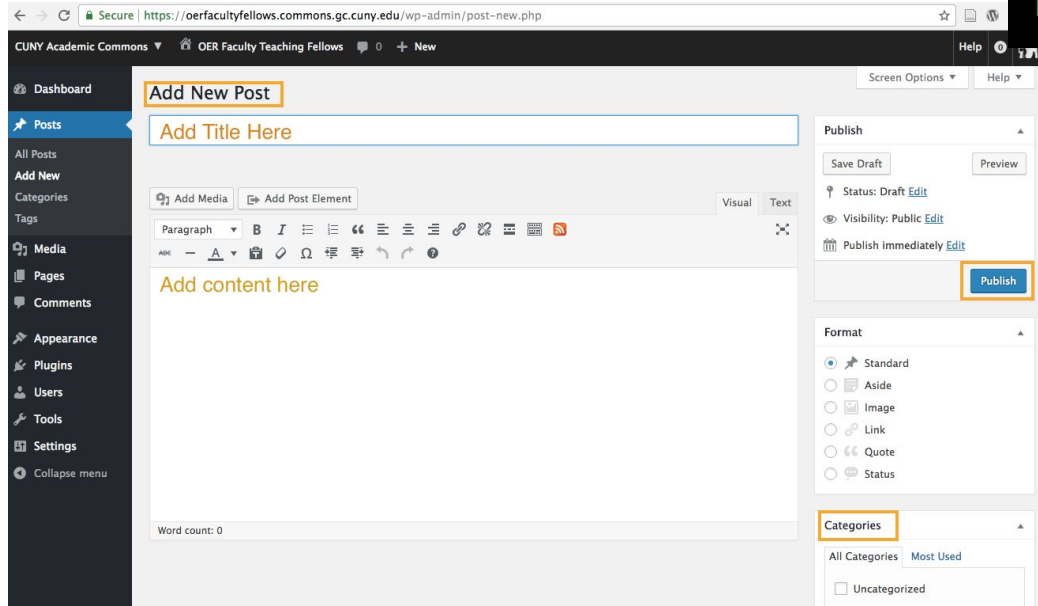
Posts > Add New

Adding & Embedding Media

Create Page or Post > Add Media

On the "Add Media" screen you can upload:
- Powerpoints (need to be converted to PDF)
- PDF Readings (should be Creative Commons licensed)
- Images (should be Creative Commons licensed)

Media that is uploaded and inserted into pages and posts will be visible and accessible to anyone who can see your site, which depends on your site visibility settings. If you want to make Powerpoints and PDFs available only to your students, you can either change the site visibility settings or use the "Files" section, located in the Group area of the Commons

Adding Video

Any Youtube or Vimeo videos will be automatically embedded on your site. Copy/Paste the URL into any page or post and the video will appear. If you are using SmartHistory or ScienceForward (Example: Why Look At Art?) videos, right click the video and copy the video URL (not the embed code!).

Creating a Static Home Page

On a site that uses a WordPress framework (like the Commons) the default home page is the blogroll of most recent posts.

Once you have created several pages, you can select one of these pages to appear as your home page - the first thing people see when they visit your site.

To set up your home page visit **Settings>Reading** in the Dashboard. In the "Front Page Displays", select the **Page** you would like to be your home page.

Next to "Posts Page" you will need to determine where you would like the **Posts** to display*. You can create a Page called "Blog" or "Posts" and select it here so that all posts can be viewed in a single blog roll.

