

English Department Recommendations for Moving across Instructional Modalities and Supporting Various Forms of Class Presence and Remote Instruction

August 2021 and Winter 2022 (Updated Fall 2022 and Fall 2023)

Shifting Contexts

Even as the University of Washington expects in-person instruction to be the primary mode during academic year 2023-24, we recognize that the effects of the pandemic continue and instructors and students may need different kinds of continued support. In this context English Department program directors outline some expectations and resources for moving across multiple instructional modalities if and when needed and for supporting various forms of presence in writing classes. *This document will be revised if/when new information emerges that requires updates or changes to what we have in place.*

While UW policies provide guidance for how to request instructor accommodations to teach remotely via the [Disability Services Office](#), the guidelines outlined below are meant to provide recommendations for instructors who need to support students with DRS online enrollment accommodations or who need to attend remotely for parts of the course, as well as for instructors who may need to shift their courses to remote instruction during the quarter because of quarantine or changes in public health policy.

If a student in your class receives a formal DRS accommodation, *DRS will notify you directly and specify what accommodations should be made.* ([Instructors should familiarize themselves with the DRS process as well as faculty resources and responsibilities.](#)) Otherwise, if a student in your class requests an accommodation from you in instructional modality (e.g., because they want to participate remotely in an in-person class, or want to participate in some activities virtually), please notify the relevant program director (Stephanie Clare for undergraduate courses, except for PWR and PWAC courses; Eva Cherniavsky for MA/Phd courses; Nikki Crouse for Creative Writing or MFA courses; Suhanthie Motha for MATESOL courses) so they can help you coordinate an appropriate response that best fits the needs of you, your course, and your student(s). Please note that you are not required to allow students to take your classes remotely for reasons other than DRS accommodations. However, if you wish to provide students in your class with greater flexibility using the guidelines below, you are, of course, welcome to do so.

This document provides guidance on the following topics:

[Use of Canvas](#)

[Student Participation and Attendance](#)

[Supporting Remote Students in an In-Person Class](#)
[Syllabus Blurbs and Student Compliance With Mask Policy](#)
[Instructor Absences](#)
[What to do if You or a Student is Sick](#)
[Additional Resources](#)

Use of Canvas

Given what we have learned about supporting and accommodating different kinds of learners and instructional possibilities, as well as about the affordances of Canvas and other resources for supporting various forms of participation, we expect all instructors to develop a course infrastructure in Canvas and make course materials available there (faculty not using Canvas need to notify their program director of alternative plans). This is essential so that you can provide a consistent learning experience and stability if 1) students receive DRS online enrollment accommodation; 2) one or more of your students contracts COVID or is required to quarantine or isolate mid-quarter; 3) you become ill or must quarantine or isolate yourself; or 4) public health guidance shifts and we are required to shift to offer courses online. As such, we encourage the following:

- Organize your Canvas site into modules that reflect the existing framework of your course. Many organize modules by week (i.e., Module 1 = Week 1, etc.) but you can also use other organizing principles, such as thematic units or assignment sequences. If a pivot to online teaching should become necessary, Canvas will offer a clear point of entry and continuation.
- Maintain a repository of course activities and resources that is accessible to students whenever/wherever they need. This includes--but is not limited to--the course syllabus, handouts, videos, and audiovisual materials. Consider how the resources you use synchronously in class might become materials that students can access via Canvas as they work independently or collaboratively with others outside of class.
- Enhance accessibility of course materials. Hosting instructional materials on Canvas also enables you to ensure that those materials are accessible to students with a wide range of different disabilities. We have a Canvas site (created by Ben Wirth) with extensive materials and resources to support you in ensuring accessibility for disabled students. Please also see the section on "Accessibility" in the ["Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption"](#) manual.
- Consider offering different possibilities for classroom interaction and engagement. Consider what is gained (as well as shifted or lost) with various

synchronous modes of engagement (such as the Zoom chat function or a shared Google doc or hashtagged discussions on Twitter) as well as by asynchronous modes of engagement made possible through affordances on Canvas and other pedagogical tools/resources.

In the case of students who receive DRS accommodation to enroll online or other remote accommodations, it is students' responsibility to regularly consult the course Canvas site to keep up with course readings, assignments, assignment submissions, and other communications.

