

Teaching Online Tips

Adapted from:

Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption, for SIS and PWR

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Feel free to remix for your own institutional contexts!

PEDAGOGY IN TIMES OF DISRUPTION

Teaching during times of potential disruption requires creative and flexible thinking about how instructors can support students in achieving essential core course learning objectives. This document offers suggestions for instructors looking to continue offering a student-centered learning experience in a remote or online learning environment.

While the process will no doubt feel unfamiliar and at times possibly frustrating, try as much as possible to be patient. There will always be hiccups, but times of disruption are, by their nature, disruptive, and everyone expects that. Be willing to switch tactics if something isn't working. Above all, stay focused on making sure the students are comfortable, and keep a close eye on the course learning goals--while you might not be able to teach something exactly the way you imagined, as long as you're still meeting the learning goals of the course, you're doing fine.

Synchronous vs. Asynchronous?

There are two options for instructors to facilitate class sessions remotely:

1. **Synchronous:** instructors and students gather at the same time and interact in “real time” with a very short or “near-real time” exchange between instructors and students.
2. **Asynchronous:** instructors prepare course materials for students in advance of students' access. Students may access the course materials at a time of their choosing and will interact with each over a longer period of time.

Instructors may choose to engage their students synchronously or asynchronously depending on the course content or material that needs to be taught. There are many advantages and disadvantages to asynchronous and synchronous teaching options.

Advantages of Synchronous Teaching

1. Immediate personal engagement between students and instructors, which may create greater feelings of community and lessen feelings of isolation
2. More responsive exchanges between students and instructors, which may prevent miscommunication or misunderstanding

Disadvantages of Synchronous Teaching

1. More challenging to schedule shared times for all students and instructors
2. Some students may face technical challenges or difficulties if they do not have fast or powerful Wi-Fi networks accessible

Advantages of Asynchronous Teaching

1. Higher levels of temporal flexibility, which may simultaneously make the learning experiences more accessible to different students and also make an archive of past materials accessible.
2. Increased cognitive engagement since students will have more time to engage with and explore the course material.

Disadvantages of Asynchronous Teaching

1. Students may feel less personally exchanged and less satisfied without the social interaction between their peers and instructors.

2. Course material may be misunderstood or have the potential to be misconstrued without the real-time interaction.

What is Zoom?

[Zoom](#) is a video-conferencing platform. Zoom allows you to engage in live Web conversations with your students using audio, video, and text-based chat features.

Unlike a video-conferencing program like Skype or Google Hangouts, you do not need a unique username or account to use Zoom. Instead, your SUNet ID and password will allow you to generate a link (much like you might for a Google Document) and a phone number that you can share with anyone. Participants can then follow the web link or call the phone number to join in on a live conversation.

SHIFTING YOUR CLASSES ONLINE

You have three options for shifting your classes temporarily online:

Option 1: Run Your Class Live With Zoom

This option works especially well for small discussion-based classes, though it's also effective for large lectures, especially if you have a moderator.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Use slides and screen sharing** within Zoom to make sure discussion questions are visible to students who may have a slow Internet connection or who may struggle to hear the audio for the initial question. (Look for [“Share Screen”](#) at the bottom of your Zoom call.)
 - On your first slide, **display an agenda** at the start of the class session so that students know what to expect of the shared time together.
- **Use the chat** (bottom of your screen). See [In-Meeting Chat](#).
 - Moderate discussion, i.e., “call on” a student with a comment to speak, to help them break into the conversation.
 - For larger classes, assign a co-host to moderate the chat and make sure important questions and comments are addressed. Even for smaller classes, it may be worthwhile to ask a student (or two) to take on special roles as “chat monitors” to voice if there are questions that arise that the instructor has missed.
 - You might use the chat to troubleshoot technical problems. For example, if a student is having trouble connecting via audio or video, the chat might be a space for you as the instructor or for fellow students to work together to problem-solve. This may, again, be an opportunity to assign a student to a special role, especially if you have students eager to help on the technical aspect of things.
 - If you have a TA or a fellow who can support the class instruction with technical help, this would also be a good person to respond to troubleshooting tips in the chat.
- **Use Zoom Breakout Rooms** to help students talk in smaller groups (just as they would do break-out groups in a larger class environment). See [Managing Video Breakout Rooms](#).

