

# Course design strategies

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CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

# Working from the presumption that we want

students

to learn

to be intellectually challenged

faculty

to enjoy their teaching

to have better work/life balance

the course design  
process

to feel manageable and useful

to save faculty time in the long run

the Core Curriculum  
Committee

to have enough information to approve  
courses swiftly

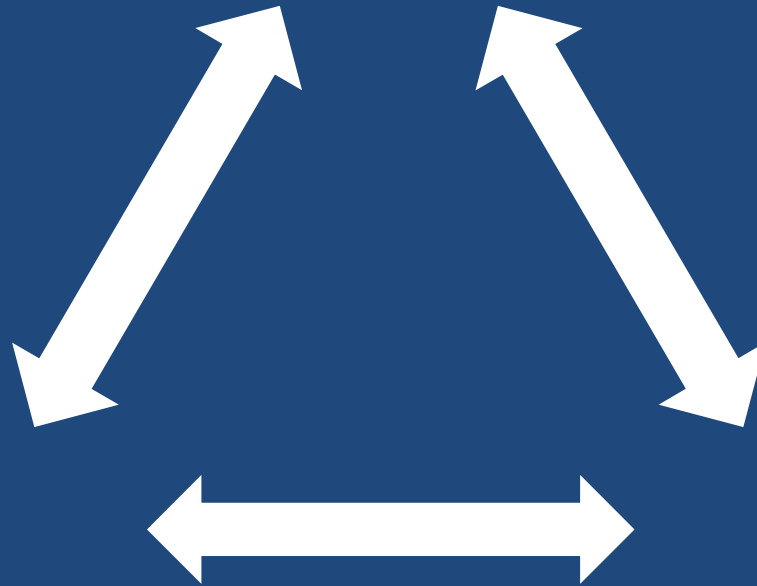
to have better work/life balance

John Biggs and Catherine Tang

*Teaching for Quality Learning  
at University:  
What the Student Does*

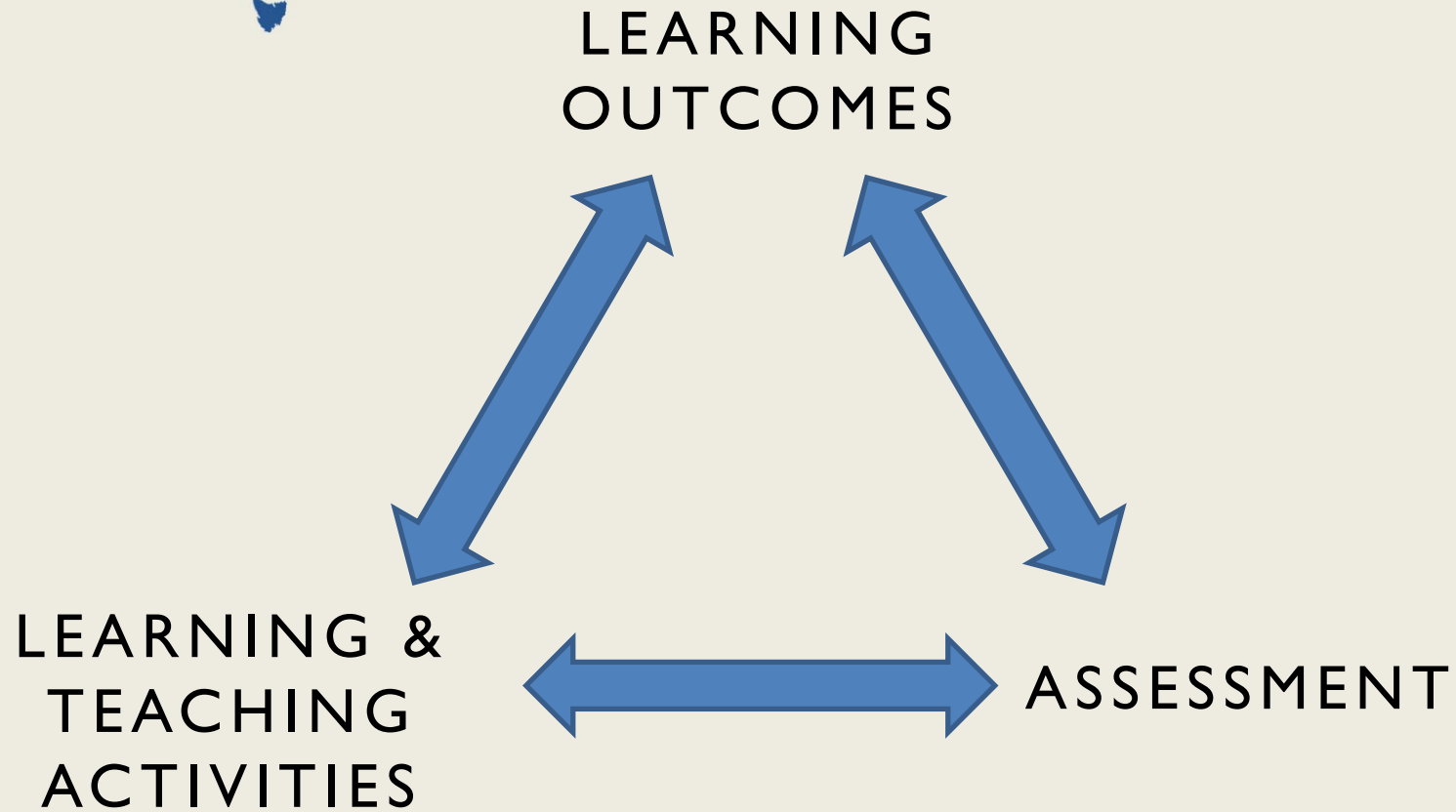
Third edition, 2007.

