Preparing to Teach a Spring 2022 Course

Remote Instruction Until January 31

Introduction

As announced in [President Frenk's message](#) to the University of Miami community on December 29, 2021, classes at the Coral Gables and Marine campuses will transition to remote instruction for the first two weeks of the spring 2022 semester. Classes will begin as scheduled on January 18 and in-person instruction is expected to resume on January 31.

While the university teaching community has a strong grasp of a variety of teaching modalities from previous COVID-prompted transitions to online, hybrid, and flipped teaching modalities, we have prepared this document as supplemental guidance to make the start of the spring 2022 semester as smooth and effective as possible for faculty members and students alike.

What can I expect the first two weeks to look like?

The first two weeks of classes will be held in a remote format. Faculty members are encouraged to use [Zoom](#) to facilitate live meetings at their scheduled class times. Students will be arriving to campus between January 10 and January 30, so you should expect to see some students joining live sessions from campus housing or from home, and some students may be located in different time zones.

In general, faculty members should expect to facilitate these live sessions from their homes or offices, but some may wish to use their assigned classrooms. Instructors seeking assistance with classroom technology and support should reach out to the [Office of Classroom Management](#).

Faculty members should consider possibilities for providing instructional materials and other resources to students in an online format; strategies for providing these resources are described in this document.

Following the first two weeks of class when in-person instruction resumes, there is a strong possibility that hybrid teaching will be needed to accommodate students who are quarantining; visit our [hybrid teaching guide](#) for additional support.

What should I do before the semester starts?

When preparing for the upcoming semester, there are a number of elements to anticipate as we prepare to teach the first two weeks remotely.

- First, become familiar with Zoom, the recommended video conferencing platform, that you can use to record your lectures, and connect with the students when they attend remotely. (See [Zoom](#) guides in the Appendix).
- Review your syllabus, give thought to which in-class activities may require some modifications or alternatives that will have to be determined.

- For each course, prepare your Blackboard course page for teaching by following the guidelines from the [Learning Platforms](#) team. Make your course available and send a welcoming announcement by the first day of class.
- Consider sending a welcome note to students the week before the semester begins. This message might include a personal introduction, your course syllabus, and any logistics and expectations for your remote sessions and in-person sessions later in the semester. This message can be sent via email or via [Blackboard Announcements](#).
- In addition to sharing in a welcome message, post your course syllabus to Blackboard so that all students have access to it. See [How do I share materials with students (e.g. course syllabus, presentation slides)?](#) below.
- Create a [Zoom meeting link](#) and [recurring Zoom class sessions](#) in your Blackboard course for upcoming classes. This will help prepare for students who will need to join remotely for the first two weeks. Zoom is currently integrated within Blackboard, you can schedule all upcoming classroom sessions there, and make the links accessible to students from day one. With this option, students can easily access their class session when attending remotely, and faculty can also access if they will be recording their sessions throughout the semester.
- Consider presetting your meeting to [mute participants' microphones](#) upon entry to lessen the likelihood of background noise or [allow participants to enter before](#) the host on Zoom to foster social interaction before class begins.
- Develop a video conferencing etiquette summary for students. Co-create this resource with your students, or [amend existing guidelines](#).

What should I do on the first day of class?

Aside from providing your students with the syllabus, consider using the time during the first two weeks of classes to set the tone and model the classroom environment you plan to foster for the rest of the semester.

- Try to set those expectations by engaging your students on the first day with an activity related to your course content. To do so, take the time to appropriately make introductions and implement learner-centered and low-stakes activities such as facilitating a student discussion.
  - You can use the [Blackboard Discussion Board](#) so students can answer questions, post responses, upload media, and respond to other student posts.
  - Besides Blackboard, faculty members can also use Zoom to create breakout rooms for students to work in pairs and then share their key takeaways with the class.
- In addition to incorporating activities on the first day, you should also establish how you will communicate with students.
  - Use [Blackboard's Announcements](#) tool to send class-wide notifications to all enrolled students in your course such as due dates for assignments and projects, changes to your syllabus, corrections of materials, or exam schedules.