*If you do not want site visitors to be able to view the entire blog roll (all posts) you do not need to set a posts page. Maybe you want site visitors view posts in their specified categories. If so, you will need to categorize posts and list the Categories in your widget area or set up access to the category archive in your menu (see below).
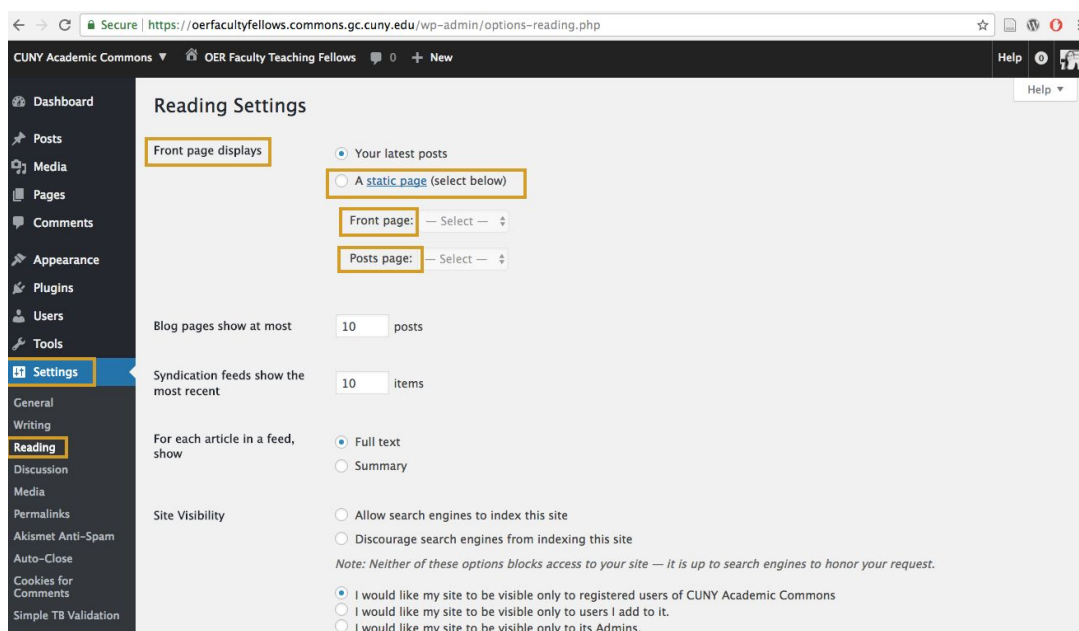
Settings > Reading

What are Widgets?

Most theme layouts have multiple columns, one of which contains main content and one or more of which is a sidebar where other information can appear. Any of the things that can live in a sidebar or footer in the theme's layout are called widgets. Some of these widgets are built-in features of WordPress (e.g. list of categories, list of recent posts) whereas others are plugins (e.g. Twitter feed, list of items in a Google Calendar). You can add widgets to your site via Appearance > Widgets in the Dashboard.

Some common widgets on course sites:
- Recent Posts (displays posts in sidebar)
- Category Sub-menu (to show different assignments, etc.)
- Text Widget to display Course Info (I.e. meeting time, room, professor email)
- Twitter or RSS Feed to display course-related content
- Add Users site bar widget - Allows admin to add "Join This Site" button to easily add students to the course site

Creating Menus

After you have created several pages and posts, visit "**Appearance>Menus**" to set up the main menu for your site.

Create a "menu name" in the empty field in the center of the page. Then, add pages, posts, categories, or custom links to the menu via the box on the left. Using the "Categories" section, you can create an areas of the site that aggregates all posts in a specific category.

Once you have added menu items, drag and drop the items to change the order. Be sure to **Save** your menu.

In some themes you must set the *Menu Location*. To do this, click the "Manage Locations" tab at the top right of the Menu page. Make sure to set you main menu in the "Primary" location.

Different themes will have different menu location options. You may also be able to create footer and other menus. To create these menus you would follow the same process by creating a new menu (in the edit menu tab), naming the menu, adding menu items, and then managing the location.

Creating Sub (drop-down) Menus

To create a drop down menu, use the drag-and-drop arrow that appears when the mouse hovers over a menu item. Use this drag-and-drop arrow to indent desired drop-down menu item under the main menu item.

Be aware: drop down menus often do not meet accessibility requirements for scr[een]
readers.
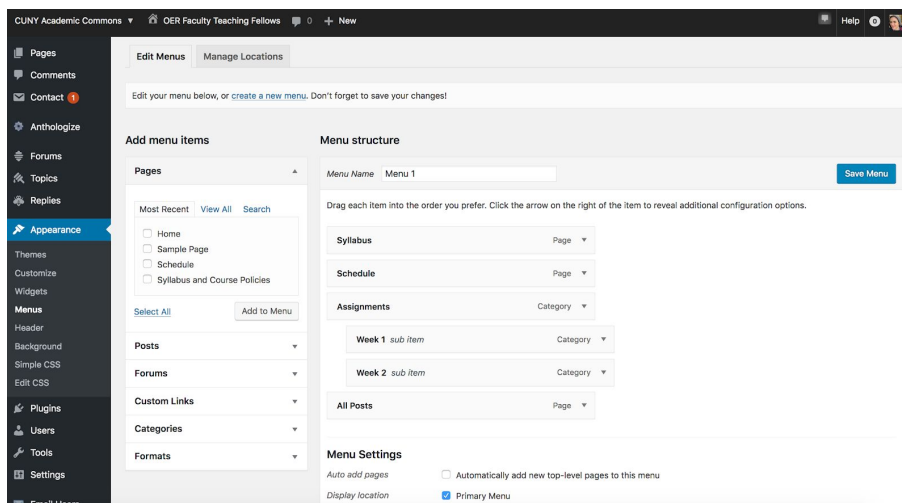
Appearance > Menus

