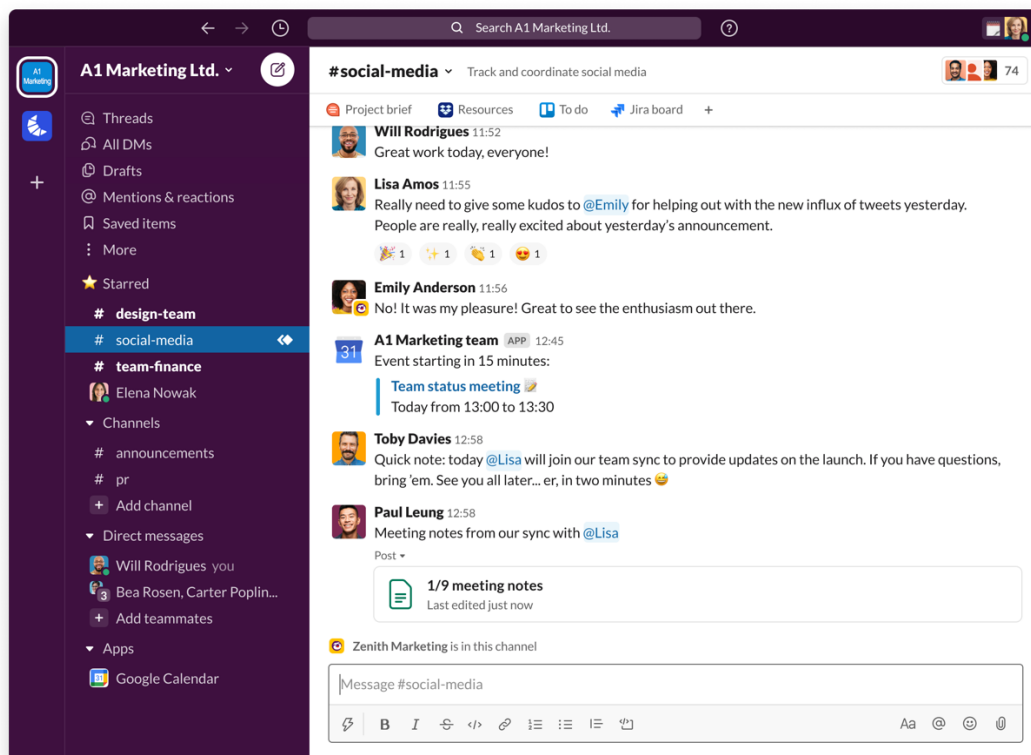


Setting Up Slack

David Grover, david.grover@park.edu

The following is adapted from the instructions I provide to online instructors who will be teaching a class that I've designed to use Slack. Feel free to adapt it for your own use.

While it isn't specifically required, I highly recommend using **Slack** as a key component of this course. Slack is a popular, sophisticated workplace communication app that allows members to create and use a shared workspace to communicate both synchronously and asynchronously across a series of channels.



In practice, using Slack is similar to using Canvas's discussion boards. The **shared workspace** you create for the class is like a small, private social media network (think of a Facebook group), and the **channels** you create are like individual discussion boards.

Note: If you choose not to use Slack, see the bottom of the document for instructions how to opt for a Canvas-only version of this course.

Why Use Slack?

There are some key differences that make use of Slack perhaps better than merely using Canvas discussion boards:

- **Sophisticated, engaging interface:** Canvas is, at best, clunky and old-fashioned when it comes to discussion boards. Slack is pleasant to look at, fully accessible, runs well on laptops, smartphones, tablets, and in web browsers. It functions much more closely to modern social media platforms—with emoji, reactions, tagging other users in posts, etc.—so many students find its use to be intuitive and less like a school assignment.
- **Realtime communication:** With a Canvas discussion board, realtime communication isn't feasible—users have to refresh the discussion page to see any new posts. With Slack, new posts are instantly pushed to all users, making it more like a chatroom or group text thread than a traditional discussion board. This can enable realtime interactions among students and with you, which increases how connected students feel.
- **Better threading and notifications:** Slack enables threaded conversations to happen in a more natural, more modern way than Canvas tends to do. It also allows users significantly better control over how they are notified about posts.
- **Seamlessly share files, images, links, etc.:** Attaching files, images, and links in a Canvas discussion board is not exactly pleasant and not always very usable. Slack allows users to share media in a much more natural and modern way, encouraging more interaction from students.
- **Direct messaging:** Slack allows you to have direct, one-on-one text-based communication with students in a way that feels more intimate and immediate than going through email or Canvas messaging.
- **Resume-building:** Students can add Slack to their resumes once they've learned to use it, making them that much more marketable.

