SETTING UP A WORDPRESS/BUDDYPRESS CLASS BLOG/NETWORK BY KEITH QUESENBERRY

1st Request a WordPress blog with BuddyPress plugin using school server space from Information Technology or set up your own with a web hosting service like Dream Host http://www.dreamhost.com/

You should then receive an email giving you the web address for your site for example: http://staging.templetv.net/keith/ Add "wp-admin" to the end

In your web browser, visit http://www.[your sitename here]/wp-admin (for example: http://staging.templetv.net/keith/wp-admin)

Type your username and password, then click the Log In button.

If you see the WordPress Welcome page give your blog a title and enter your email. (This may have been done for you by IS).
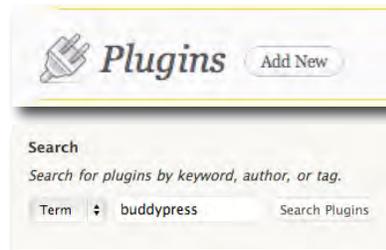
Now you will be at the Wordpress Dashboard. Here, you can see some of your site statistics and recent information. For editing and adding information, look at the sidebar.

2nd You will want to install the BuddyPress Plugin. First, check to see if it is already installed. If you see "BuddyPress" under the "Dashboard" home icon skip to step three.
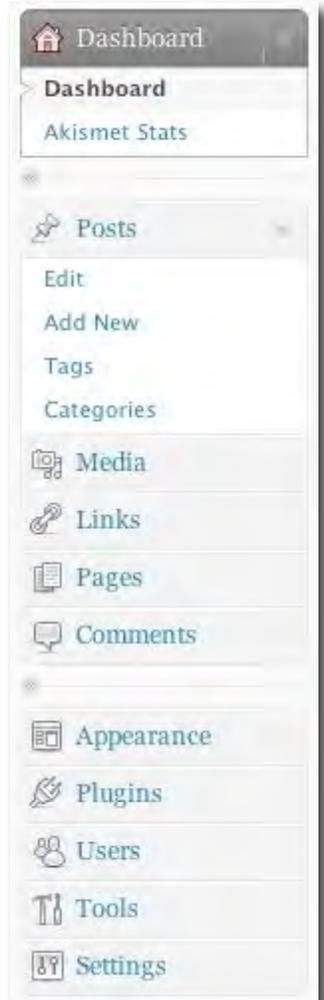
Click on "Plugins" in the "Dashboard" and then "Plugins Add New" at the top of the Plugins page. In the Plugins Search window type in "BuddyPress"
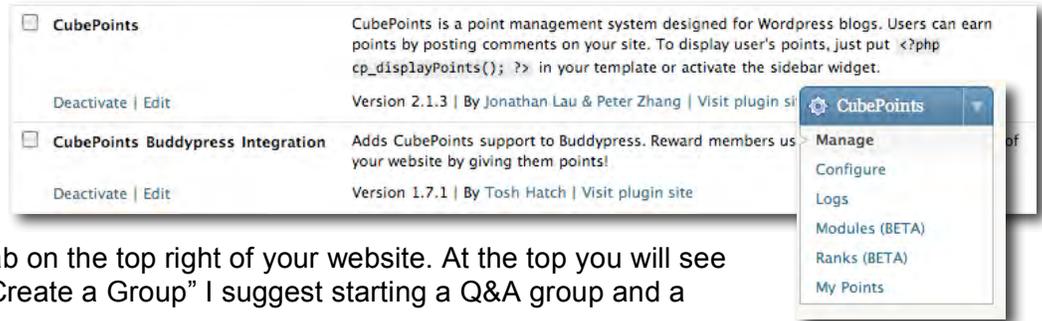
Find BuddyPress 1.2.5 and click "Install Now"

BuddyPress 1.2.5 ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐ Social networking in a box. Build a social network for your company, school, sports team or niche community all based on the power and flexibility of WordPress. BuddyPress will let users register on your site and start creating profiles, posting messages, making connections, creating and interacting in groups and much more. Try the Demo
Details | Install Now   If you're interested in seeing what a default installation... By The BuddyPress Community.

