Syllabus Resources

With courses being offered in multiple modalities (face-to-face/in-person, online, and “dual delivery”), it is important to set clear expectations for students, to maintain open communication, and to act with respect, care and kindness.

As instructors prepare to revise their course syllabus for dual delivery, please consult the faculty senate guidelines for syllabus standards. The additional information and examples of guidelines below are designed to help instructors develop their own specific classroom policies.

Attendance

As noted in the university’s Attendance and Excused Absences policy, documented in the GA, students are normally expected to attend all scheduled activities for all of the classes for which they are registered. While this is still generally true, the requirements for dual delivery are that students that are in remote locations have equal access to the instructional material, and it is not reasonable to expect students who are more than 4 time zones away to attend classes synchronously. As a result, the instructor must make accommodations for these students in their attendance and grading policies. In addition, the need to protect the health of our community means that the university is expecting everyone, students included, not to come to campus if they are not feeling well. This means that students may not be able to come to their in person classes on very short notice and they may not be able to inform their instructors in advance of their inability to attend. Instructors are encouraged to be lenient in excusing absences this Fall due to the unusual circumstances we all find ourselves in. It is also possible that students or instructors may need to change their typical mode of attending/delivering class during the semester. For example, students (or instructors) may need to switch between in-person and remote participation in a course. Whenever such a long term change in a how a student participates in a course is made, the student should inform their instructor of this change. Similarly, if instructors change how they deliver the course material, all students in the class should be informed as soon as possible.

However, these considerations do not mean that instructors cannot generally expect their students to attend classes (in person or remotely) and participate in class discussions and other activities. Instructors are encouraged to clearly state their attendance expectations in their course syllabus. Instructor attendance policies will probably vary based on the method of instruction, or delivery mode. Particularly for face-to-face courses for which are dual delivery, instructors should be clear about expectations for students attending class physically and in-person vs. those attending online and remotely, either synchronously or asynchronously. Examples:
• All students who live four or fewer time zones away, are expected to attend every class synchronously, either in person or via Zoom

• All students who are living where the time zone is >4 hrs from the central time zone are expected to either attend class synchronously via Zoom or to work out in advance with the instructor a suitable solution for asynchronous attendance.

• Students attending class synchronously via Zoom are expected to arrive to class on time (e.g., within 5 minutes of start time). This is essential because links/docs posted in the Chat window and are only available to students who are present at the time the links are posted. Links will not be reposted to accommodate students who arrive late.

Note: Courses that have not applied for and received an exemption from dual delivery must accommodate students participating remotely, including asynchronous participation by students more than 4 time zones away. Instructors and students should discuss options and agree on a solution. For courses where discussion of the material is an important part of instruction, instructors may choose to schedule special meetings with their asynchronous students to have one on one or small group discussions. Instructors may choose to have the student watch recordings of portions of the class with instructor over Zoom and discuss or respond to points raised in the original class discussion. Other accommodations can also be made.

---

**Participation**

Instructors may want to state in the syllabus how they want students to engage during class. A special note is warranted about the use of cameras for students participating remotely. A recent survey of our students indicates that many have concerns about their home environments for taking part in classes, and as some do not want their camera on during class. While many instructors desire that students have their cameras on for class discussions and other types of participation, we ask faculty to be aware of the possible issues associated with this and be lenient with students who may seek an accommodation. Examples of potential participation statements, including the use of cameras, are:

• Students are expected to be actively engaged in the classroom. If you are joining class remotely, please keep your video camera on and microphone muted. Use the [chat, raise hand, unmute, etc.] when you have questions or would like to participate. Students needing an accommodation for using their camera or microphone should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss and work out needed adjustments.

• In this course, students are expected to work in groups. If you are physically in the classroom, maintain a 6-foot distance and wear a mask or face covering at all times. Students should use screen-share software, Google docs, Zoom breakouts, portable white boards, etc. if they need to view other students’ work. If students attend class remotely, they should discuss with their teammates how to contribute to group work.
Online discussions and activities are an integral portion of the course. You may be asked to engage in an offline dialogue with colleagues throughout each session as indicated in session directions.