Slack is not a panacea, however. Like any course software, it involves a learning curve and has downsides. Still, in my experience developing and teaching EN207, I find that it adds much more than it takes away.

If you're familiar with and prefer another type of communication software (such as Discord or Microsoft Teams), feel free to adapt the following instructions to accommodate its use in the class. I'd love to hear about your experience so I can improve these instructions in the future.

Setting Up Slack

The following instructions will walk you through setting up a shared workspace for your section of EN207.

Please note that, as Slack is regularly updated and improved, the specific steps detailed below and the screenshots pictured might have changed in small or large ways. Slack is user-friendly, and you should be able to navigate the setup process regardless of these changes. If you need

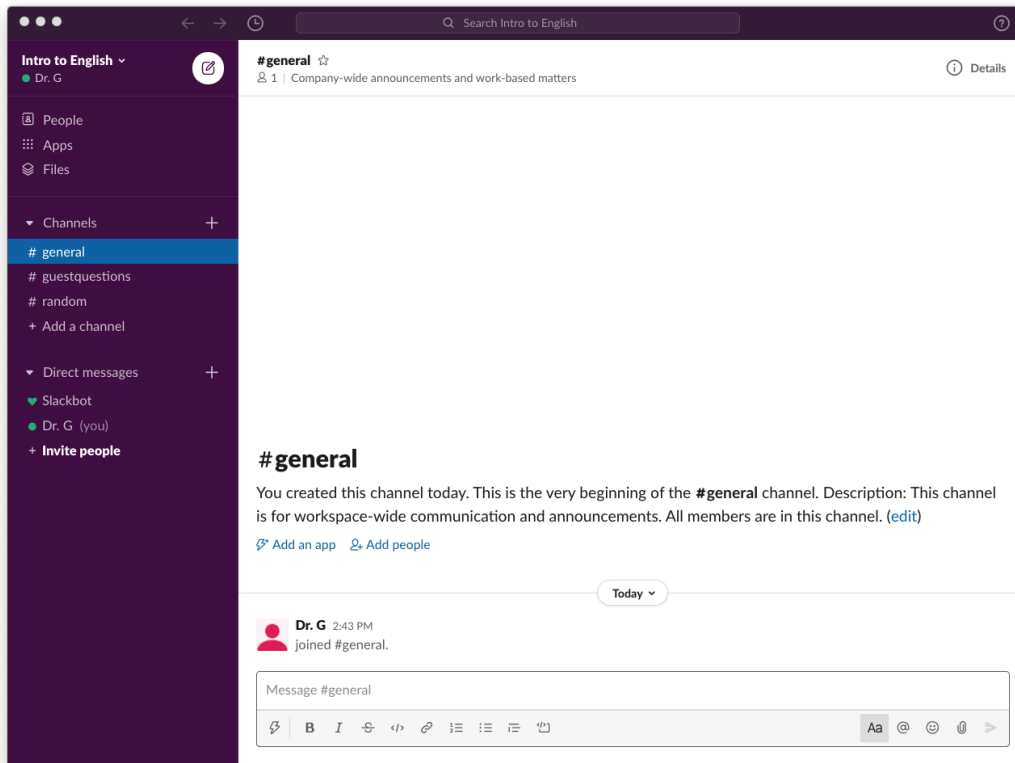
help figuring things out, or if you have suggested revisions for these instructions, please contact me.

Step 1: Set Up the Workspace

The first step is to set up a workspace that you can use with your class.