# Constructive alignment

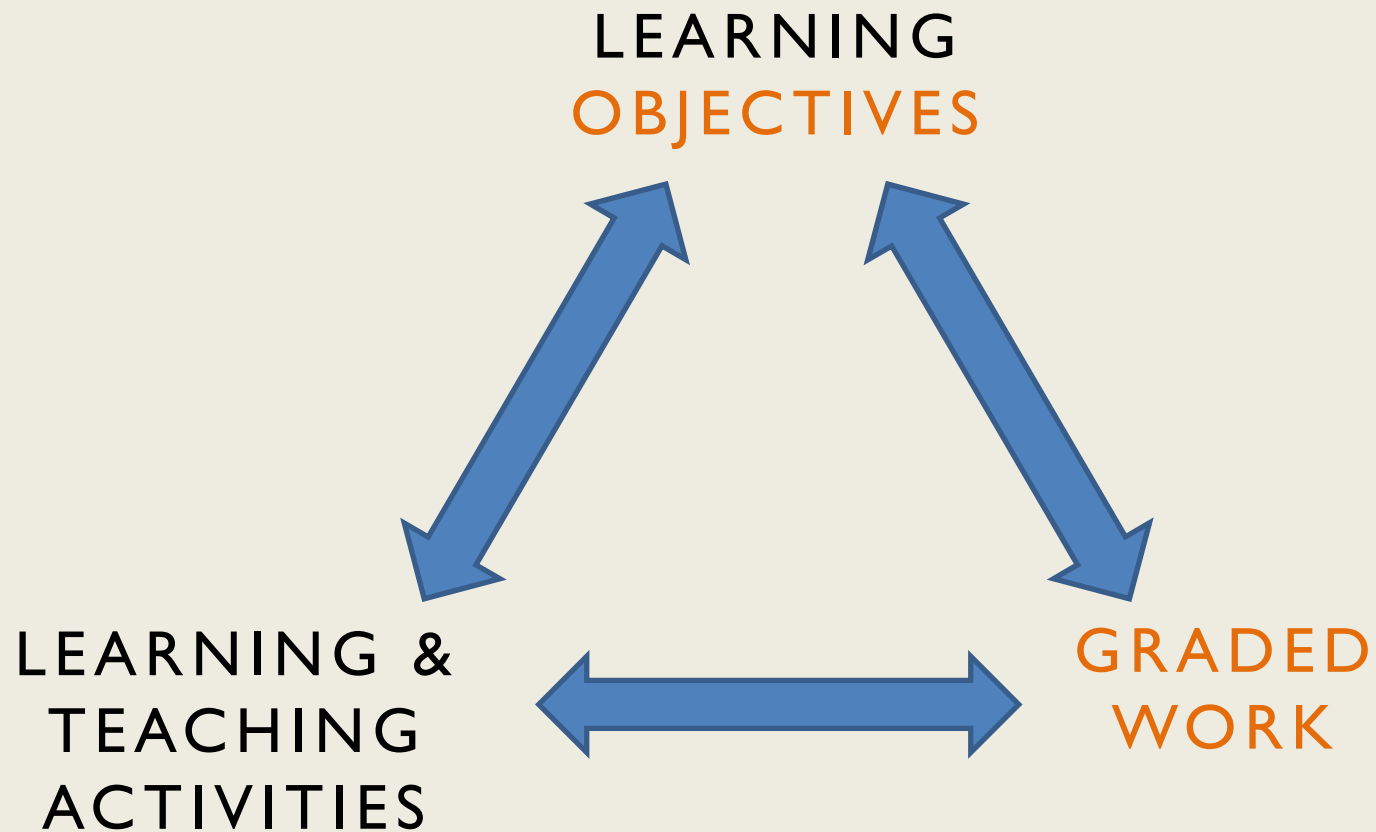