- **Rethink your classroom activities** to make the class more interactive even if Zoom students don't have ideal connections and aren't able to hear and see everything perfectly.
 - Have students write and comment together on a shared Google Doc.
 - Try using [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Google Forms](#) to collect student responses, and then share results with both in-person and online students.
- **Consider making discussion questions available in advance** in so that students can access the questions if screen sharing does not work. If sharing slides in advance share as PDFs, as students will be able to access the material on their phones.

A Few Troubleshooting Tips:

- **If your microphone is not working**, use the phone number listed in the Zoom invitation when you set up a Zoom call. You can use your phone as the microphone and audio source for your call rather than your computer's built-in microphone if necessary.
- **If your Internet connection is slow or lagging**, consider temporarily turning off your video stream and only maintaining the audio stream. Sometimes, running the web camera on your computer will use up the Internet's bandwidth in a way that might make communication challenging. Turning off the video should improve communication quality and consistency.
- **If you have earbuds or a headphone set, wear them!** Wearing earbuds or headphones will reduce the amount of noise that your computer will pick up during your quality, which will make it easier for your students to hear you. Similarly, you may want to advise your students to wear earbuds or headphones during the call.
- **Advise students to mute their microphones if they are not speaking and unmute the microphones when they wish to speak.** Students may be joining Zoom calls from all kinds of different locations, many of which may create background noise that could be distracting. Encourage students to mute themselves if they're not speaking to minimize unnecessary or distracting background noise. Using the "raise hand" feature or simply seeing the microphone unmuted will give the group a visual cue for when a student wishes to speak.
- **Check the "chat" space for student questions and contributions.** Some students may not have working microphones and, therefore, may be unable to contribute via voice. The chat room is a good place for students to contribute, ask questions, and be involved.
- **Check the [Zoom Help Center](#)**

Accessibility Suggestions:

- **Automatic live captioning is not available in Zoom**
- **For students who are blind or have low visibility, narrate the material that you're displaying visually on the screen.** Just as you might read materials aloud in class, read screen material that you share on-screen just in case students are not able to see essential text.

Option 2: Pre-Record Your Lectures

[Video: Beth tests out presenting PowerPoint in Zoom](#)

If you are not comfortable presenting live, another good option is to pre-record any lecture material. We recommend that you pre-record lectures using Zoom, as this will generate automatic closed-captions that are needed for accessibility reasons.

The Tech Side:

Basically, you'll want to open up your Powerpoint or slides, make sure you're recording to the cloud, and then use Zoom's "Share Screen" tool.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Keep videos short and lively.** It is often harder to focus on a video than on a person! [Check out some tips for creating lively short online videos from online educator Karen Costa.](#)
- **Test your microphone** to make sure that you have good sound quality. Consider using a headset with an external microphone to capture better audio.
- **Consider ADA compliance.** Automatic closed-captioning is not perfect. Speak clearly and not too quickly to make the content as accurate as possible.
- **Integrate interaction with the lecture material.** You might consider setting up some specific questions, using a quiz, or setting up a chat session for a text-based live discussion.

Option 3: Skip the Video

Many online courses do not have a video component at all. If you are not sure you have the right equipment and are uncomfortable with the tech setup, this might be a good option, at least for the short-term.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Annotate your slideshow with notes** and share this with student's email
- **Set up a discussion.** Use specific, structured questions, and let students know expectations for their responses.
- **Share links to outside resources.** Encourage students to watch videos, read articles, etc.

Office Hours

Set up virtual office hours to meet with students using your webcam, share your computer screen or collaborate using Zoom's whiteboard feature.

Pedagogical Recommendations

- **Encourage students to share their screen with you.** Screen sharing is possible not just for the instructor in Zoom, but for students too. Help your students navigate towards a screen sharing option so that they can show you their written work on their screen.

OTHER USE CASES

Student Presentations

Pedagogical Recommendations:

- If students are sharing their presentations **asynchronously**:
 - **Ask students to record themselves at their screen**, using a web camera, the built-in microphone on their computer, and screen sharing software combined to capture both their faces/persons as well as the slides on the screen.
 - [Zoom](#), [Jing](#), and [Screencast-o-matic](#) can be used for audio/video recording in this capacity, as can Quicktime (on Mac only).
 - If students want to use presenter notes while recording in Zoom in particular, they can follow the instructions [to use two monitors with screen sharing](#). If students do not have access to two monitors, they can also use the screen sharing function by selecting to share *only* the window with the final slidedeck and NOT to share the window that pops up with the presenter notes. (i.e. "squish" both windows so they could appear side-by-side).
 - Voiceover narration in slidedeck creation software can also be used via [Keynote](#) (Mac), [PowerPoint](#) (Mac or PC), or [Quicktime](#) (Mac).