1. Go to <https://slack.com/get-started#/create>. and enter your Park email address.
2. Slack will send you a confirmation code to your email; enter the code on the website.
3. Pick a name for your team; I recommend "English 207" or "Technical Editing."
4. Slack will take you through a few screens of setup. Answer the questions however you want (you can change things later)
 - o If it asks you to enter email addresses of your team members, just pick "skip for now."
 - o If it asks about a project your team is working on, say "questions."
 - o If it asks who you email the most about this project, just pick "skip for now."
5. Once you get through the setup wizard, Slack will open your new workspace in the internet browser you're using. It may show you additional setup steps like these (if not, don't worry—the instructions below will walk you through any needed changes):
 - o Adding team members (skip this for now)
 - o Setting up a greeting (how about "Welcome to our Slack workspace for EN207: Technical and Professional Editing!")
 - o Posting to your new project channel, #questions (post whatever you like—no one will see it for now)
 - o Setting your name and password (I use "Dr. G" as my username so students can readily see I'm the instructor)
 - o Setting your workspace name and a Slack URL (for the URL, I recommend using the course number and semester, like this: "en207fall2020.slack.com")

Once you get through all the setup, your workspace will look something like this:

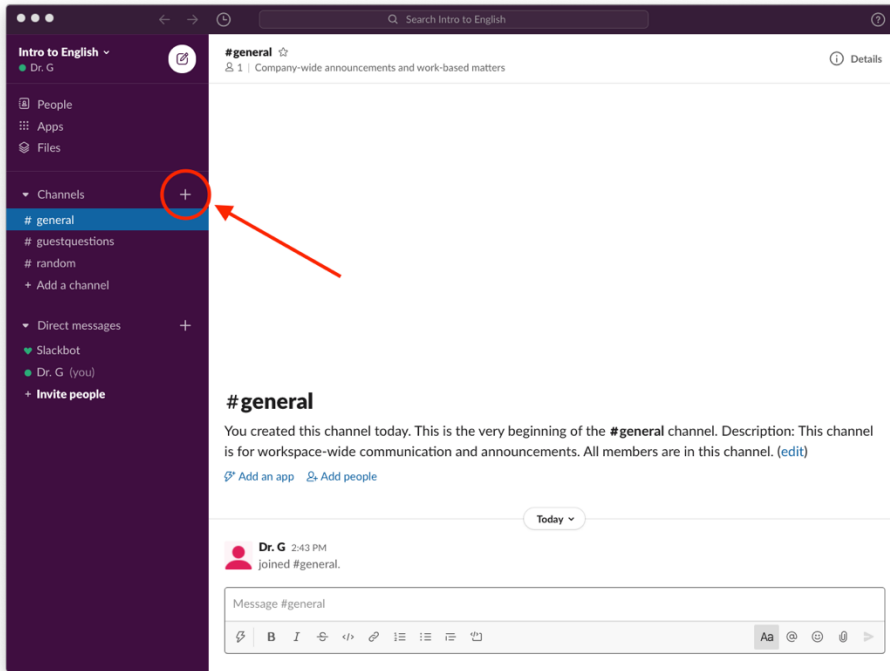


You can continue to use Slack through a browser like this. I recommend, however, [downloading the desktop app](#). and accessing Slack that way for a smoother experience. **The rest of these instructions will assume you're working from the Slack desktop app** (things might look different in a browser or on a smartphone).

