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Our core guiding principle is our commitment to providing an excellent education for every student in an environment that maintains the health, safety and well-being of our campus community.

Our success in meeting this mission relies on building a Fall 2020 semester that provides a rich academic experience even though the semester will look quite different than our traditional fall terms. To do this, we have developed an academic plan that meets the needs of our students and faculty by providing a full slate of classes offered in multiple delivery options across the curriculum. The campus community has come together to ensure that we can accomplish our academic mission by enhancing our ability to offer online instruction, developing plans for restructuring classrooms to provide safe in-person delivery, and coordinating processes to streamline services.

COVID-19 presents the University at Albany with many new challenges as we work to create a safe and healthy campus for all, striving to protect public health while continuing our mission of access to excellent education and research. These challenges will require a commitment to shared responsibility in which each of us is accountable to one another and engages in behaviors that ensure the health and well-being of the entire UAlbany community. To this end, please familiarize yourself with all COVID-19 related policies and procedures in the classroom and on campus and adhere to these policies for the safety of all.

Given the continued shifting conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic—the following guidelines are presented with the understanding that we will need to respond and adapt to changing public health requirements as they emerge and that remaining flexible in our plans is of paramount importance in the weeks and months ahead.
To ensure appropriate physical distancing and accommodation of faculty preferences, the university has adopted a multi-modal instructional approach for the Fall 2020 semester that delivers course instruction in three broad categories: in-person (all students participate face-to-face); hybrid (a combination of face-to-face and online), and fully online. Below is an outline of the framework for course instruction for the fall semester. Additional details about each modality are available: https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/course-development

**COURSE MODALITIES FOR FALL 2020:**

**In Person:** All students meet in the classroom with the instructor for all class meetings.

**Hybrid – Synchronous Simulcast:** a low-density in-person class with some students attending remotely. In-class students meet with the instructor in the classroom (face-to-face) at every class meeting. All other students in the class interact with the instructor and their peers through Zoom in a synchronous manner.

**Hybrid – Blended/Reduced Classroom Meetings:** a low frequency in-person class where online course activity replaces a portion of required face-to-face class sessions and class “seat-time” is reduced commensurately. Students meet with the instructor in the classroom (face-to-face) for a reduced number of class meetings during the semester. Remaining class interaction with the instructor and peers occurs through Blackboard or Zoom in a synchronous or asynchronous manner. Synchronous describes instruction and learning that occurs at the same time (e.g., students meet with instructor online at specified times), whereas asynchronous describes instruction and learning that does not occur in the same place or at same time.
Hybrid – Alternating Attendance: Students in the class are divided into two or more groups. Direct instruction (lectures) is presented online asynchronously, and each group of students meets with the instructor in the classroom (face-to-face) on alternating sessions for interactive and/or applied learning activities (e.g., discussions, computer-based activities, statistical analyses, etc.).

Alternating Sessions Lab: A lab section is divided into two or more groups of students. Groups alternate sessions participating face-to-face in the lab. Students who are not in the lab are participating in online learning, which might be synchronous or asynchronous.

Fully remote: a course that has no in-person meetings and conducts all class activities online.
- **Synchronous:** Class interaction with the instructor and peers occurs in real time through Zoom during the scheduled class meeting times.
- **Asynchronous:** Class interaction with the instructor and peers occurs through Blackboard without real-time interaction.
- **Mixed Asynchronous/Synchronous:** Class interaction with the instructor and peers occurs through Blackboard with some scheduled synchronous sessions via Zoom.

**TIMELINE FOR UPDATING THE FALL 2020 SCHEDULE**

The University is moving quickly to update the Fall 2020 schedule of classes to reflect the new teaching modalities. Below is an estimated timeline for completion of this project.

- **July 1:** Updated Academic and Planning Calendar
- **July 3 – July 8:** IT Creation of Programs for REG to use in making mass scheduling changes; Testing for mass update to the Schedule of Classes
- **July 9 -17:** Registrar’s Office to process changes to Schedule of Classes (PS 9.2 Upgrade July 10-13 – no access to PeopleSoft or EMS)
- **July 20-30:** Registrar’s Office to re-room in-person courses
- **July 31:** Academic Support Center and the Graduate School to communicate with students that have conflicts as a result of rescheduling

**IMPACT ON COURSE REGISTRATIONS**

Updating the fall course schedule is complex and will take place over the next four weeks. During the time that course delivery modes are being adjusted, students will have access to their course schedules and will be able to make changes to their schedules in real time. A notification will be sent to students suggesting that they wait until all changes have been made by the Registrar’s Office before making individual adjustments to their schedules.