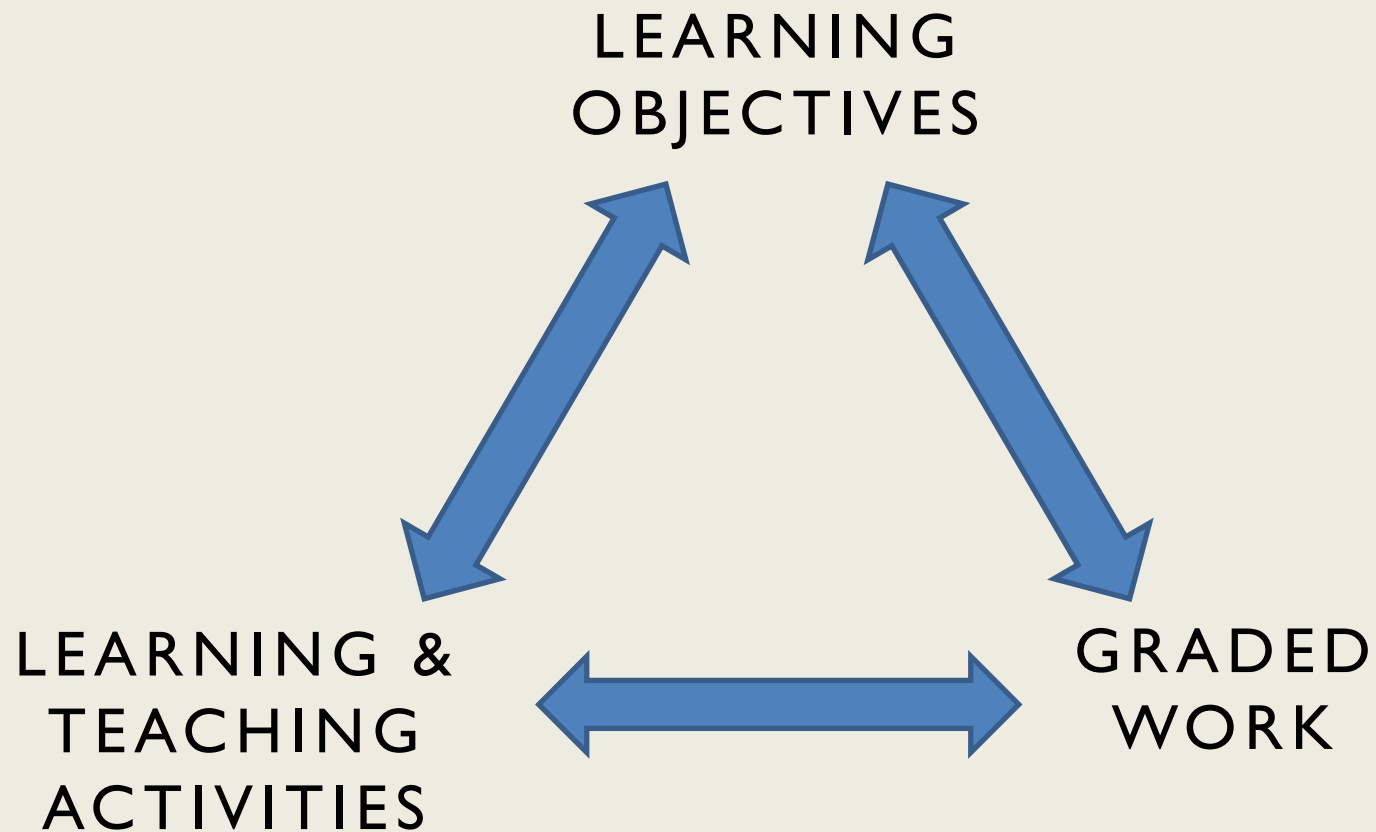
# Constructive alignment in the research