Student-Facing Language to Help Students Understand Options for Final Presentations (hat tip to Sarah Pittock and Jennifer Johnson)

Student-Facing Language For Students Giving Live Presentations

Your instructor will provide the URL to the Zoom room. Simply click the URL or paste into your browser of choice to open the meeting.

- Audio and Video Setup
 - After launching the Zoom meeting from the meeting URL, you will be prompted to join the room's audio. Click "join audio by computer." Zoom allows audio participation through your computer's internal speakers, a headset, or a phone line.
- Mute Yourself/Stop Webcam
 - To mute, click the microphone icon in the bottom-left corner. To unmute, click the microphone icon again. Follow the same process to turn the webcam on and off.
 - Background noise can be minimized if you mute yourself when you're listening.

Share Screen

Participants are able to share applications or documents using Share Screen. After selecting "Share Screen", Zoom will present a list of all active applications and available desktops on your computer. You may also choose to share a whiteboard or iPhone/iPad. When the screen is shared, the bottom navigation menu will move to the top of the screen. To reposition the menu, simply click and drag.

- NOTE: By default, screen share opens in full screen. If you have the participants list and chat windows open (they will display on the right-hand side of the meeting), the windows will be hidden in full screen. Either click "Exit Full Screen" in the upper right corner or re-enable the windows by clicking "Manage Participants" and "Chat". The annotation toolbar allows participants to draw and make comments on the shared screen. Your

instructor may choose to disable this feature. To end the screen share, choose “Stop Share”

Student-Facing Language for Students Pre-Recording Presentations

Uses a web camera, the built-in microphone on the computer, and screen sharing software combined to capture your face (in window) as well as the slides on your screen.

Directions:

- Click [Host a Meeting](#) (don't worry, you don't need anyone else in the mtg!)
- Be sure to [activate audio and video](#) (bottom left corner) When you activate video you will have a video window in the upper corner of your ppt where we can see you presenting the material
- [Turn on Screen Sharing](#) (center bottom) and you'll be prompted to select what you want to share: go to your desktop (and select your ppt) or you may see your ppt as a direct option, if you have the file open.
- [Hit record](#) (bottom center screen) and select “send to cloud” (red record light appears at top of screen)
- When you finish your presentation, [hit end recording](#)
- Within a few minutes, you'll receive two links in an email from the Zoom cloud: a shareable link and a second private link where only you can download your video file.
- Upload your file to Box and send me the presentation link. (note: recording can be done multiple times, so please feel free to practice)

More questions? Guide on [recording in zoom](#)

Want to use presenter notes?

- a. Dual monitor screen sharing with ppt zoom [tutorial here](#)
- b. Use google slides by selecting to share *only* the window with the final slidedeck and NOT to share the window that pops up with the presenter notes. (i.e. "squish" both windows so they could appear side-by-side)

Written Discussions

To remove technical hurdles and to ensure that students are able to engage with peers and each other in a discussion-based class (even without a strong Internet connection), you might choose to move student discussion to an asynchronous format.

Other places to engage in asynchronous written discussions include:

- [Padlet](#) (the free version allows users to create 3 “boards”)

Pedagogical recommendations:

- **Craft discussion questions to be as clear and as specific as possible** so that students can build off of the question for a sustained response.
 - See [Stanford TeachingCommons' “Designing Effective Discussion Questions”](#)
- **Assign roles to students** so that they understand when and how they might respond to you or their peers. For example, students might “role play” as particular kinds of respondents or you might ask them to do particular tasks (e.g. be a summarizer, a respondent, a connector with outside resources).