- ○ Additionally, you can create a Blackboard Q&A Discussion Board Forum and encourage students to post questions for you and other students to respond to.
- Have a backup plan in case there are connectivity or technical issues. Share the multiple options students can connect to a session (e.g., another computer, mobile device, or tablet), or use alternative collaboration tools such as Blackboard or Google Drive to have students work "asynchronously" (offline).
- Make sure you have technical support contacts on hand in case of any issues during your class session; these are located at the end of this document.

How do I share materials with students (e.g. course syllabus, presentation slides)?

Your course content including the syllabus and presentations can be shared with your students at any time via the Blackboard Learning Management System.

- [Add your syllabus](#) on Blackboard through the Course Content page. You can browse for your syllabus files in cloud storage or on your computer and add them or use the syllabus builder to create your own in a modular format.
- [Add content](#) such as online lectures, presentations, multimedia, tests, assignments, and links to websites and social media.
- [Create containers](#) such as folders or modules to present the content in an organized and engaging way.
- If you are recording or hosting a live session on Zoom, avoid focusing the camera on both you and your presentation slides (PowerPoint, Google Slides, etc.). Have the camera focused on you as the speaker. Use Zoom to share your screen as you present, but also consider making any slides available to all students before the session on Blackboard or posting a link to an online document through the chat feature.
- Consider sharing an outline of the agenda, discussion prompts, or problems on the board visible to students throughout the session.

Should I record my class sessions?

It is recommended to record your class sessions. Since the first two weeks will be online, the recordings will cover important topics (class expectations, policies, and introductions) that students can refer to throughout the duration of the course.

- If you intend to record a class session, let all the students know at the beginning of class. Although synchronous meetings in Zoom can be recorded for future reference, session recordings may constitute protected educational records per FERPA. For more information, refer to [Virtual and Other Classroom Recording and Student Privacy (FERPA)](#).
- Session recordings can easily be shared with students in Blackboard.

- If you are teaching a class that deals with sensitive topics, and the possibility exists that students will be uncomfortable sharing their perspectives because of the session recording, disable recording. While recording is helpful for students, don't sacrifice the learning experience for the sake of the recording.

How do I ensure students feel involved and engaged in the classroom online?

In a remote environment, students can sometimes feel isolated and less involved, so it's important to create opportunities for students to engage with one another.

- Consider building time for students to check in with you and their peers. You can set up break-out rooms for students to connect and discuss course content or develop opportunities for reflection at the end of class. Additionally, some faculty members build time before class for students to chat and socialize on Zoom.
- To encourage participation, co-create video conferencing guidelines with your students. Students can discuss their experience with remote learning and decide what norms to adopt such as Zoom's "raise hand" feature, nonverbal feedback, or polling, when to mute, or what to do when two students accidentally speak at the same time.
- Remember that if a student's webcam is disabled, that doesn't always mean they're not paying attention. Some students might be joining class from a home office with others in the background that they prefer not to share or have disabled their cameras to optimize limited bandwidth. Authentic participation is a better indication of engagement than having a webcam on. If you're concerned about a student's engagement, it might be better to discuss individually with them after class.
- At the end of class, confirm that the session is over and that students can exit the Zoom session. Before ending the session, check to see if any students want to stay after class to ask any questions (and if so, turn off recording).

How do I encourage collaboration and teams among all the students in class?

Collaborative learning opportunities, or assignments where students work in groups toward a common goal, can lead to greater academic achievement and more positive attitudes toward learning (Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Parente, & Bjorklund, 2001; Springer, Stanne, & Donovan, 1999), and teaching remotely creates unique challenges and opportunities for assigning group work.
- Instructors can create student groups using the Blackboard Groups tool. This is an excellent strategy for semester-long formal group projects or for large-enrollment courses that want to build community through smaller groups. Groups in Blackboard have access to their own discussion board and other tools.

