Recommendations for Teaching during the Fall 2020 Semester
Last updated Aug. 6, 2020

As we prepare for Fall, it is important to consider opportunities to support all students attending classes at Mines. We want to assist Mines faculty with successful and high-quality delivery of all courses, recognizing that most courses will require remote options. The guidelines below are meant to provide faculty with direction to implement best-practices to meet our students’ needs and expectations of a high-quality Mines education during this period. While many Mines faculty incorporate a number of these practices already, we articulate the guidelines here to promote consistency across campus. For information about policies for teaching this fall, review the Policies and Expectations document (forthcoming).

It is essential to mark the differences between remote and fully developed online courses, because this distinction will help with setting student and faculty course expectations and potential state audits (for more information about the difference between remote and online courses, visit the Remote and Online Instruction Modalities website). While many faculty are teaching courses on campus (in person), there are several situations that may arise that would require faculty to accommodate remote students, including:

- Students request or meet remote requirements from day one of the course.
- Students become ill during the semester and need remote accommodations.
- The governor or county reinstates all remote learning.

As you browse the guidelines, pay particular attention to the Questions to Consider. If you are uncertain of your responses to any of the questions or would appreciate help thinking through delivery for your course, please contact the Trefny Center and reference the resources available on the Trefny Center website.

Course setup and structure: A well-designed and structured course lays out a clear pathway for students to master the learning outcomes.

- **Create a clear and consistent course structure in Canvas**: By creating a Canvas course with a consistent structure, students can more easily find course materials, assignments, and due dates. This is beneficial for both in person and remote students. We recommend using modules to effectively organize the materials (readings, assignments, assessments) into manageable segments.

- **Determine productive use of in-class and out-of-class time**: Use scheduled class times to productively facilitate interaction, discussion, problem-solving, and experimentation with students. Activities best suited for out-of-class time include reading, watching, collecting research, working on problems or projects, and reflecting.

- **Consider how in-person course activities translate to remote activities**: Use SMART learning outcomes to guide remote activity design. Select alternative activities by...
focusing on the **skills** you expect students to demonstrate and master, acknowledging that not all existing in-class activities will translate perfectly to remote settings. Consider designing activities that all students can participate in regardless of how they are attending the course (in person, Zoom, asynchronously). If teaching in person, review the policies and procedures for using live lecture capture (forthcoming).

- **Remote work does not mean additional work**: Do not add additional work or requirements unless you are removing some that require about the same amount of time and effort. The work for students attending a course remotely should be directly comparable to the work that residential students complete. You can adjust the activities, but they should accomplish the same outcomes and be about the same workload and level.

- **Ensure all students have access to course resources**: Review [these tips for accessibility](#) and ensure that students can access the materials and resources in your course. In addition to posting and organizing resources in Canvas, consider whether your course requires additional tools, materials, or software access. Make a plan for how students will access resources. [Raise your hand](#) to receive help from ITS or the Dean of Students.

- **Review and adapt the course syllabus**: The course syllabus is a crucial tool to communicate course structure and setup to students. Review your current syllabus and include text that helps students understand how to productively participate.

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<th>Questions to consider:</th>
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<td>• How do you plan to organize your course in Canvas?</td>
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<td>o How and where will students access course materials?</td>
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<td>o How and where will students access class recordings?</td>
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<td>• How will you use in-class and out-of-class time efficiently to support student learning?</td>
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<td>• Is there any special resource (e.g., software or technology) that students will need to work effectively? Are alternatives available?</td>
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<td>• What equipment or physical resources (e.g., print materials, office supplies, 3-D printer, VR goggles) will students need to access? Are alternatives available?</td>
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**Design flexible assessments**: Ensure that both in-person and remote students have equal opportunities to demonstrate mastery of the learning outcome(s) on the assessment.

- **Design assessments based on learning outcomes**: Course assessments should directly align with the learning outcomes and be consistent with the intended level (introductory --> advanced) of the course. For example, if the learning outcome asks students to describe XYZ given 123 parameters, then the assessment should ask students to describe XYZ given 123 parameters. Well written learning outcomes define the assessments.

- **Incorporate a variety of assessment and assignment types**: Consider the kinds of assignments and assessments students engage in throughout the class. Do students
have the opportunity to complete a variety of assignments and assessments? If the primary assessments in the course are high-stakes exams, consider incorporating a variety of low-stakes assessments (quizzes, discussions, etc.) to help students practice with the course material and achieve the learning outcomes.

- **Avoid high-level proctoring:** As much as possible, avoid assessments that require high-level proctoring. Recall that many students may not have access to the technology necessary for proctoring software and may experience significant glitches. Instead, increase the frequency of low-stakes assessments and incorporate authentic assessments in your course, helping students focus on achieving the learning outcomes. Making even small changes to exam items can result in less stress for instructors and students and can reduce the likelihood of cheating. Review the Mines’ Policies for FALL 2020 Teaching & Learning due to COVID-19 for additional guidance on incorporating exams into classes. And if you are considering using proctoring, review the policies and guidelines for using Proctorio in Mines courses.