3rd There are some other useful Plugins you might want to install. Install each the same way as BuddyPress. Click on "Plugins" in the "Dashboard" and then "Plugins Add New" at the top of the Plugins page. In the Plugins Search window type in "BP Group Documents" and then "Install Now" This allows you to attach documents within Groups.
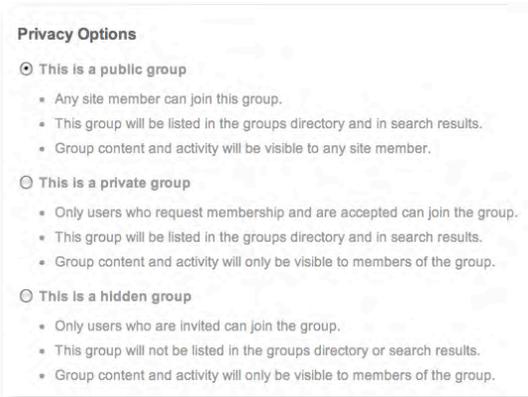
BP Group Documents This BuddyPress component creates a document storage area within each group
Deactivate | Edit   Version 0.3.5 | By Peter Anselmo, Studio66 | Visit plugin site

Search "CubePoints" and "Install Now" and then "CubePoints BuddyPress Integration" and "Install Now" These Plugins will enable you to assign points for class blog activity for easier student performance assessment.
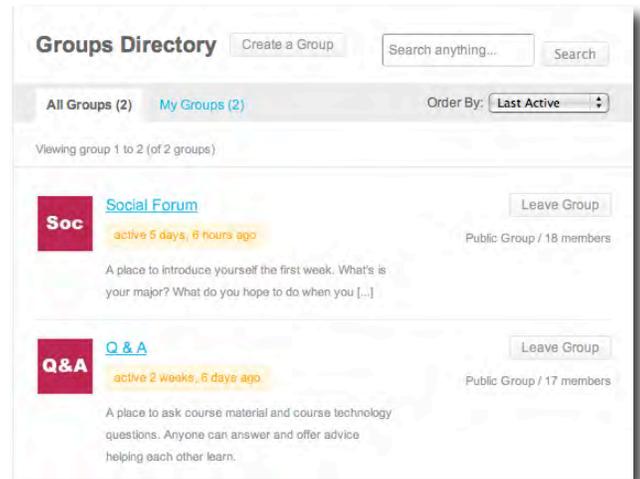
4th Next you can set up Groups. Go to your Home Page and click on "Groups" tab on the top right of your website. At the top you will see "Groups Directory" Click on "Create a Group" I suggest starting a Q&A group and a Social Group.

Give your group a name and description. Then after clicking "Create Group" you need to select your privacy settings. The settings range from a completely public group (like a Q & A or FAQ group) to completely hidden where only invited members can view. The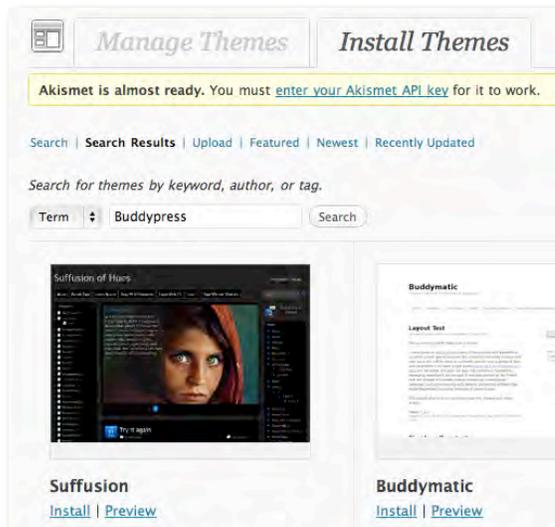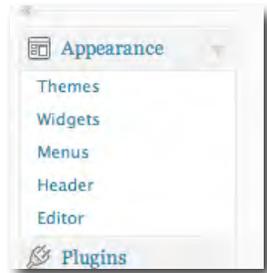 hidden group may be useful for setting up group projects or a place for students to talk privately that is not viewable to the public like their blog posts.

Then upload an image as the avatar for the group. As you can see above I made simple word blocks to represent the groups.

Once your group is established you can "Send Invites" (this is necessary for a hidden/private group) or members can join on their own in public groups.

5th You can adjust the layout and look of your website. Go to your Dashboard and click on "Appearance" towards the bottom of the left side. Several options will appear. Click on "Themes" under "Appearance" and then "Install Themes" at the top of the page. Then in the search box type in "BuddyPress" to see all the BuddyPress theme options.
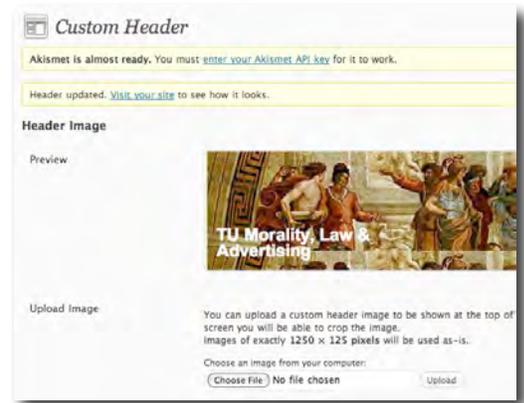
You can choose the theme you like, but I have chosen "BP Columns" because it gives you a three column layout. Click "Install"