Individual Students Using Zoom to Attend In-Person Classes (Small, Discussion-Based)

- **Position your computer** so that students can see and hear as well as possible. If necessary, repeat student points for the Zoom crowd, if only you are close enough to be heard. You might consider bringing or borrowing a microphone to make it easier for students to hear.
- **Solicit input from Zoom participants**, as Zoom students may have a harder time breaking into the conversation.
- **Assign a student to moderate** the Zoom chat and to speak up for a Zoom participant with a question or a raised hand.
- **Share handouts and slides** in advance to make sure Zoom participants can look at them. These handouts and slides could be shared via links in the Zoom chat room.
- **Rethink your classroom activities** to make the class more interactive even if Zoom students don't have ideal connections and aren't able to hear and see everything perfectly.
 - Have students write and comment together on a shared Google Doc.
 - Try using [Poll Everywhere](#) or [Google Forms](#) to collect student responses, and then share results with both in-person and online students.
 - If doing group work, consider an alternative activity for Zoom students. If multiple students are on Zoom, put them in a group together to discuss.

Live-Streaming In-Person Lectures

Note that this is not an option for Winter 2020 classes, but we are keeping it here in case recommendations change in the future.

If lectures continue to be held in person, but some students, particularly students with any immunity issues, need other ways to access the lecture material, you have several options. The one that is best for you really depends on the physical space of your class, your comfort with tech, etc.

The main challenge of these situations is usually making sure that the sound quality is good enough for students to hear.

Synchronous

- **Use Zoom**, as you would in small classes. Mute all participants, and make sure someone is monitoring chat.
-

Asynchronous

- **Record lectures using your phone, or video cameras or audio recorders**

Scheduling Tools for Student Tutorials/Conferences

Asynchronous

Recommended Tool: Google Docs

If you usually send around a physical sign-in sheet, you might be looking for alternatives that let you schedule appointment slots with students.

You may book and reserve time with students:

- **Embed a Google Doc/Sheet into the course.** Create an openly editable Google Document or Sheet with a table of available appointments for students to sign up for appointments. The link to edit the Doc or Sheet could be shared with students.

Meetings with Teaching Teams

Synchronous Recommended Video Tool: Zoom

The easiest way is for one team member to schedule a Zoom meeting and send the link to everyone else.

Best practices for web meetings:

- Have a clear agenda and keep an eye on time--it's easier for people's attention to wander during web meetings
- Sometimes starting with something personal (a quick check-in) can make these meetings feel more personal

RESOURCES TO LEARN MORE

General Tips for Teaching Online:

1. [Tips and Tricks for Teaching in the Online Classroom](#): Jim Harrison and J. Diane Martonis (*Faculty Focus*)
2. [Selecting the Appropriate Communication Tools for Your Online Course](#): Rob Kelly (*Faculty Focus*)
3. [8 Lessons Learned from Teaching Online](#): EDUCAUSE Research Library
4. [How To Be a Better Online Teacher](#): Flower Darby (*Chronicle of Higher Education*)

Resources for Online Writing Instruction

5. [Annotated Bibliography of Online Writing Instruction research](#) (compiled by Heidi Harris, 2019)
6. [Foundational Practices of Online Writing Instruction](#) (book); edited by Beth Hewett and Kevin DePew, 2015. Here are a few chapter highlights:
 - a. [Grounding Principles of OWI: Beth Hewett](#)
 - b. [Asynchronous and Synchronous Modalities: Connie Mick and Geoffrey Middlebrook](#)
 - c. [Faculty Preparation for OWI: Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch](#)
 - d. [Preparing Students for OWI: Lisa Meloncon and Heidi Harris](#)
7. [Personal, Accessible, Responsive, Strategic: Resources and Strategies for Online Writing Instructors](#) (book): Jessie Borgman and Casey McArdle, 2019

TECH TUTORIAL: GETTING STARTED WITH ZOOM

Step 1: Schedule your class meetings

“Schedule a New Meeting”

- **Name** meetings clearly to indicate lectures, discussion sections, office hours, etc.
- If a recurring class session, select “**Recurring Meeting**” while setting it up
- Select “**Record Automatically**”
- If creating this meeting for someone else or planning to have a moderator (recommended), **add Alternative Hosts**.