# Constructive alignment in SU terminology



# MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE: “Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”



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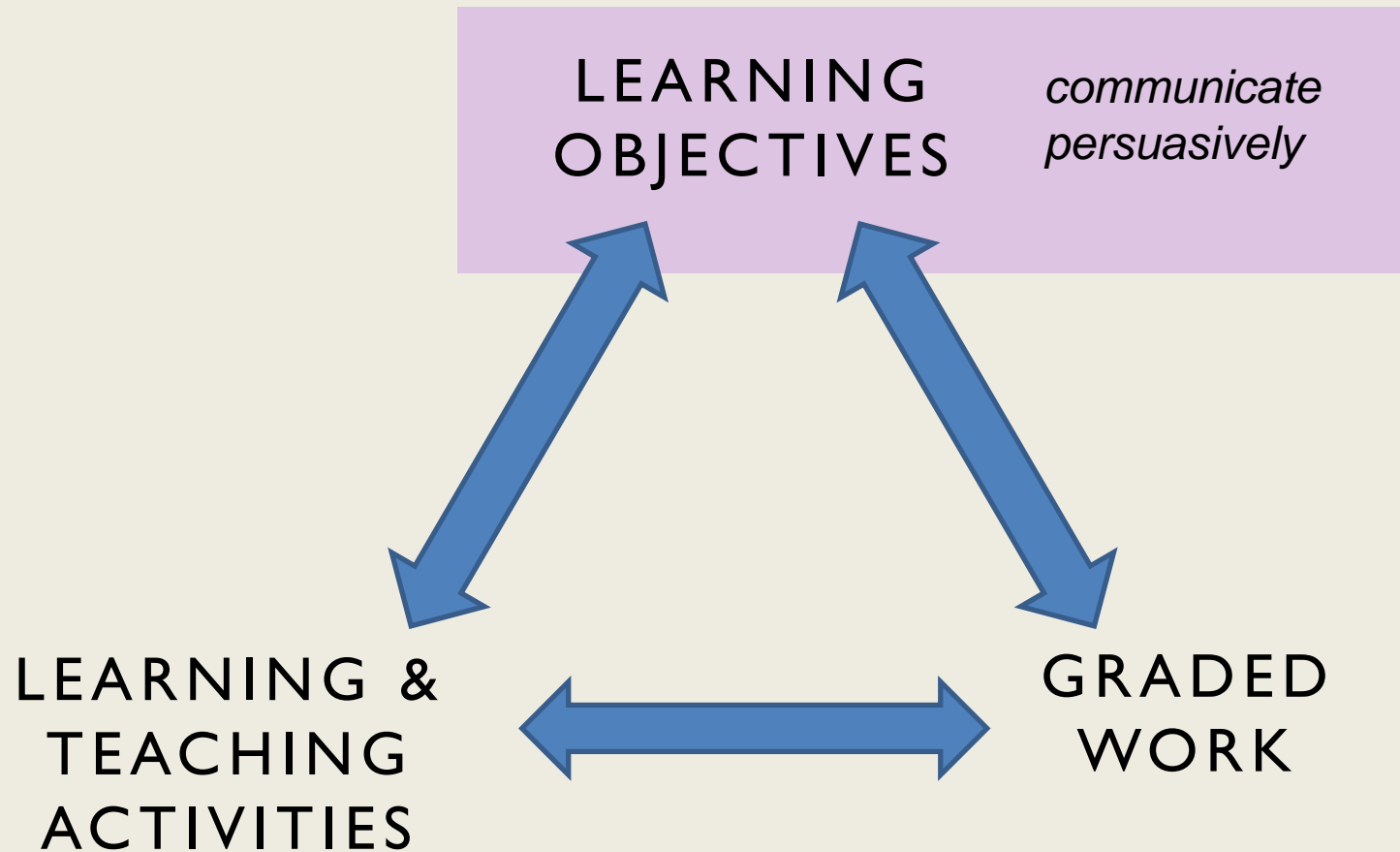
## LEARNING OBJECTIVE

On successful completion of this course, you will have:

engaged in persuasive communication in appropriate civic spheres



# MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE: “Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”

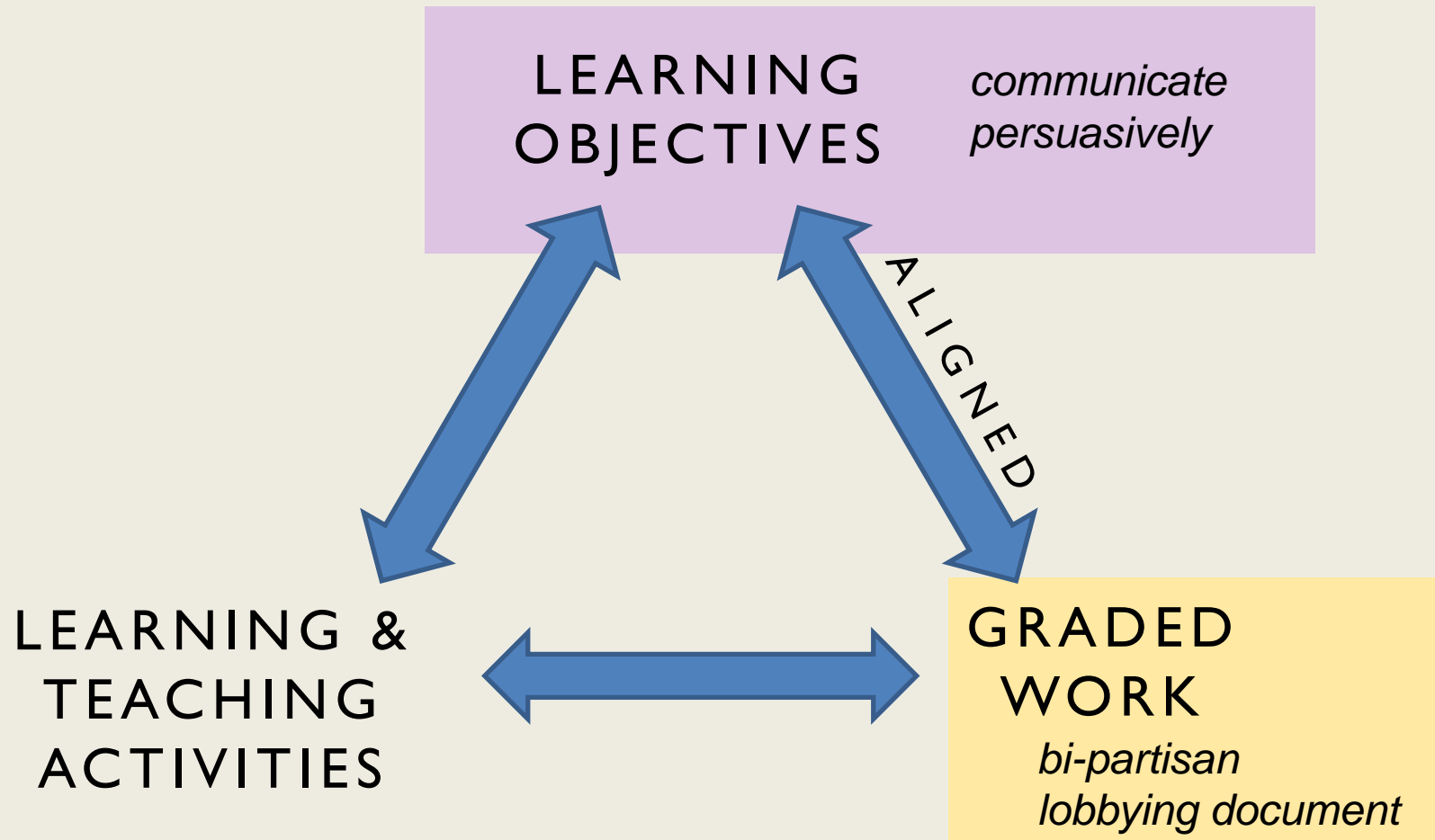


MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE:  
“Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”

Write a lobbying document  
designed to garner  
bi-partisan support  
for a Southeast Asian  
humanitarian project  
of your choosing  
(3,000 words)

