

JSIS Guidelines for Asynchronous Online Teaching

Some suggestions to help you make modifications and scale down your courses to adapt to an online environment.

1. Consider the advantages of *asynchronous teaching*

- Though the University has asked students “to be prepared to engage in learning online during your regularly scheduled class times” we recognize that for many students this could cause a significant difficulty. Students may not be able to create “a distraction-free workspace” as they may be unwell, caring for others, not have reliable internet access, not have a stable living environment, or not have free access to technology beyond a phone, if even that. Giving students an entirely asynchronous class significantly increases their ability to learn under difficult conditions and anticipates such difficulties.
- Asynchronous teaching means not having any part of your course require students to be online at a specific time.
- Instead, construct your course so all work can be done within the space of a whole week. Here are some examples:
 - Rather than maintain the timing of your original course, record lectures the week before class and upload them to Canvas for students to view during the week when they are able.
 - Rather than require students meet for a discussion (either seminar style or discussion section) at a particular time, use the Discussion Board feature of Canvas, which also allows you to randomly assign small groups within your larger class of any size you want. Respecting that students may live in multiple time zones, we suggest that you leave at least 36 hours between the first and second deadlines (e.g. initial posts due on Tue at 12p, reactions to classmates’ posts due on Wed. at midnight).

2. Be flexible in Scheduling Office Hours

- While we’re required to hold office hours at set periods of time, it’s important that we maintain even more flexibility than usual to accommodate students who are zooming or dialing- in from multiple time zones.
- Consider scheduling Zoom meetings via email rather than rely solely on a set time.

3. Use Canvas; avoid using Zoom as the online basis for your course

- Visit this Canvas site at UW to learn how to make your course an online Canvas course: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses/1248554>
- Zoom is a meeting platform; it is not a course platform.
- Use Zoom to communicate with students as needed, or even to record lectures (Powerpoint, video, voice).

4. Downsize! Less is more.

- An in-person class taught under normal conditions has the luxury of time and space. Be respectful of students (and maybe you too) who don’t have this luxury. Strip your course down to the bare minimum necessary to convey your subject.
 - Pre-recorded lectures have the benefit of being tighter, more focused, and denser than the live version tends to be.

- Students can pause, re-listen, and digest video lectures, so shorter, more condensed lectures can convey the same information as longer, less-condensed in person lectures.
 - If you like to allow students to ask questions during lectures, create a “question” board on Canvas for each week’s set of lectures, where students post questions and you post answers.
5. **Design your course based on weekly modules (not daily meetings)**
 - For example, if you had planned three 50-minute lectures in a week, instead offer 60 minutes of recorded lecture in 6 ten-minute videos.
 - The first week of the quarter is “transitional.” Use it to orient students to the new format and to give yourself time to prepare for the quarter by having the following week’s subject ready in advance and uploaded before the week’s module starts.
 6. **If a lecture course, record multiple “10 minute” lectures using Powerpoint**
 - Use Powerpoint with voice narration. Here is a link to explain how to do this: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/video-record-presentations-2570dff5-f81c-40bc-b404-e04e95ffab33>. This will produce a video you can easily upload to Canvas.
 - Record lectures in **small segments** not more than 10 minutes in length then upload.
 - Smaller lectures make it easier to redo if you make a mistake; easier to download for students as it is a smaller file.
 - You can also use Panopto, but it is a bit more difficult as it requires their software and Powerpoint, rather than just Powerpoint.
 7. **Give assignments that can be completed entirely online.**
 - Canvas can accommodate various kinds of files, including written, audio and video formats.
 - Consider creative ways to use shared documents for group work or individual work, like Google’s Docs, Sheets, and Slides.
 8. **Make all course materials entirely digital.**
 - Do not rely on the student having to buy books or use library resources.
 9. **Move away from thinking in terms of “lecture” and “seminar” for online teaching.**
 - Just because you had scheduled a **lecture course** does not mean you have to carry on with a lecture course online. Consider instead many small projects, use online resources, find creative ways to grade and assess, and make ample use of the discussion boards on Canvas for group work.
 - For **seminars**: you do not have to replicate the three hours in person class experience. You can treat it more like a lecture course or Task Force with small group work (easy to do on Canvas) or with short weekly lectures.
 10. **Rethink giving synchronous midterms and finals.**
 - A quiz or exam that has to be completed in a small window of time (like 2 hours) is an example of synchronous teaching that may pose difficulty for students.
 - Instead of giving a synchronous midterm or final perhaps consider giving exams as “take home” exams, allowing students 48-72 hours or more to complete their exams.
 - Or consider giving small-scale modular and creative assignments, with low stakes, throughout the quarter, maybe one per week, in lieu of exams.

- **Whatever assignments you create, make sure they can be completed after the end of the quarter if necessary.**
- Remember that a lot of students, for many reasons, may need an “X” (“X” or “no grade” is a little more flexible than an “incomplete”). Exams are hard to make up later, whereas other kinds of final projects (papers, videos, powerpoint presentations, etc.) are much easier to complete after the quarter.