**Questions to consider:**

- What technologies will students need to have in order to complete assignments and assessments (e.g., specific software, computer with webcam, etc.)?
- Will remote students be able to fully participate in planned assignments/assessments? If not, what alternatives can you offer?

**Communication and expectations:** Clear and frequent communication is important for all students to be successful in classes. Be specific about what you want your students to be able to know and do, when, and how.

- **Be flexible and understanding:** There is a lot of uncertainty about the fall semester. While preparing for the semester, and throughout the semester, be patient and give yourself a break as you are making rapid changes to adapt your course. In addition, be patient and understanding when interacting with your students. Some students may not have a safe home, reliable access to internet, printers, a laptop, or even the time to be online during regular hours if they are taking classes remotely (students may be 12 hours ahead, sick, or caring for children/parents). Please be understanding and work with students to accommodate their learning. Every student has a different situation and needs your support to be successful. Try not to create extra barriers for students in their need to be accommodated by requiring excused absences documentation. Anticipate, plan for, and trust students who report technology issues, symptoms, or needing to care for a sick family member.

- **Communicate frequently:** Communication with students, both those joining a class in-person and those joining remotely, is essential. Communicate with students early through the syllabus and your Canvas course, and provide opportunities for students to contact you with any questions or concerns they may have about the course. Send
• **Communicate expectations for the course overall, including for assignments and assessments:** Communicate course expectations (learning outcomes, time commitment, participation requirements, deadlines, etc.) to students at the beginning of the semester. On the first day of class, discuss what students are accountable for and what they can come to expect from you. Make it a collaborative effort. Be sure to note what is required, what is optional (no penalty for not doing it), and how can students can best work with you for support. Review instructions for assignments and assessments to make sure that they are clear.

• **Share expectations for interacting productively in the classroom environment:** Explicitly communicate with students how to interact in the classroom and Zoom settings. This setting (with social distancing if attending classes in person or on Zoom if attending classes remotely) is new for everyone. It is helpful to begin by outlining norms (guidelines) for how to interact in meaningful ways in the classroom environment. Remind students of the expectations in the [Oredigger Promise](#) that they signed as well as the information they learned during the COVID-19 training course, "Staying Healthy in a Changing Environment."

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<td>• How will you notify students (e.g., e-mail, Canvas announcement) if the course must suddenly go remote?</td>
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<td>• How will you communicate expectations to students?</td>
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<td>• How will you regularly communicate (e.g., syllabi, email, Canvas announcements) with students?</td>
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<td>• How do you prefer remote students connect with you to ask questions and/or get help if they are unable to attend scheduled times for help (e.g., they are in a different time zone)?</td>
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<td>• How frequently and through what means will you check in on remote students?</td>
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**Facilitate interactions and build community:** Students benefit from interactions (synchronously and asynchronously, in person, on Zoom, through Canvas) with faculty and other students. These interactions help build a sense of community in the course.

• **Get to know each other:** Start your course by providing opportunities for students to get to know you as a person and for you to begin building connections with your students (e.g., introduce yourself in person or in a video, share something fun about yourself, provide some discussion time for students to ask open questions and to share with each other). Ask students about themselves and how they are doing, listen to them for suggestions, be sympathetic, and maintain open and regular communications with
your students. This will help build a rapport with your students early on making it easier on them to ask for help when they need it.

- **Facilitate interactions between you and students:** Continue to incorporate opportunities for students to interact with you during class sessions (in-person and/or on Zoom), in office hours, through discussions in Canvas, through videos explaining course content/relevance, etc. Students want guidance, support, and regular interactions with you, so it is important to build in “instructor presence” into the course. Consider adding optional “tutoring” or “recitation” sessions via Zoom. As a reminder, remote office hours should be offered at least two different days and times each week. Additionally, consider giving students the option to make Zoom appointments outside of scheduled office hours.

- **Facilitate interactions between students:** Building community with peers is an important aspect of classroom environments. Incorporate opportunities for students to interact with each other around course content as well as topics unrelated to the course.

Questions to consider:
- Will students need to log in during any specific dates/times to participate in class? If so, what happens if students are unable to log in during those times (e.g., they are in a different time zone and the scheduled class time falls during the middle of the night)?
- Will students need to connect with other students to conduct group work? If so, how will students connect with their group?

**Next Steps:**

**Connect with the Trefny Center:**
- Visit the [Trefny Center website](https://www.colorado.edu/). The Trefny Center is publishing [resources and supports around teaching strategies and designing online assessments](https://www.colorado.edu/).
- Schedule an appointment with a Faculty Developer for help thinking through the delivery of your course.
- Attend an upcoming event (visit the [Trefny Center website](https://www.colorado.edu/) for a list of offerings).

**Connect with your peers:** Reach out to other faculty to see how you can learn and support each other’s efforts. Students look for consistency from their instructors.