GRADED  
WORK

# MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE: “Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”

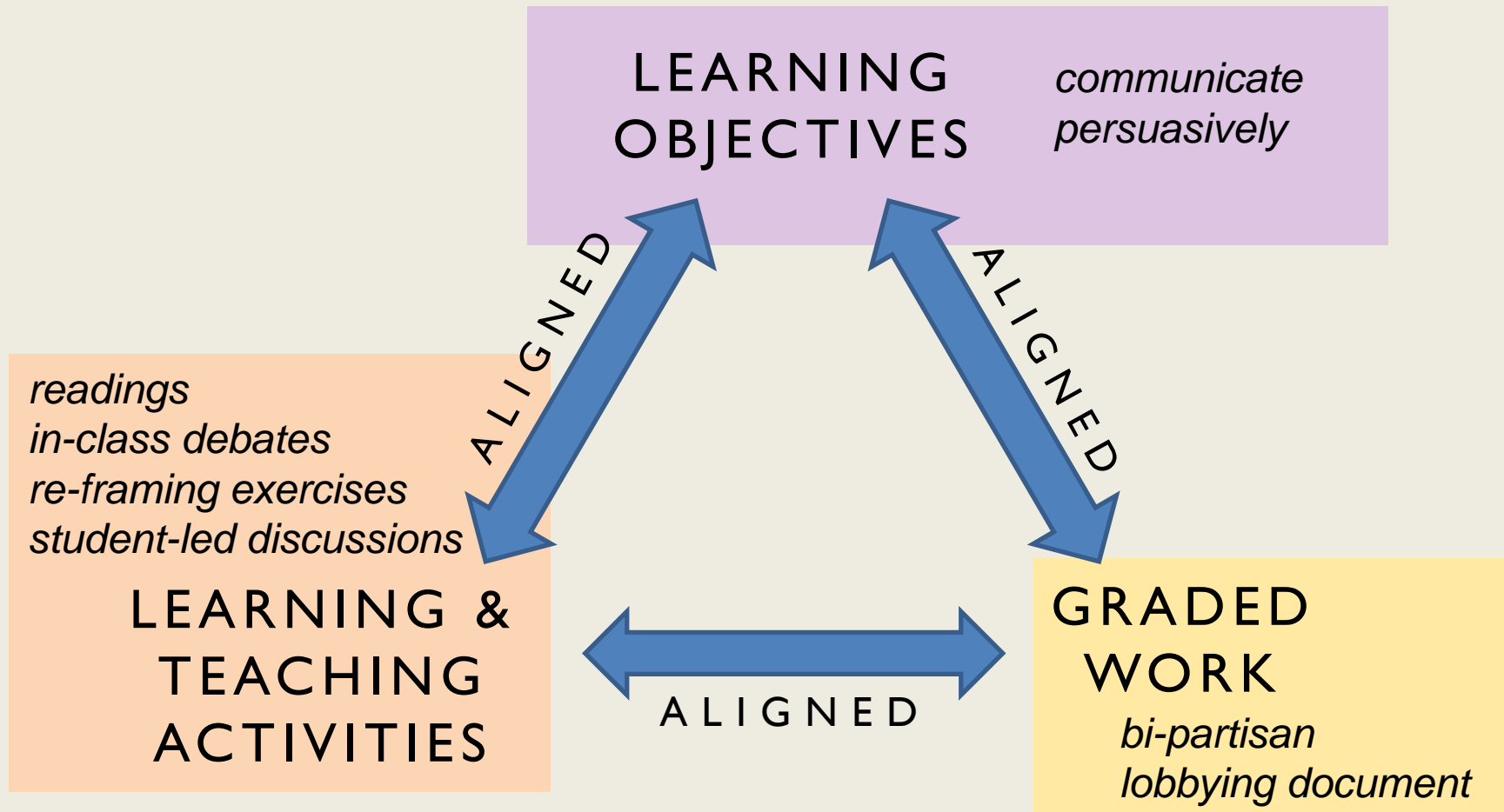


## MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE: “Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”

### LEARNING & TEACHING ACTIVITIES

- Readings
- Student-led discussions of four humanitarian crises
- In-class debates, taking a different perspective from your own
- Exercises in reframing messages for specific audiences

# MODULE III SOCIAL SCIENCE EXAMPLE: “Humanitarian crises in Southeast Asia”



# Why bother?

## Education is about *conceptual change*

Conceptual change is more likely if:

- students and faculty are clear about where they're going in a course (objectives)
- students experience the need to get there, and faculty can communicate that need
- students feel they can focus on the task, rather than worrying they might be caught out
- students enter dialogue with faculty and peers to “shape, elaborate, and deepen understanding.”

# Applying these principles to the Core Course Proposal documents (AND SAVING TIME)

<http://www.seattleu.edu/CETL/resources.aspx>

# Part I: Familiarization



# Ia. Familiarization: Start at the end!

## Specific requirements

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

Last two pages:

Description

Notes and guidelines

How objectives should be addressed  
within this course

# I b. Familiarization

## Section IV | Essential pedagogies

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

### IV. Essential pedagogies

= What absolutely **MUST** happen in this course (mostly relates to graded work)

Jot down quick summary, e.g.

1. Major paper/project
2. Reflection/synthesis of prior course learning
3. Translation/application of knowledge to public or civic context

# Part 2: Constructive alignment

TODAY'S LIKELY FOCUS

## 2a. From the students' perspective

### Section IV | Required learning objectives

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

IV. Essential pedagogies

IV. Required learning  
objectives

Objectives already listed

Think about

- a) what they ask students to demonstrate and
- b) how you might convey that to students.

- “On successful completion of this course, you will have...”

