Emergency Online Learning

When Hofstra University is closed due to weather, natural disaster or other emergency situation, it may be necessary for an instructor to teach their course outside the normal class times or locations.

While most online learning is asynchronous, if you need to hold class online for any reason, there are options for both synchronous and asynchronous class sessions.

EdTech makes the following recommendations and supports the following tools:

- Give your students a chance to practice attending class in the new format if at all possible. **Students do not automatically know how to participate in a class online asynchronously**, nor do they necessarily know what meaningful online conversation looks like. We recommend you discuss these things with your class, and offer them some guidelines as to what you expect a meaningful contribution to the class to look like.
- If you are concerned about student participation, be sure to give them credit for their participation in the online class sessions just as you would for face-to-face participation.

Asynchronous Class Examples

**Example 1**
Record mini-lectures with audio or video – aim for 10 minutes long. Lead a discussion in the Discussion Board in which students are required to respond to your question and to at least one other student response.

**Example 2**
Post mini-lectures & questions as teacher blog throughout the week. Require students to respond to each post; encourage them to respond to each other.

**Example 3**
If you already use PowerPoint in your class, or are comfortable with it, you can use your PowerPoints and add voiceovers to each slide. Post as mini-lecture. Require students to post their questions in Discussion Board and respond to each other’s questions and responses.

Synchronous Class Option

We provide support for desktop videoconferencing (via such tools as Blackboard Collaborate) which can be used to allow the class to meet synchronously online. Visual or audio discussion would require that students all have access to cameras and microphones. If students don’t have access to technology with cameras and microphones, discussion can also be in text-only mode.

Synchronous online classes can be very rich, but because of possible technical difficulties and requirements, we do not recommend this for an emergency or one-off online class. In an emergency students may well have technical problems with these relatively complex tools and may be left out of a class session. We strongly recommend testing these technologies before relying on them in a teaching situation, and they are not well-suited to carrying on class according to traditional face-to-face models.

Tools You May Want to Use

You can search this wiki (via the search box on the left) to find information and instructions on any tool we support. Here are some direct links to some of the tools mentioned above:

- [Mobile Device](#) (to record mini-lectures quickly and easily)
- [Blackboard Discussion Board](#)
- [Discussion Board Grader](#)
- [Blackboard Blog](#)
- [PowerPoint](#) (to add audio to your PowerPoint presentations)
- [Blackboard Collaborate](#)