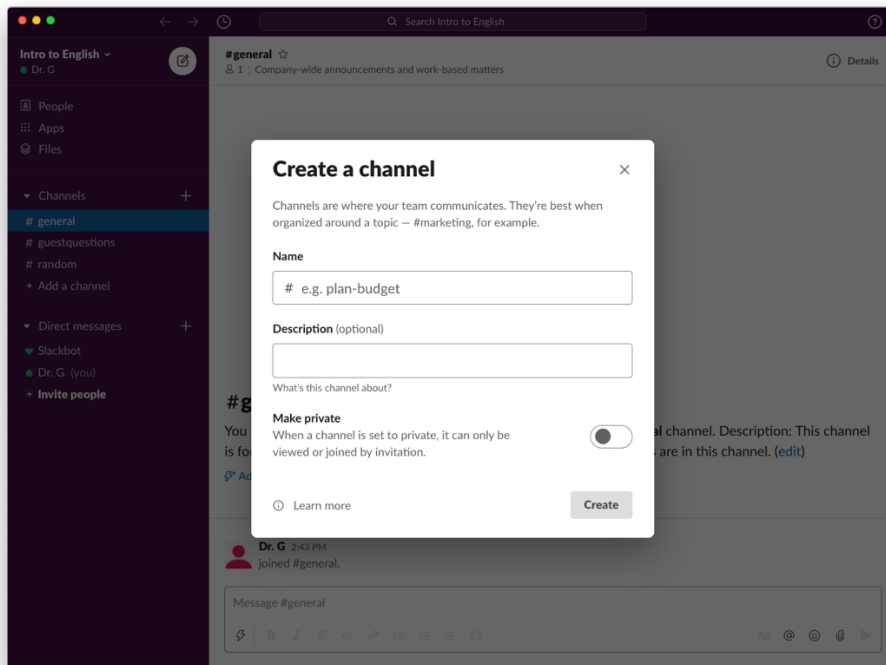
Step 2: Set Up Channels

Slack will automatically set up three public channels for you: #general, #random, and #questions (or whatever you told it when it asked about a project you would be working on). **You'll need to set up additional channels for the class to use:**

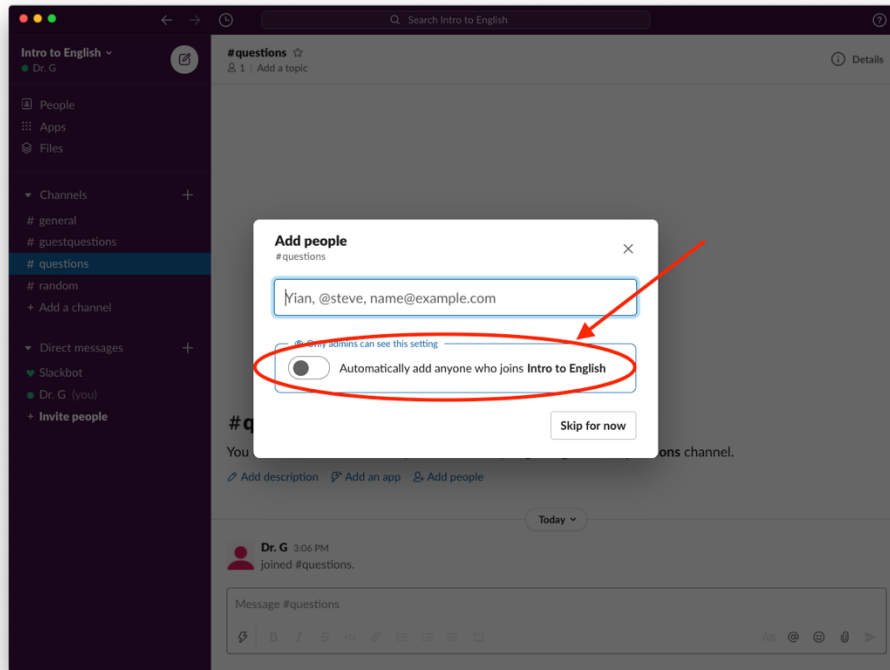
1. Click the plus sign next to "Channels" in the left sidebar (you may have to hover your pointer in the area for it to appear). Choose "Create a channel" from the pop-up.



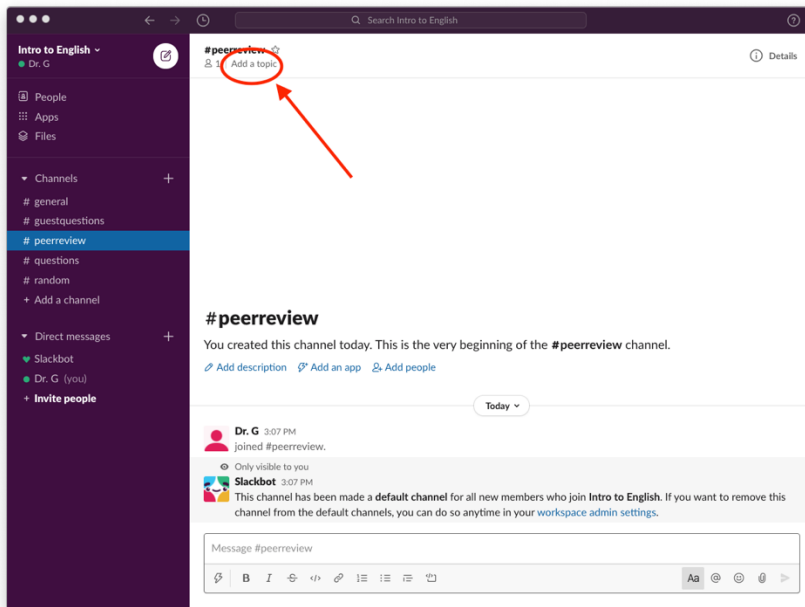
2. Give your new channel a name and description; then hit "Create."