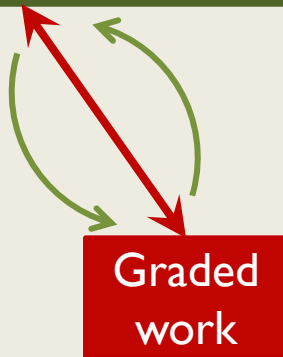
## 2b. Aligning graded work to objectives

### Section IV | Required learning objectives

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

IV. Essential pedagogies

IV. Required learning objectives



Start to sketch out the kinds of graded work students will complete to show they meet each objective

- Iterative process (objectives–graded work)
- How might students demonstrate (a) content knowledge, (b) intellectual skills, (c) subject-specific skills, and (d) transferable skills?
- Create assignments that you LOOK FORWARD TO and that students will enjoy
- One element of graded work may accomplish more than one objective, plus essential pedagogies

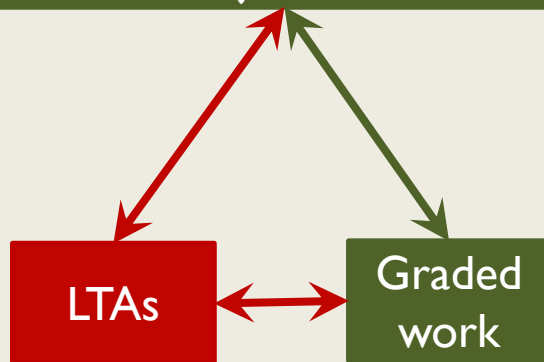
## 2c. Aligning LTAs to objectives & graded work

### Section IV | Required learning objectives

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

IV. Essential pedagogies

IV. Required learning objectives



Start to sketch out the kinds of in- and out-of-class activities students will do to help prepare for assignments and achieve learning objectives

- Aim for variety to build students' learning skills
- Consider ways to develop (a) content knowledge, (b) intellectual skills, (c) subject-specific skills, and (d) transferable skills (i.e. interpersonal, intrapersonal, and technical skills)

## Part 3: Filling in the detail

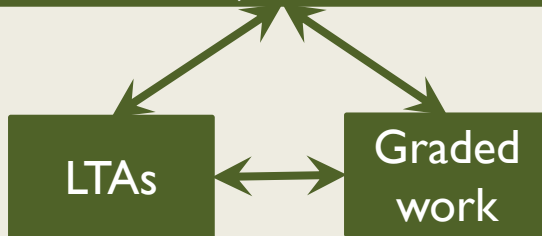
## 3a. Quick check

### Section IV | Essential pedagogies

Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

IV. Essential pedagogies

IV. Required learning objectives



IV. Essential pedagogies

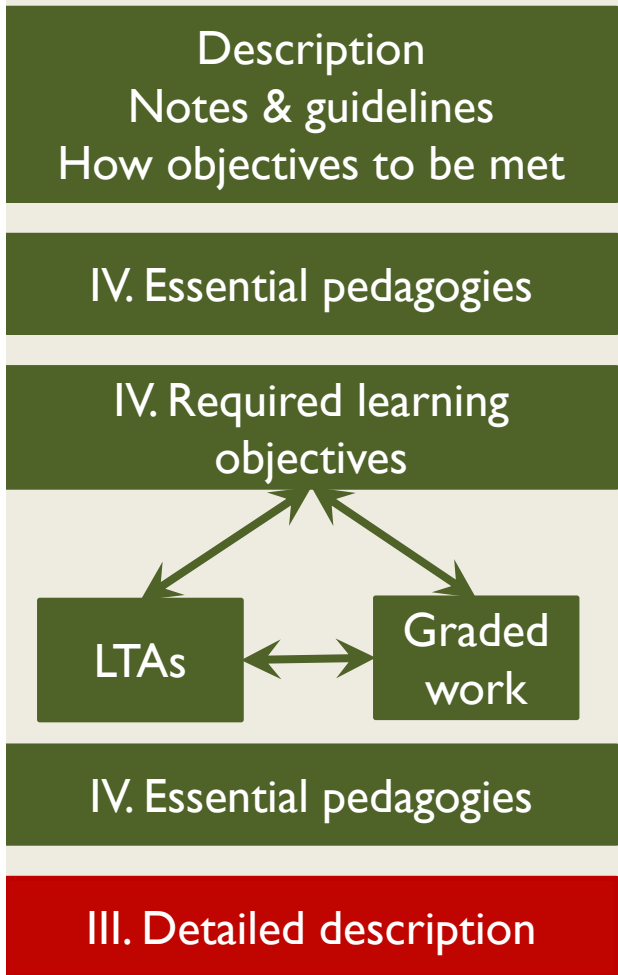
Take relevant sections from the “Required learning objectives” section and paste them into the “Essential pedagogies” section

- Keep it brief



# 3b. Putting it in context

## Section III | Detailed description



Probably the longest section

Enough information for the review committee to see how everything fits together

- Fits “Description”
- Fits “Notes and guidelines”
- Explains subject, content, basic design

Enough information to remind you of what you were thinking

Ideally...