Your current Time Zone is (GMT-08:00) Pacific Time (US and Canada). [📍](#)

[All My Zoom Meetings/Recordings](#)

[Schedule a New Meeting](#)



Upcoming Meetings

Previous Meetings

Personal Meeting Room

Cloud Recordings

[Get Training](#)

Show my course meetings only

Start Time	Topic	Meeting ID		
Mon, Mar 9 (Recurring) 12:00 PM	Lecture	726-817-880	Start	Delete
Mon, Mar 9 1:00 PM	Beth's Discussion Section	904-303-818	Start	Delete
Tue, Mar 10 11:00 AM	Office Hours	252-596-883	Start	Delete

Step 4: Start Your Session

Mon, Mar 9 (Recurring)
12:00 PM

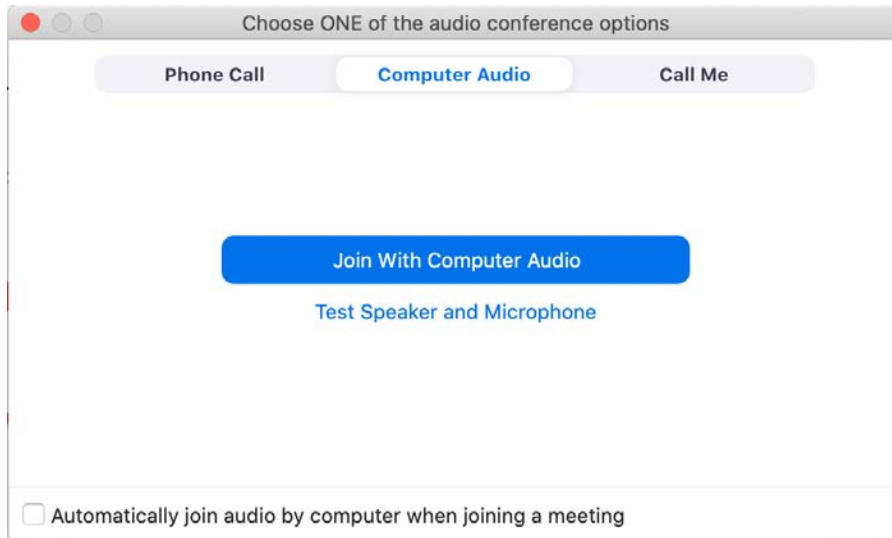
[Lecture](#)

726-817-880

[Start](#)

[Delete](#)

When it prompts you, allow it to open Zoom.



The first time, you might want to test your speaker and microphone before hitting “Join With Computer Audio.”

Step 5: Check your video, sound, and configuration

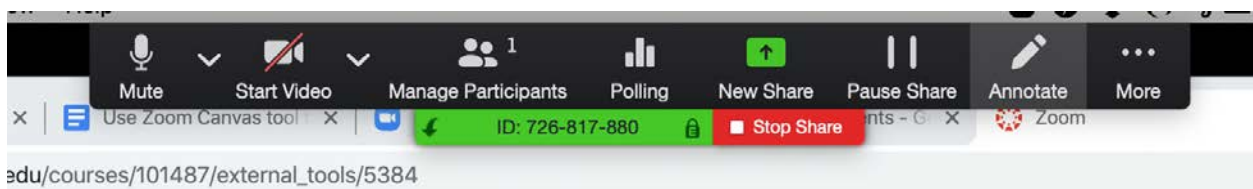
You’ll see the following bar at the bottom of the screen. This is where you control different functions of the course.



- The left icons let you **Mute** and **Start Video** to control whether others can see or hear you. We recommend that you start your video to let students see your face.
- **Manage Participants** lets you see students, and, if necessary, mute them.
- **Chat** lets students post messages to you and to the course as a whole. It’s especially useful for troubleshooting, so you might want to assign a moderator.

Step 6: Share your slides

You’ll also see **Share Screen** on this bottom menu. When you launch this, you’ll see options to share your whole desktop, a specific window, or a “whiteboard” you can draw on. (If you don’t see your slides, try making sure they’re open in the background, and try again.) Once you’re presenting, a top menu will appear with more options, including Annotation and the ability to “Stop Share.”



Step 7: Wrap up

When you’re done, use the red “End Meeting” button on the bottom right.

About this Doc

[Jenae Cohn](#) and [Beth Seltzer](#), both Academic Tech Specialists at Stanford, started writing this on March 6, 2020 in response to initial Covid discussion meetings. It's geared towards the specific instructor needs in our programs ([PWR](#) and [SIS](#), which are both mostly small seminar courses), and to the tech already licensed on our campus, including Zoom and Canvas. We've put a CC BY-NC-SA license on the document. Please feel free to copy, re-use, and modify any portion of this document that you'd like for non-commercial purposes.

We're interested in knowing if others have found it helpful, so we'd love a heads-up if other institutions are using it, though please don't feel like you need to ask permission in this very busy time!