If a pop-up asking you to add people appears, you may choose to click the option for "Automatically add anyone who joins" your workspace (you can set this up later in the settings too; see below).



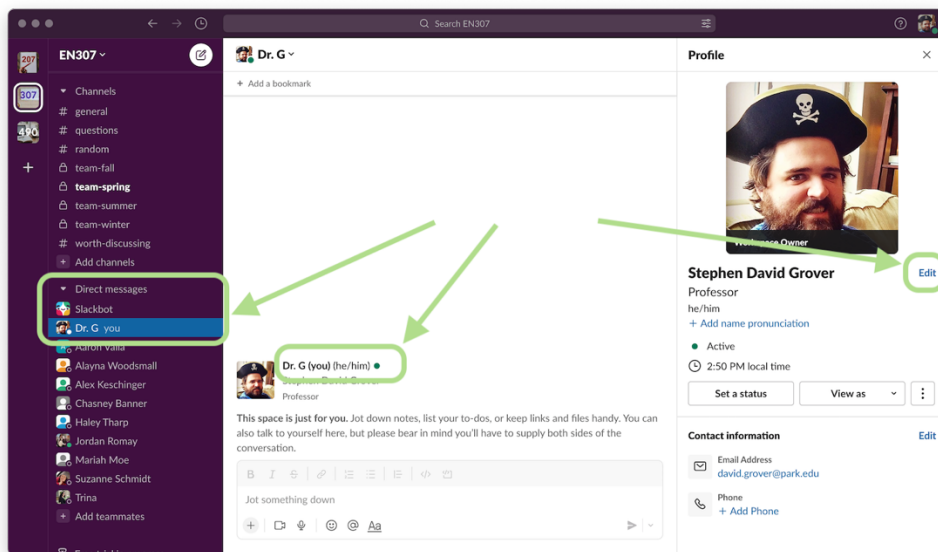
3. In addition to #general, #random, and #questions, you'll need to make the following channels for the class:
 - **crowd-sourcing-answers**
 - **editing-in-the-real-world**
4. Once a channel is made, you can set (or reset) the topic by clicking the topic space under the channel name when you are viewing the channel.



Step 3: Edit Your Profile

You should edit your profile to help students know who you are and how to contact you.


1. Click on your name in the sidebar under the "Direct messages" heading, then click your name in the main area that pops up to open your profile.
2. Find and click the link that says "Edit" in the space where your profile appears.



3. Upload a picture and change any settings you prefer. (I usually make my full name my actual name and my display name "Dr. G.")

Edit your profile

Full name
Stephen David Grover

Profile photo


Display name
Dr. G
This could be your first name, or a nickname – however you'd like people to refer to you in Slack.

Title
Professor
Let people know what you do at EN307.

Pronouns
he/him
Let people know which pronouns you use.

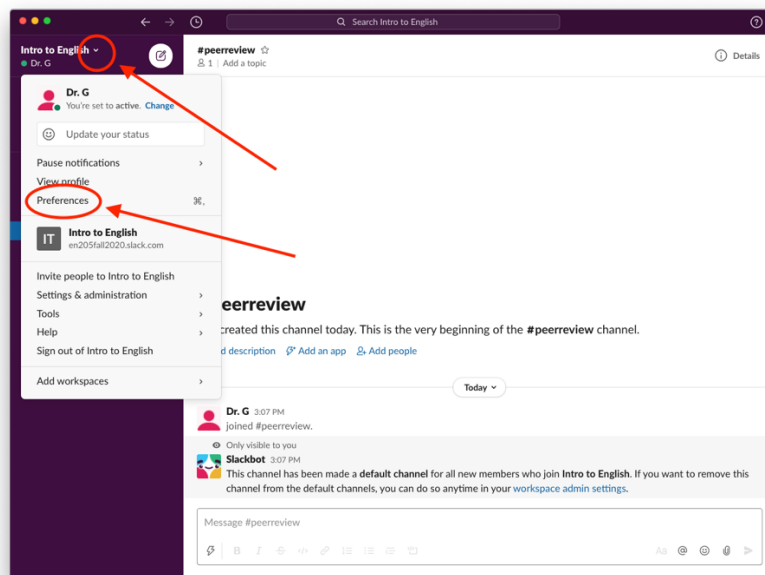
Name recording

Name pronunciation
Zee (pronounced 'zee')

Step 4: Alter Preferences

You should read through the preferences page for your account and make changes to any settings you desire.