If you need support or resources for using Canvas, you can consult the [UW-IT Teaching with Canvas Guide](#) and the [UW-IT Canvas Support Page](#). In addition, Ben Wirth (jbwirth@uw.edu), the English department digital pedagogy consultant, is available to support you with using Canvas.

Student Participation and Attendance

Please establish flexible policies for course engagement, participation, and attendance in your course. [UW prohibits grading students on attendance](#) under normal circumstances, and we should be especially flexible on this point now.

- Familiarize yourself with drop and withdrawal periods; if any of your students do not appear during the first week or so of classes, reach out to them with information about dropping or withdrawing (and cc Humanities adviser Rachel Zuraek <rzuraek@uw.edu>. The [add/drop calendar is here](#).
- Instructors should treat student absences as they typically would, with one difference being that students do not need a medical note to excuse missed classes. If a student who does not receive online accommodation does not log on to Canvas or attend class sessions or otherwise participate, then instructors are encouraged to contact the students via email to check in.
- In cases where students are absent and do not contact the instructor, students who do not engage in whatever class activities an instructor assigns *may* have their participation grade reduced per instructor policy. Instructors cannot grade participation based solely on attendance, and thus participation should be based on completing class activities and assignments. As is always the case, instructors have the discretion to remain flexible and to provide opportunities for students to make up missed work and participation.

- If a student misses classes but notifies the instructor, the UW has recommended that instructors be prepared to accommodate students who are requesting to miss class sessions due to illness, including clearly communicating opportunities and expectations around alternative assignments or makeup work. This is where a comprehensive Canvas site can be helpful. If a student is ill or needs to quarantine for a period of time, please come up with a plan for them to keep up with course assignments and activities remotely (see next section).

Supporting Remote Students in an In-Person Class

While we encourage instructor flexibility in accommodating students, we also recognize the challenge in simultaneously supporting students across a variety of remote and in-person modalities. Instructors are not obligated to provide accommodations to students whose requests were not approved by Disability Resources for Students (DRS). That does not mean we shouldn't do our best to be flexible and compassionate. We thus offer here a set of suggestions and possible ways of moving that can accommodate students who cannot be physically present in class (for a wide range of reasons) or who have an approved accommodation for remote participation, such that your labor as an instructor is conserved.

- Consider holding at least some office hours virtually. You might also give students the option of having solo or group conferences virtually.
- Ask students who are able to attend in-person class sessions to (on a rotating basis) take notes on class activities and discussions, and post those notes in Canvas in an ongoing archive.
- Offer opportunities to annotate, reflect on, or share reactions to course materials, perhaps including opportunities for interaction with others. As one example, set up a discussion forum in Canvas to supplement a face-to-face class discussion. To minimize instructor labor, ask students who were present in class to summarize the discussion and pose ongoing questions for remote learners to engage.
- If you are comfortable doing so, arrange to record your class lectures, announcements, assignment/activity explanations, and/or discussions and upload those to Canvas.
- Participation Journals: Ask students who receive online accommodation to document once a week how they have participated in or engaged with the course. Such documentation might include (but is not limited to) responding to

the readings, connecting with a classmate and summarizing their conversation, engaging with course resources, seeking out resources or activities/events outside of class meetings. You do not need to grade these journal entries; you can scan them as evidence of student engagement in lieu of in-class participation.

- In cases of in class peer review or group work, if you have two or more online students, you can arrange for them to conduct peer review or group work remotely. Too, depending on how you structure it, peer review or group work could be an activity that happens outside of class time.
- Encourage students to schedule online writing center appointments in the Odegaard Writing and Research Center as a means of further engaging writing assignments and course work.
- In your syllabus definition of or in your course grade contract (if you use one) regarding participation, explicitly outline multiple opportunities to participate both in person and online, including:
 - attending office hours, in-person or virtual;
 - engaging with peers through any or all forms of class discussion, in-person or virtual;
 - maintaining a participation journal;
 - posing and/or responding to questions in the course community forum(s);
 - demonstrating effort toward creating a presence in community (e.g., adding a profile pic in Canvas);
 - having video on (if possible) during Zoom discussions;
 - offering support to other students;
 - being prepared for and participating in peer review;
 - arriving in class on time and prepared, etc.