- For informal group work, faculty can use Zoom [Breakout Rooms](#) to facilitate activities such as think-pair-share, jigsaw, or other discussion-based interactions.
- Students can use Blackboard or Google Docs to work asynchronously (not at the same time), or their own Zoom rooms to hold live meetings outside of (or even during) class time. Students may also share work digitally or collaboratively take notes using specific tools (see Collaborative Tools in the Appendix).

How can I share board work or handwriting?

If you rely heavily on writing out work on the board while teaching (math or science problems, sentence diagramming, etc.), you can use the following [collaborative digital whiteboards](#):
- Faculty can use the [whiteboard](#) or [annotation tools](#) in Zoom to share handwritten content for remote teaching and learning.
- [Google JamBoard](#) is another option that enables students and instructors to write, sketch, and share resources on an interactive canvas in real-time and asynchronously.
- If you have access to a document camera, you may be able to use that as the "webcam" instead of your normal camera. Your students would see your handwriting via screen-sharing in Zoom. It's a good idea to test this setup before a class session that needs it.
- LIFE has created a helpful guide on how to [demonstrate math, diagrams, and graphs](#) in a remote environment.

How can I manage my office hours?

For the first few weeks, faculty may want to host ["virtual" office hours](#) in Zoom where any student can meet with them remotely outside of class time.

- Some faculty members may want to keep a set schedule for virtual office hours. An open meeting allows all students to join, which could lead to productive discussions about similar issues. Or, using a waiting room feature ([like that in Zoom](#)) will allow you to manage who you meet with at a given time.
- Other faculty members might prefer to schedule individual appointments with their students. Scheduling tools like [Calendly](#), which integrates with Microsoft Outlook, are a good option for giving students opportunities to schedule meetings with you (note that Calendly's Zoom integration, a paid feature, is not supported at UM).

How do I accommodate students with disabilities?

Some students may require accommodations to tests or other aspects of their remote learning experience because of a documented disability, such as extended time on tests and quizzes.

- If you have any students who require accommodations in your course, you are encouraged to work with the Office of Disability Services (disabilityservices@miami.edu) in the Camner Center to ensure that they are engaging in equitable learning opportunities.
- Disability Services has issued specific guidance to University of Miami faculty members regarding the accommodation request process, the types of accommodations, and engaging in communicating with students regarding their accommodations.
- To share transcripts on recorded lectures, Zoom Cloud Recordings provide machine-generated audio transcripts, and live transcripts on a video or audio recording. Google Slides and PowerPoint presentations also have real-time captioning features you may use in a screencast or synchronous video lecture.
- As you prepare online content for students to engage with, guides like EDUCAUSE's ADA Compliance for Online Course Design, or CAST's Universal Design for Learning share principles and practices to ensure inclusive and equitable course design.
- Blackboard Ally is a feature in Blackboard that creates alternative and accessible files from the original documents in your course (e.g., readable text for screen readers, pictures with captions, and easy-to-navigate content). Contact the learningplatforms@miami.edu to enable Blackboard Ally in your course.

How do I (and my students) find additional support?

For additional guidance relating to teaching in-person classes, feel free to reach out to Learning Innovation and Faculty Engagement at life@miami.edu. The team is ready to help you create an effective and engaging learning experience for your students.

For additional support, these teams are ready to help you or your students:
- The Learning Platforms Team (Lacademictechnologies@miami.eduPT) supports faculty with the use of Blackboard, and a variety of teaching-related technologies.
- University of Miami Information Technology (UMIT) supports faculty with the use of Zoom and any hardware that is used in the classroom to support teaching and learning.
- Student Technology Help Desk (STHD) supports student technology needs.
- The Camner Center for Academic Resources provides online tutoring support to students' academic achievement.
- The Writing Center provides online help to students working on papers for a course, theses and dissertations, personal statements, business letters and resumes, grant proposals, articles for publication, and personal writing projects.
- The Math Lab provides specialized online math tutoring to any student enrolled in an undergraduate math course.
- The Modern Languages Lab supports undergraduate students with online help for assignments and essay projects from courses in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, and Chinese.