Next you will see a message letting you know it has been installed. Click "Activate" to change your theme to the new one.
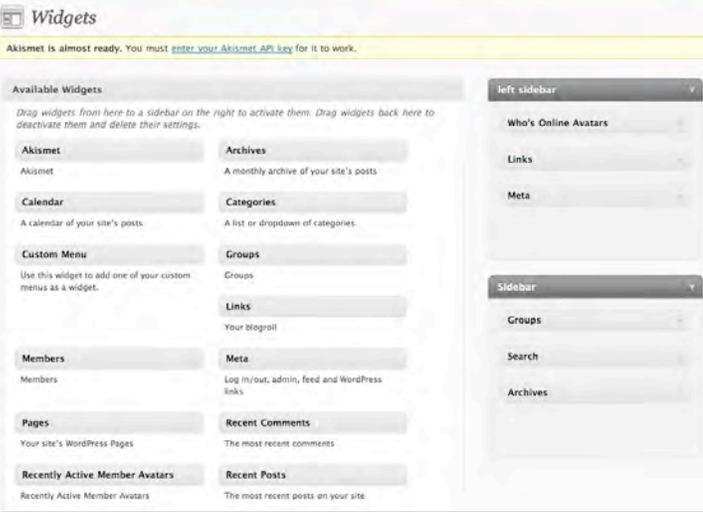
You can create a custom header to your site by changing the color or uploading a picture as a background. To do this go to "Appearance" and click on "Header" then follow the instructions to upload a photo, change color or title.
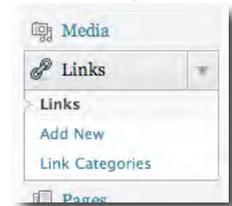
Another important appearance tool is adding widgets to your website. This interface is very simple as you drag the features to where you want them to appear on your site. Again go to "Appearance" and then click on "Widgets" Here you will see available widgets with descriptions of what they do. Simply drag the ones you want to appear on the left or right side bar. Click on the upside down triangle to customize.

Good ones to include could be Groups, Search, Archive and Links. Meta is good also because it gives you and your students a place to access Dashboard where you can create new blog posts.

To add links that you want to appear on the site. Go back to Dashboard and click on "Links" and "Add New"
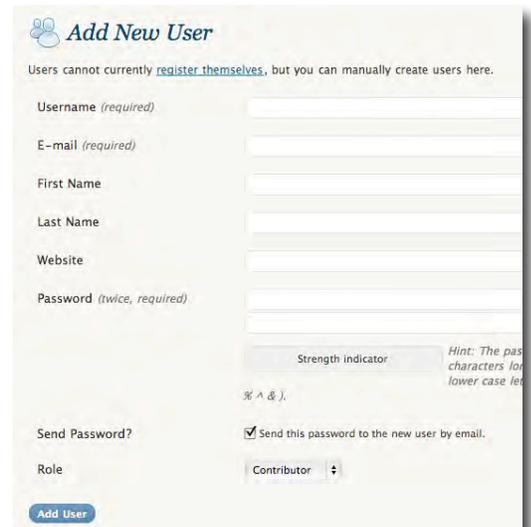
You can do a lot in WordPress and BuddyPress. I encourage you to explore the Dashboard and see all that you can do and customize. Once you get the site looking the way you want you can add your student users and invite them to the website.

6th Now you can set up your student users. In the site Dashboard click on "Users" toward the bottom. Then at the top click on "Users" "Add New" You will then see a box where you can enter each students name and email. (simply copy from the class lis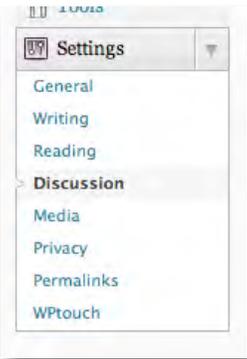t) Give them a generic password like the class name that they can change later. Make sure you click send password so they get an email inviting them to join the class blog/network. (you may also simply add user name and email and a random password will be generated).

* Make sure you select the role "Author" so they are able to make blog posts but not change any of the other setting of the website.

