

I have been keeping track of resources, tips, and recommendations for how to quickly flip a class to be online. These are based *not* on how to best design an effective online class, but rather how to do it rapidly in an emergency situation. Feel free to share this with others.

Table of Contents

I plan to teach asynchronously my recording my lectures (in smaller chunks) and upload to YouTube.....	1
I plan to start a Slack page for engaging with students, answering student questions, and some discussion.....	2
You can use the quiz and exam functions on Sakai and other LMS to set up timed assessments.....	3
Students are likely to be experiencing major disruption from this.....	3
Here are additional resources	4

I plan to teach asynchronously my recording my lectures (in smaller chunks) and upload to YouTube.

"Asynchronous teaching "is probably better than trying to live stream. This means that students can watch a video of the lecture whenever they want. This will decrease the bandwidth strain (i.e., trying to get a meeting going with 40+ students at once). There is a lot of concern online that basically all universities are encouraging their faculty to use Zoom and we are headed for problems if everyone tries to stream with tons of people watching at once. Asynchronous lectures is especially important to consider if students go home. They might be in different time zones.

- *If you are thinking about doing synchronous teaching*, I would recommend using platforms like Zoom to create "conference calls" in which you can hold discussion sections or lectures. Note that these platforms tend to get buggy when more than 10 or so people are on a call, so you may want to advise your students to turn off their web cams or consider asynchronous methods for larger courses.

Here are two versions of step-by-step directions to record a lecture on Zoom ([short version](#) or a [longer version](#)). You can also record on QuickTime, Panopto, WebEx (which has a free 90 day trial), and others. Keep lectures to 20-25 minutes, no longer. You can also break it into 10-minute sections.

- In my first recorded lecture, I plan to talk about 1) update on the coronavirus, 2) the importance of social distancing and #flattenthecurve, 3) where to get GOOD information on the virus, 4) how the class will be run and short demos of the software we will be using.
- One of my classes has 5-minute news presentations. I will have students follow these directions to make their presentation and post it online. I will then encourage students to engage with it via Slack (see below)

I am hearing from friends at other places that Moodle and other LMS sites (like Sakai at UNC) are struggling to upload lots of videos longer than 20 minutes. I haven't tried uploading yet but it wouldn't surprise me if Sakai struggled with that. One thing you can do is [upload your videos to YouTube](#) and set the privacy settings so that only people with a link can watch the videos. That way they will all have the videos in one place. I'll probably do that.

- You can also send students a link to the recording via Zoom. But that doesn't decrease the concern about Zoom being overwhelmed and crashing.

Zoom has a few benefits worth mentioning:

- You can turn on closed captioning (that works pretty okay if you enunciate what you are saying - this is important for accessibility)
 - Google Slides and Power Point also allow you to do closed captioning if you click record. (This won't record YOU - only the slides and your audio)
- Allows you to screenshare your slides AND still have a little screen showing you (students get more bored if they only see the slides).
- You can also turn your background into something fun if your operating system and processor are new/powerful enough! I bought a [\\$10 green screen on Amazon](#) so that I can make fun backgrounds with images and gifs I upload. I figure – we might as lean in to the absurdity.
 - [PS this is me](#) seeing how the virtual background works. It's pretty funny.
- If holding office hours you can set up a “waiting room” so students can join a “meeting” but wait to be “called in” one at a time. This would prevent you from setting up multiple private zoom meetings. The meetings would also stay relatively small, which makes it more likely your meeting will work.
- You can set up “break out rooms” where students/colleagues can join and talk to one another and then rejoin a large group. As the moderator you can move between these “rooms”
 - Just be careful with this one as this may be difficult if you have a large class and there is heavy use of Zoom.

Most cameras and mics on laptops these days are okay, but if we are doing this the rest of the semester, you may want to get an external webcam with a better microphone. These are pretty cheap.

I plan to start a [Slack](#) page for engaging with students, answering student questions, and some discussion.

Slack is a communication tool that allows groups to talk with one another in a “chat” or “message” format. Participants sign onto a “channel” in Slack and can view the discussions that other members of the group are having.

- I am not going to grade students on participation online (because the quality of online participation is low, it's not right for my specific classes, and I wasn't grading participation before). Instead, I am going to tell students that I will be online on X days, between the hours of X and X.
- You can invite your whole class to join at once using a link.

[Here is a 5 minute video on how to use Slack.](#)

Slack has several benefits but here are some that are particularly helpful for online courses:

- Does not cost anything for students or faculty
- Allows for active participation in group discussions, activities, projects online
- Enables instructors to “group” students into different channels and thus facilitate class activities that involve breaking into smaller discussion groups
- Is slightly more facile than tools automatically integrated into Sakai like online chat and forums
- Can be used to facilitate online office hours when you don’t want to get out of your pajamas!

If you are thinking about using Slack, here are some things to consider:

- If you intend to separate your class into separate discussion groups, channel management is key!
- To keep up with what’s going on in a channel, be sure to turn on your notifications so that you get a pop-up when someone participates (these can be muted later)
- Slack is relatively easy to use but may be challenging for students with disability issues, communication anxiety, or limited access to computers or WIFI so if this is used to gauge participation in class, flexibility is key.

This is how I will use Slack:

- I will encourage students to ask questions, comments, post interesting news links, etc throughout the week. This is a way of keeping students engaged and a way to make communication easy. Students can then also see the answers to questions other people ask.
 - Of course, Sakai and other LMS have an online chat and forum functions - but these tend clunky, and not aren't as easy to build an ongoing conversation (because you have to keep clicking to different forum topics). And, like I mentioned above, LMS at some schools are crashing.
- I will have a channel for news links, a channel for each lesson topic (that way it’s easy to find the discussion and questions for each lesson), and a channel for office hours questions/discussion.
- Some of my classes are doing group projects. Slack also allows students a way to start a "channel" for their group topic. They can chat, discuss, plan, and share files through that.

[You can use the quiz and exam functions on Sakai and other LMS to set up timed assessments.](#)

You can set these to be available between the hours of X and X.

[Students are likely to be experiencing major disruption from this.](#)

I plan to be accommodating on deadlines. Now doesn't seem like the time to be draconian about timelines.

Our students didn’t sign up for an online class. They might not have tech, reliable internet, etc. Ask your students about this by sending out a survey. If you have students that won’t have good, reliable internet access,

Rebecca Kreitzer
Public Policy
UNC Chapel Hill
@rebeccakreitzer

this is another good reason to teach asynchronously, rather than synchronously. Students can find a place with internet and download multiple videos at once. They may be using cellular data to download lectures, so keep this in mind as well.

Students are also going to be faced with learning several new platforms at once. I hope to minimize this by making my videos available on YouTube, which most students are very familiar with. Slack and YouTube also have good, intuitive mobile apps.

Here are additional resources

This blog post does a good job reminding us that [we aren't going to make these classes perfect](#). Students didn't sign up for online classes and don't have all the necessary resources. Everyone should read this.

Here is a crowdsourced document on [teaching online with care](#).

This is the [UNC website of resources](#).

[Here is a very detailed google doc from Stanford faculty](#) on how to adapt. It has a lot of useful content.

Here are two curated lists of resources and suggestions that political scientists have been tracking ([list 1](#) and [list 2](#)). Click on these links to see lists of tips, articles, insights from people who have already started doing this.

This is a [crowd-sourced google doc](#) with other considerations, and includes more insights and tips.