1. Click the down arrow next to the workspace name at the top of the sidebar. Click "Preferences" to view all the personal preferences options.

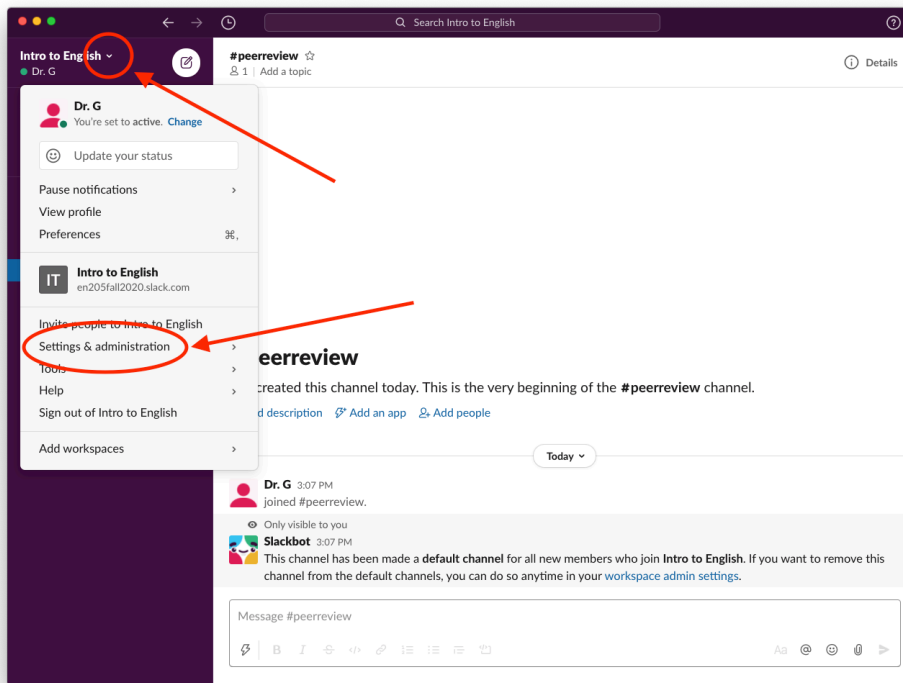


2. I recommend the following settings:
 - Under **Notifications**, you may want to click the "Use different settings for my mobile devices" if you've also downloaded the Slack mobile app and don't want constant sounds and vibrations throughout the day.
 - Under **Notifications**, you may want to change the hours listed in the **Notification schedule** area.

Step 5: Alter Workspace Settings

You should read through the workspace settings and make changes as needed.

Click the down arrow next to the workspace name at the top of the sidebar. Hover over "Settings & administration" and choose "Workspace settings" from the popup menu. This will open a webpage with the settings options.



I recommend making the following changes.

Under the Settings tab

- **Joining This Workspace:** Click the button for "Allow invitations, and approve invitations for any email address from these domains:" In the text entry box, add "park.edu". Click "save."

Joining This Workspace Close

Choose how people [join your workspace](#): by accepting an email invitation or signing up with an email address from an approved domain. If you enable the setting to let people with an email address on an approved domain join automatically, Slack will generate a link that anyone with an approved email address can use to confirm their email and sign up.

Allow invitations
 Allow invitations, and approve invitations for any email address from these domains:

park.edu|

If you want to add more than one domain, separate each one with a comma.

Save

- **Default Channels:** Make sure all the required channels you created above are included in the list displayed.

Default Channels Close

Choose the channels new members will automatically be added to (in addition to **#general**).

#guestquestions × #peerreview × #questions × #random ×

Save

- **Email Display:** Under the question "Who can see EN207 members' email addresses?" choose "No one." Click "save" to save your choice.
- **Pronouns Display:** Click the checkbox next to "Show pronouns on profiles." Click "save" to save your choice.
- **Do Not Disturb:** The default range is 10pm to 8am, but you might want to change that or disable this setting entirely depending on where students in the class are located. Click "save" to save your choice.
- **Workspace Icon:** Here is an icon you can use if you like: EN207 Slack Icon (save this image to your desktop and then upload it to Slack when prompted).
- **Workspace Name & URL:** Slack usually auto-creates a URL for your Slack workspace, one that isn't very useful. I recommend changing the URL to something like en207spring2023.slack.com.