Choosing a Theme

The look of the site is largely governed by its theme. Themes can be viewed by navigating to **Appearance>Themes** via the Dashboard menu (black bar on left). You can "Live Preview" a theme to get a better idea about what it will look like before you "Activate" it, making it live on your site.

Before choosing a theme you should make one or two **Pages** and a few test **Posts** to get an idea about how the site will look (See below). If there is no content on the site, you will not get an accurate view how the theme determines the layout for the site.

Different themes provide varying options for layout, menus, widget areas etc. so you should play with a couple themes before you decide which one to use for your course. A few things to think about when choosing a theme:

- *Flexibility*: Do you want a theme that will look good on a smart phone or tablet? If so, you probably want to choose a "responsive" theme.
- *Customization*: Will you want to change the fonts, colors, and background of the site? If so you probably want a theme with a lot of customization possibilities. Some themes once installed provide options to make these changes or have a separate theme customization menu.
- *Columns and Widget areas*: Are you going to want sidebar space for a tag cloud or sub menu? If so, you probably want to choose a theme that has sidebar widget areas and or multiple columns. This info is often outlined in "theme details" when viewing the themes in the Dashboard.
- *Text vs. Image centric Themes*: If your course will be image/media-focused you may want to choose a theme that prominently displays images. Most themes will nicely feature text but there are some minimalist themes that focus exclusively on text, often getting rid of margins and sidebars to feature text more prominently.
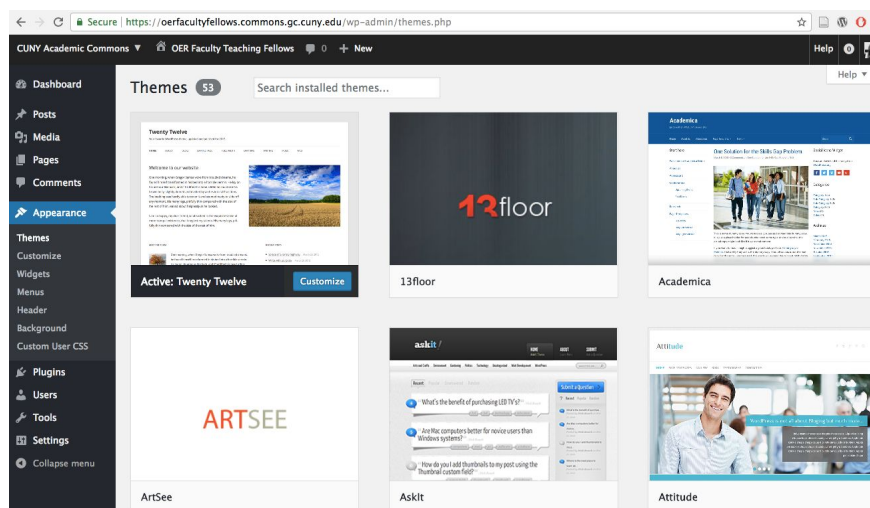
Appearance>Themes

Expanding functionality: Plugins

A plugin provides additional functionality not coded directly into WordPress. For example, you might want to include your Twitter feed or create a forum for students to ask questions. You can browse and activate the plugins you want to use on your website in the Plugins Menu on the Dashboard.
Some common plugins used on course sites include:

- *Jetpack*: adds various functionalities to your site but most commonly used to add a "Subscribe" button to the site so students are notified of new posts.
- *bbPress*: creates ability to add a forum to the site where students can ask/respond to questions about the course.
- *Add Users Sidebar Widget*: this creates a field on the frontend of the site where students can add themselves (via email/username) to course site.
- *Category Sticky Post*: categories help organize posts on the site. This allows for one post in each category to be "sticky" meaning it always appears at that top of that category. This can be helpful for keeping assignment guidelines at the top of the page, with student submissions below.