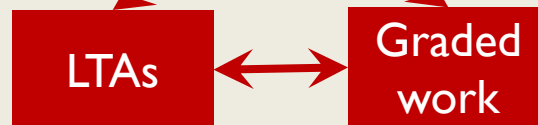
Description  
Notes & guidelines  
How objectives to be met

You're already familiar with these sections. Otherwise a quick skim.

IV. Essential pedagogies

IV. Required learning objectives

Today's focus: Constructive alignment.



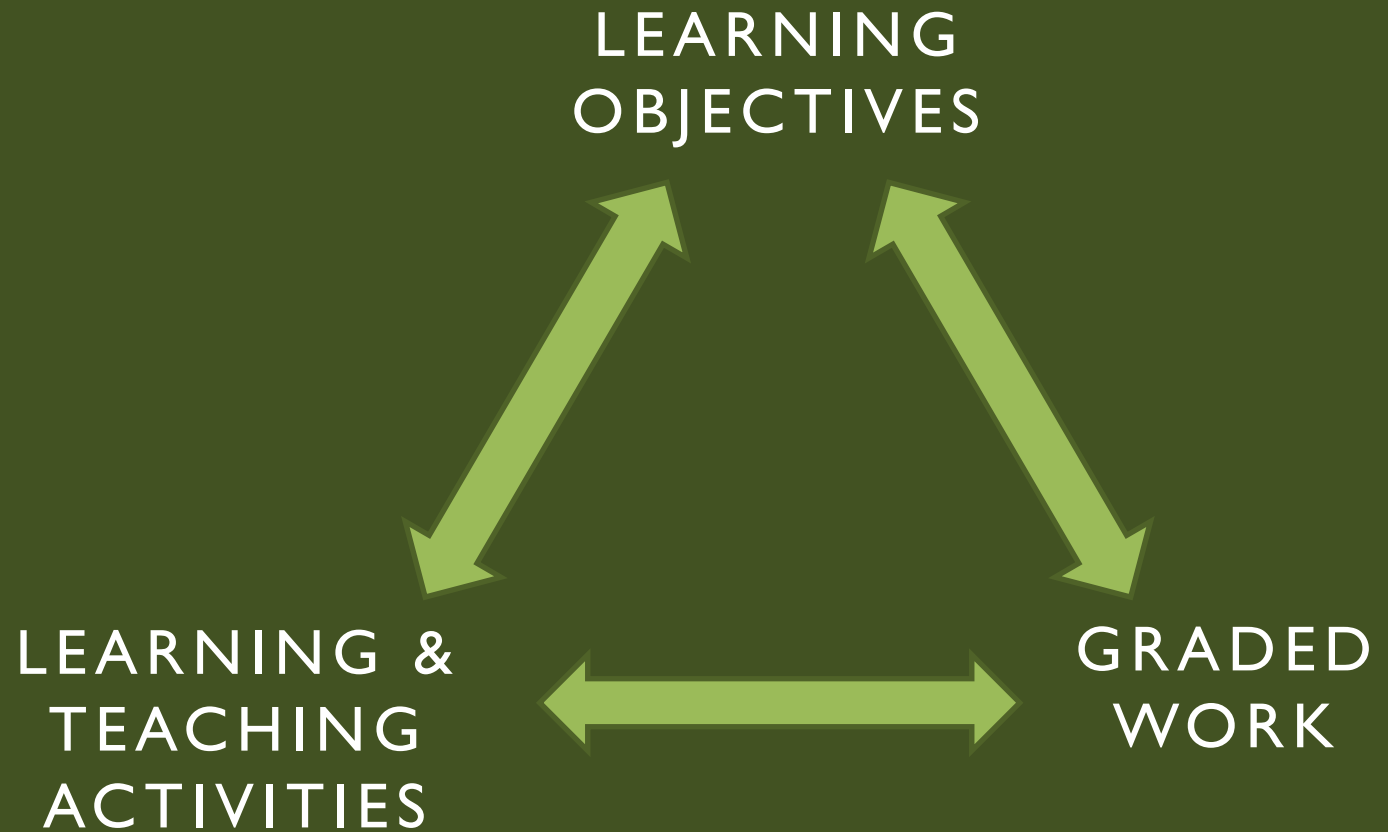
IV. Essential pedagogies

Something to complete after today.

III. Detailed description

Questions?

Contact us at [cetl@seattleu.edu](mailto:cetl@seattleu.edu)



**Key reference:**

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2007). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does.* (3rd ed.)  
Maidenhead, UK: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press.