7th You may also want to visit the "Settings" link in Dashboard to set up some general preferences. "Discussion Settings" are important. That is where you can decide to allow posts and comments to be published right away or if you want to moderate them.
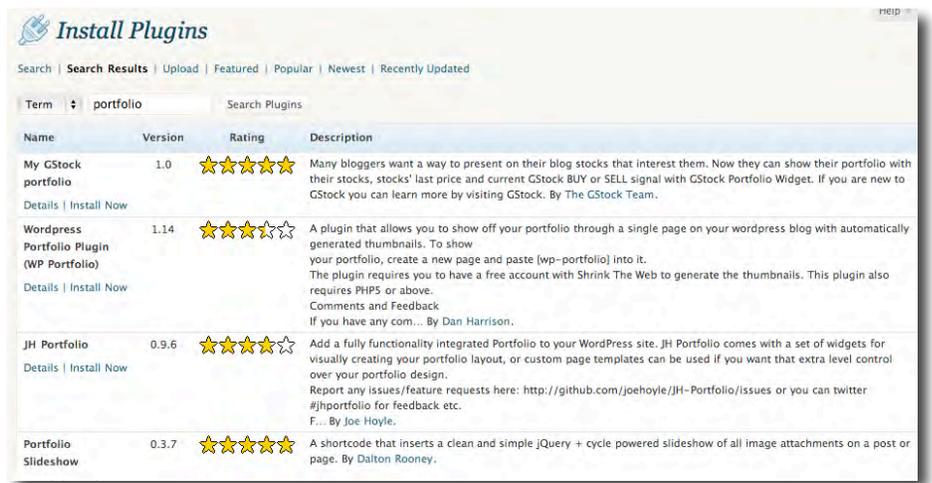
You can also set up email alerts for various activity.

If you are in a more creative oriented class. There are some good Plugins to display photos, layouts and design projects.

Search "portfolio" in the Plugins for these options.

For any features you are looking to add you can do a subject search in Plugins to see what is out there.

8th Check out the WordPress support page. They have common topics and you can search to find easy to use instructions and video:
http://en.support.wordpress.com/

The WordPress documentation page is also a good place to go:
http://codex.wordpress.org/Getting_Started_with_WordPress#Posting_in_WordPress

For more information on BuddyPress you can visit there website:
http://buddypress.org/

And here is a preview and link to my site:
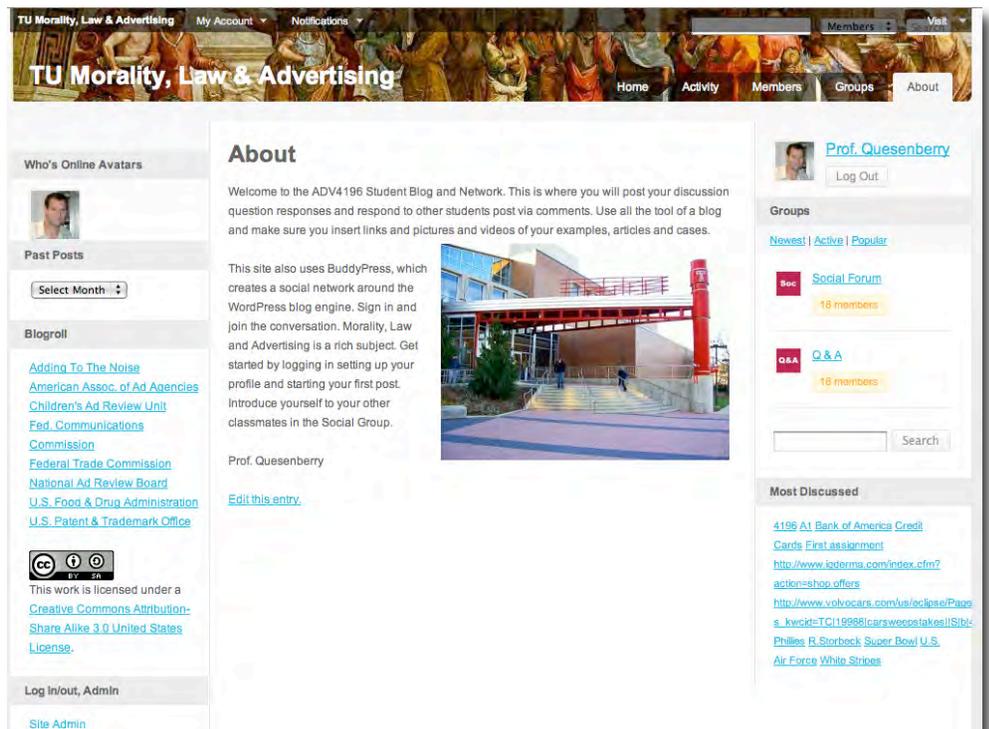http://staging.templetv.net/keith/

Just one final note. Make sure you go in and update your "About" page. This is where you want to give the general description and purpose of the website.

To do this go under "Pages" in the Dashboard and click "Edit" on the "About" Title.

To the right you can see how I have described my site.

This may seem like a lot of work, but once you get in there it really is easy. And once you set it up for a class you are done. It has really improved the interface of my classes bringing a level of professionalism/depth to class discussions and links/picts/video with all students. Plus, it has been a lot less "buggy" than Blackboard.

Thanks for your interest in class blogs and social networks! If you have any questions just let me know. I'm sure I haven't covered everything. And if you have any suggestions that you discover please let me know.

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