Additional Resources

Boston University. (n.d.). *A Quick Guide to Converting your Face-to-Face Pedagogical Approaches to the Online Environment » Center for Teaching & Learning |* Boston University. Retrieved January 3, 2022, from
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University of Washington. (2021). *Teaching the first day of class*. Retrieved January 3, 2022, from https://teaching.washington.edu/topics/preparing-to-teach/teaching-the-first-day-of-class/

Appendix: Technical Guides

This appendix includes some helpful technical guides to accompany the teaching advice provided in the previous sections.

Zoom

University of Miami faculty members have access to multiple video conferencing platforms that can be used in the course. Zoom is the recommended tool for classroom use, which features screen sharing, chat, breakout rooms, annotation, file sharing, and more. University of Miami Information Technology continually updates resources on using Zoom on their service page. The following are highlighted resources for teaching using Zoom.

Getting Started

To activate your Zoom account, sign in to zoom.miami.edu using your CaneID and password. You will also need to download the Zoom Desktop client onto your device by visiting zoom.us/download. For a comprehensive tutorial engage with the tip sheets below.

- Get Started with Zoom at the U
- Zoom Frequently Asked Questions
- Join a Zoom Meeting

Creating a Remote Class Session

You can schedule all upcoming classroom sessions within Blackboard. If you create a meeting with Zoom within the desktop app, you can also use Blackboard to post the link so that it is available for all students.
- Learn How to Use Zoom in Blackboard
- Learning Platforms Team: Zoom Playlist
    - Create a Zoom Meeting Link
    - Create Recurring Zoom Class Sessions

Recording a Session

Zoom allows you to record all sessions and download them either on a computer or through the cloud. You can also pre-record lectures for students to watch at their own pace. Recordings may take up to 24 hours to process. Although synchronous meetings in Zoom can be recorded for future reference, session recordings may constitute protected educational records per FERPA. For more information, refer to Virtual and Other Classroom Recording and Student Privacy (FERPA).
- Zoom Recording
    - Recording a Meeting Locally
    - Recording a Meeting to the Cloud
- Automatically Transcribe Cloud Recordings

In-Meeting Video Conferencing Guidance

Once you have launched your Zoom session, you can leverage various features to facilitate learning for your remote students. You may wish to also inform students how you will share information through Zoom.

- [Video Conferencing Tips and Suggestions for Faculty](#)
- [Resource Guide: Zoom Meetings](#)
- [Recommendations for Using Live Captioning in Zoom](#)
- [Student Tips for Participating in Zoom](#)

Screen File Share

During a class session, you can use Zoom to share content with your remote students. **Keep in mind that your other tabs, bookmarks, or applications not related to your presentation might serve as a distraction–or expose personal materials to students that you'd rather them not see.**

- [Zoom Screen Share](#)

Chat

You can use the chat function in Zoom to allow students to ask questions in real-time during class. You can also download the chat and review unanswered questions at a later time or send them to students as notes.

- [Zoom Chat](#)

Polling

You can use the polling features to ask questions, start classroom discussions, assess student knowledge, or allow for anonymous feedback. You can also set up polls prior to class start time and also download them to see remote students' responses.

- [Zoom Polls](#)

Breakout Groups

Breakout groups can be used to foster student-student interaction through discussion, group projects, or review sessions. You can drop in at any point to monitor progress or provide guidance to each group.