Under the Permissions tab

- **Invitations:** Check the box by "Require admin approval." Click "save."
- **Channel Management:** Change **all** categories to "Workspace Admins and Owners only." Click "save."

Feel free to read through and change other things, but **don't get overwhelmed**. As it has matured, Slack has added tons of new features and subscription-only options, which you won't need at all. If in doubt about what a setting does, just leave it alone. Slack will work just fine as a basic communication platform without any special tinkering on your part.

Step 6: Install Apps (Optional)

Lastly, you may want to browse the [App Directory](#) and install a few apps in your workspace.

To be completely honest, however, I haven't used any apps for several years—we just don't tend to use Slack that extensively in this class to merit adding any.

As you use Slack, the Slackbot may recommend an app or two when it sees you post, say, a Zoom link or a link to a Google folder. You can follow its recommendations, or you can simply tell it you aren't interested.

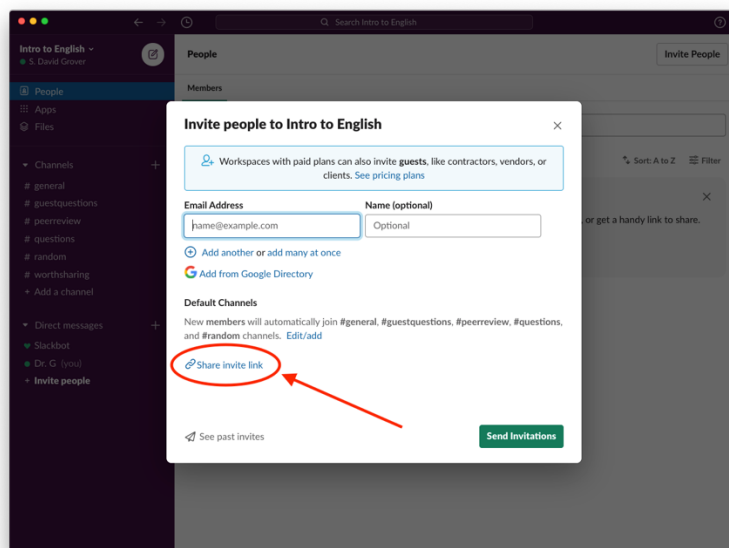
Step 7: Add Slack Links to Canvas Pages

Now that your Slack workspace is fully set up, you can add links to it on key pages here on Canvas so that students can easily get signed up and access the workspace.

"Get on Slack" Assignment

The first assignment of the semester is called "Get on Slack." **You'll need to update portions of the assignment as follows:**

1. First, on Slack, click the down arrow next to the workspace name at the top of the sidebar. Find and click the "Invite people to" your workspace link in the menu.
2. In the popup, click "Copy invite link" to copy the special URL created by Slack for your workspace.




3. On the "Get on Slack" assignment page, click "Edit" to make changes to the page.
4. In the editor, make the text "Click here to join our team!" a link using the URL you copied (highlight the text, choose the "External Link" option from the link button in the toolbar, and enter the copied URL in the pop-up).
5. Replace the text "[team URL]" with the URL you chose for your workspace (this can be found in the workspace settings near the bottom of the page).

Step 1

Join our Slack workspace by clicking the link below:

[Click here to join our team!](#) 

If that doesn't work, you can also sign up using your park.edu email address by going to <https://en207spring2023.slack.com>  and choosing to create an account. If you have problems with this step, contact me as soon as possible.

6. Under Step 3, change the text "Dr. G" to whatever you made your display name.
7. Click the "Save" button at the bottom of the page to save your changes. Test the two links you created to make sure they send users to your workspace.

"Instructor and Office Hours" Page

In the Course Information Module is a page called "Instructor and Office Hours." If desired, you can add a link to your Slack workspace there for students' convenience.

Since Slack can serve the same purpose as the traditional Instructor's Office discussion board, you can unpublish or delete that discussion board if desired. If so, remove it from the Course Information Module.