Active engagement is an essential component of the learning process. Participation in online courses includes active reading and discussion within online forums and activities during the week in which the class is engaged with the same content. Students are expected to log into the course, monitor course discussions, and engage as appropriate for the course several times a session.

Office Hours
Instructors should state how and when office hours will be held. As instructors consider how to schedule their office hours, physical distancing must still be practiced. The requirements of dual delivery means that instructors teaching in person will also need to be available for remote (Zoom) office hours. Examples include:

- In person office hours are by appointment only. Email the instructor to set up an appointment and/or use Google calendar to set up an appointment.
- Remote office hours will be conducted via Zoom on [Day/Time]. Use this Zoom link for office hours: ____. Please be patient if the instructor is meeting with another student.
  - When you arrive for remote office hours, you may be directed to the waiting room.
  - When you arrive for remote office hours, you will be able to immediately join the meeting. Type your name in the Chat window and briefly state the topic or question you would like to discuss (eg, problem 5 in the homework; personal matter). This may enable the instructor to organize small groups of students who want to discuss the same question/topic.
- Include a policy regarding asynchronous learners’ participation in office hours.
- If you live in a time zone that makes it difficult to attend the weekly posted Zoom office hours, email the instructor to make an appointment.

PPE & Physical Distancing
All undergraduate students will be signing a “Culture of Care Agreement” where they will promise to abide by the university’s policies on PPE and physical distancing as well as other behaviors. However, instructors may also wish to add a statement on this to their syllabus. Examples include:

- Every student in the classroom is expected to properly wear a mask or face covering [Rice Crisis Management Policies] and to abide by Rice’s physical distancing policy (maintain at least six feet of distance from other persons whenever possible).
The instructor reserves the right to instruct students to leave the classroom if they are engaging in behavior that places faculty and/or students’ health at risk. If students do not comply, the instructor may cancel the class meeting and refer the student to Student Judicial Programs and the Dean of Undergraduates or the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

Instructors should let the students know how they want to be approached during office hours and/or after class. Examples:

- Please leave the classroom immediately after class ends. This will help reduce the crowding that occurs between class periods.
- If you have questions at the end of class, please submit them via email or attend office hours. If you email a question, the instructor will try to answer it within 24 hours during weekdays.
- Meet the instructor at the exit of the building (designate it) and conversations can happen outside.

Technology Resources

The university is continuing to survey the technology needs of students. In addition, instructors may wish to state the technology they expect their remotely participating student to have. Examples include:

- Students attending remotely must have a working computer with a video camera, speaker and a microphone, and a working internet connection that allows them to be on video. Students should test their equipment before joining class. Undergraduate students should contact the Dean of Undergraduates if they have concerns about meeting this requirement. Graduate students should contact their department.
- If your computer/phone has no webcam/microphone, which are needed to complete some assignments, please let the instructor know as soon as possible and [contact the Dean of Undergraduates if you need to request support via the Access and Opportunity Portal (https://aop.rice.edu/application), contact your academic department if you are a graduate student, request to borrow one from the Digital Media Commons].
- This course occasionally includes activities that require unique materials, equipment, or supplies. If you are participating in class remotely on one of those days . . . [make sure you have the equipment/supplies you need to complete the task independently; contact your partner/team (if appropriate) to determine how you can contribute to the work they are doing in the classroom; etc.]
Privacy and Confidentiality

Instructors should also let students know about the standard protections and any other expectations they may have in light of internet-mediated communication. Examples include:

- In line with FERPA requirements, recorded classroom discussions involving students will be available only to students officially registered and enrolled in the class. If you have concerns about appearing on these recordings, please contact the instructor ahead of time.

- Some instructors may desire or plan to use recordings from this class for another purpose. In such situations, and in line with FERPA requirements, the instructor may ask students to consider signing individualized consent forms. Students who do not provide written consent must be de-identified and/or omitted from all recordings.