

Subject: Fall 2020 Synchronous (Live Online) Teaching

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From: Woodward, John A.

To: All Faculty

CC: Wall, John J., Neuhard, Ian P., Litt, Sheri B., Kooi, Jana, Boese, Marc A.

Dear Colleagues,

For Fall 2020, some of our courses will be meeting on campuses because of the demands of the curriculum. However, most of our courses will meet fully online. As we move into a Fall semester that will look in many ways like our summer semesters, Senate's recommendations regarding synchronous and asynchronous instruction remain. If you were scheduled to teach a face-to-face course and it has moved full online, you will be expected to have some form of meeting during the scheduled time and day. Students are receiving emails that use the term "live online" for these synchronous courses. The Ad Hoc Committee has crafted some clarifications to Senate's previous recommendation.

By "synchronous approach" we mean any activity carried out in a synchronous fashion during the hours when your course was already scheduled to meet. Some possibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- Meeting one day for a focused lecture and another day for open discussion
- Recording lecture content and meeting for the course time to discuss the content and work through problems, examples, etc.
- Recording lectures and using the meeting time for recitation
- Holding synchronous meetings for discussion, problem solving, etc only
- Lecturing during the assigned time and using videoconferencing and/or discussion using chat

Our guiding principle is to meet the outcomes of the course to the best of our ability in the online environment, and to also hold up the expectations our students may have where it comes to signing up for a course that meets at a certain time. The length and purpose of synchronous sessions are the professional purview of the faculty member (the session may run the entire meeting session or part of the meeting session, on one or more of the assigned days).

Please remember that these recommendations are only for the upcoming Fall semester. Please remember as well, that office hours and class time are not identical and can be considered by the faculty to have different purposes, methods, and outcomes.

Nota Bene: We consider it to be perfectly within the purview of the faculty to close classroom meetings that have no student presence within the first ten minutes while fully holding office hours regardless of student interest. We also encourage faculty to record their synchronous session in a secure fashion (Canvas Conferences is relatively secure and can be restricted to students only) even though there may be pedagogical concerns about attendance, etc. We also encourage very flexible attendance policies for the Fall where possible and practicable and pedagogically neutral.

Here are some links for learning more about possibilities for (a)synchronous online teaching:

When to Teach Online Classes Live and When to Let Students Learn on Demand

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-04-08-when-to-teach-online-classes-live-and-when-to-let-students-learn-on-demand>

Turns Out You Can Build Community in a Videoconferencing Classroom

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Turns-Out-You-Can-Build/249038>

The Remote Learning Diaries: Reflections on How to Improve Live and Prerecorded Classes

<https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2020/06/remote-learning-diaries-reflections-how-improve-live-and-prerecorded-classes>

Best,
John and Jason

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