- [Zoom Breakout Rooms](#)

Annotation/Whiteboard

Zoom has basic annotation tools (text box, free form drawings, shapes, and highlighter) that you can use to guide students or explain a concept. Access these tools by selecting the Annotate option when you're sharing your screen. You can also use the Whiteboard feature to have faculty and students annotate on a blank page. This feature allows you to incorporate "board work" that in-person and remote students can see.

- [Zoom Annotation Tools](#)
- [Zoom Whiteboard](#)

Collaborative Tools

During classroom activities where students work in groups, students can use and work synchronously on online documents, presentations slides, or whiteboards. The following highlighted tools are available to students to login and engage with using the CaneID and password.

Google Drive Guides
- [Google Drive](#) (Docs/Slides)
- [Google Docs](#)
- [Google Slides](#)
- [Google Jamboard](#)

Office for the Web
- [Office for the Web](#)
- [Word Online](#)
- [PowerPoint Online](#)
- [Microsoft Whiteboard](#)

Blackboard

Blackboard Learn, available at [courses.miami.edu](#) is the University of Miami's Learning Management System. Here is where you will be uploading course materials, scheduling Zoom sessions, creating synchronous or asynchronous activities, and communicating with your students. [University of Miami's Learning Platforms Team](#) has a [YouTube channel](#) with multiple quick guides and sessions on using Blackboard Learn for your courses. The following are highlighted resources and tools for teaching using Blackboard.

- [Blackboard's Announcements](#)**:** Send class-wide notifications to students.
- [Blackboard Assignment](#): Collect assignments online.
- [Blackboard Discussion Boards:](#) Assign (non)graded or graded discussion forums.
- [Blackboard Users and Groups](#): View the course roster in Blackboard.
  - [Blackboard Group Discussion Boards](#): Create a special group discussion board available only to the members of a course group.
  - [Blackboard Group File Exchange](#): Students can share files with members of their group.
- [Blackboard Groups](#): Create multiple groups at once for projects or semester-long groups for large-enrollment courses.
- [Kaltura Capture](#): Upload or screen-share presentations, audio, or videos and share with your students.
- [VoiceThread:](#) Annotate slides with voice, text, audio, or video comments.
- [Blackboard Blogs](#): Assign (non)graded reflected individual, course, or group blogs.

- **Blackboard Tests, Pools, and Survey**: Create a graded quiz, exam, or a non-graded anonymous survey.
- **Blackboard Ally**: Ally provides guidance and tips for lasting improvements to your content accessibility. Contact the learningplatforms@miami.edu to enable Blackboard Ally in your course.

Helpful Class Checklists for Teaching the First Two Weeks Remotely

Before Class

- ☐ Prepare your Blackboard course page for teaching by following the guidelines from the [Learning Platforms](#) team.
- ☐ Make your course available and send a welcoming announcement by the first day of class.
- ☐ Schedule your upcoming classroom Zoom sessions within Blackboard.
- ☐ Have all your resources available to present and close any tabs that are unrelated or can cause a distraction when sharing your screen.
- ☐ Optimize the lighting and other room conditions for the Zoom session.

Starting Class

- ☐ Start the class early to ensure everything is working and your camera and microphone are connected.
- ☐ After the first few students connect, make sure they can see and hear you.
- ☐ If you are recording the class session, remind all students that the session will be recorded before starting to record.

During Class

- ☐ Create time for student introductions.
- ☐ Share or co-create video conferencing guidelines.
- ☐ Integrate polls or give students sufficient time to utilize reactions, ask questions in the chat, raise their hand, or be unmuted to ask questions live.
- ☐ Establish how you will communicate with your students.
- ☐ Incorporate a low-stakes activity, Blackboard discussion, or breakout room related to the course content.

Ending Class

- ☐ Refer students to any materials hosted in Blackboard in preparation for the next session.
- ☐ Before ending the Zoom session, check to see if any Zoom students want to stay after class to ask any questions. If so, disable recording.
- ☐ Use the Announcements feature on Blackboard for any relevant updates in between classes.