A note about remote teaching technology: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates that all identifying student information remain confidential unless otherwise (and expressly) permitted by the student. For FERPA compliance, the English department strongly recommends that instructors use UW-supported technologies including [Panopto](#), [Zoom](#), [Canvas](#), [Office365](#) and [UW Google](#). These technologies have comprehensive agreements in place to help the UW protect the privacy of personal data and manage information security risks. Please be cautious about using other technologies, which may not include an appropriate agreement or adequately protect individuals' privacy. See [IT Connect](#) for information about UW-supported technology. The English Department's "Teaching Effectively" document also includes a

section on [Digital Tools, FERPA, and Data Privacy](#), which clarifies questions about intellectual property in relation to Canvas.

Syllabus Blurbs and Student Compliance with Mask Policy

As of August 2023, face coverings are **optional indoors** (in locations where they are *not* required). **[Masks continue to be required in healthcare and clinical facilities](#)**, including on shuttles that serve healthcare facilities (read the complete list below).

When wearing a mask, the university recommends wearing [a well-fitted, high-quality mask indoors](#) (e.g., KN95, N95, KF94 and surgical masks) to reduce the potential for transmission. Please refer to the University's **[COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](#)**, [log of changes](#), and the frequently asked questions below for more information.

Please include the following language in your syllabus, and refer any students who have questions or concerns about this policy to the relevant program director:

Students are required to follow the University's COVID-19 Face Covering Policy at all times when on-site at the University, including any posted requirements in specific buildings or spaces. If a student refuses to comply with the policy, the student can be asked to leave University premises. [Student Conduct](#) offices are available for consultations on potential violations of student conduct if needed. University personnel with concerns that a student or group of students are not complying with this policy should speak with their supervisor, consult with the campus student conduct office, or report it to [Environmental Health & Safety](#). Students concerned about other students should contact their campus student conduct office.

Instructor Absences

- If you are sick, first and foremost, please follow the [UW's latest recommendations for what to do if you feel sick](#).
- Faculty should notify program directors when they will need to miss or cancel scheduled courses.
 - If, due to illness or other reasons, an instructor is unable to teach a regularly scheduled class (or convert it to synchronous or asynchronous instruction), please notify your program director and plan to either have a substitute or cancel class.
 - If an instructor is not able to find a substitute for a synchronous class or continue instruction asynchronously, they should cancel class by sending an e-mail notification.

- In the case of an extended absence, your program director and department chair will discuss options, including appointing a substitute instructor for class continuity. There are no FERPA violations if student information is shared specifically in the context of UW instruction and if FERPA-compliant digital platforms and tools such as Canvas are employed.

Beyond these basic guidelines for handling missed classes, please know that we understand that the circumstances for missing classes are various and that, accordingly, the ways we coordinate with you to support you and your students will also require a case-by-case assessment.

What to do if You or a Student is Sick

If you are sick with any potential illness, you *must* stay home.

[COVID-19's most common symptoms](#) are fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you're symptomatic, take the following steps to protect yourself and your loved ones:

- Get tested and stay home until you receive your test result.
- The [COVID-19 Public Health Flowchart](#) outlines the University's requirements and procedures.

Symptom monitoring:

Personnel and students are required to self-monitor daily for symptoms and stay home (or go home) if they are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19 infection.

Personnel and students who experience any new onset of symptoms of COVID-19 infection, including fever (100.4 degrees or higher), cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, loss of taste and/or smell, chills, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, headache, muscle or body aches, that are not attributed to another condition, are required to follow these instructions:

1. Stay home (or go home) and isolate away from other people, even if you have mild symptoms.
2. University units are required to direct personnel and students to follow the steps in the [UW COVID-19 Public Health Flowchart](#).
3. Get [tested](#) for COVID-19. The UW offers no-cost rapid antigen tests on campus. Read guidance on how to select a [PCR versus rapid antigen test](#).

- Do not go to work or class until you have confirmed whether or not you have COVID-19 via testing, even if you feel better. Refer to the [COVID-19 Public Health Flowchart](#) for details.

Testing positive:

1. Stay home and self-isolate.
2. Follow the steps in the [UW COVID-19 Public Health Flowchart](#) to help you recover from COVID-19 infection and protect others from getting sick.
3. Refer to the [University's COVID-19 Case and Exposure guidance](#) for detailed information on additional precautions, re-testing and when it is safe to return to work and/or class

Additional Resources

- [Teaching Effectively During Times of Disruption](#)
- [Center for Teaching and Learning](#)