**KEY DATES**

August 24: First day of classes
September 7: Classes will be held on Labor Day
October 12 and 13: Classes will be held during fall break
November 24: Last day of on-campus instruction
November 25: Students leave campus for the semester
November 30 through December 7: Final exams will be held remotely for all students

**ACADEMIC AND PLANNING CALENDAR**
Classrooms and Classroom Protocol

CLASSROOM USE

All classrooms were evaluated to determine possible use for Fall 2020. In order to accommodate physical distance of 6 feet between students and between faculty and students, classroom capacities were adjusted based on room size and seating options. In fixed seat rooms (such as the LC’s) – the capacity was reduced to approximately 20% and in traditional classrooms with moveable seating the capacity was reduced to generally 40%. Some classrooms that are too small for physical distancing will be utilized to store excess classroom furniture.

In-person and hybrid courses will be rescheduled into classrooms that meet the new capacity limits based on the course enrollment cap. Remaining classroom space will be available for faculty to reserve through Virtual EMS to use for office hours or small group gatherings (https://uaems.albany.edu/virtualems/).

CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

All Instructional spaces will be equipped with audio-visual (AV) capability to support web conferencing for a distance education instructional modality. This enables instruction to be broadcast to some or all students either synchronously or to be recorded for asynchronous viewing.

Technology set-ups will vary by classroom and provide instructors with ranges of movement from Fixed Instructor Stations to Extended Instructor Movement. Detailed information about classroom technology modalities is available on the Covid-19 website: https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/technology-information

To help ensure safety of faculty, staff, and students, cameras and microphones will be installed with an intent to minimize the need to touch the equipment.
Each classroom will have a Quick Use Guide at the podium that includes instruction on technology use and helpdesk information. Faculty should review guides, materials, and training opportunities that will be made available in advance of the semester, to prepare to utilize the classroom technology in ways best suited for their instruction. ITS is prepared to address classroom support needs and assist faculty as needed in the classroom. This information will also be available on the COVID-19 website as it becomes available.

**CLASSROOM FURNITURE**

Where possible, excess chairs and furniture will be removed from each classroom. When it helps with distancing and seat counts, table and chair configurations will be replaced with armchairs and node chairs. Revised student seat count signage will be installed in classrooms and floor markings will indicate where moveable chairs/furniture should be reset when/if they are moved during the day.

In rooms with fixed-seating, seating patterns will be established by covering or marking seats that are not to be used.

*Classroom furniture should not be removed from its original classroom and moved to another location. Furniture has been removed from rooms (and stored elsewhere) to ensure Physical Distancing capacities are maintained.*

**FACE COVERINGS IN THE CLASSROOM**

As in other areas of the campus, students will be required to wear a mask or face covering when attending an in-person class. Please note that any students who may be subject to Federal or New York State policies requiring quarantine or self-isolation, will not be present in classrooms until they have fully complied with the applicable requirements.

Should a student forget to wear a mask to class, disposable masks will be available in central locations across campus during the first two weeks of the semester. Signage, behavioral norm messaging, and syllabus instructions will be used to clearly articulate and reinforce the in-class policy.

Please follow the “Responding to Student Non-Compliance with COVID Policy” guide when addressing students who are not abiding by the University’s COVID related policies (i.e. not wearing a mask, not distancing, etc.)

Faculty can require a student to leave the classroom if they refuse to wear a mask.

Given the shared responsibility for safety held by all members of the campus community, faculty will be expected to wear a face covering (disposable or cloth mask or face shield) in the classroom and will be provided with a face shield (upon request).

The use of microphones will facilitate the projection of sound in the classroom.

When lecturing or leading instruction, faculty may remove their face covering, if absolutely necessary, for students to clearly understand the instruction and for the benefit of the hearing-impaired, as long as they are able to remain in the designated lecturing area and no fewer than 6 ft away (ideally more than that) from others at all times. This should be the exception rather than the rule.
CLASSROOM CLEANING

While custodial crews will continue to follow CDC guidelines by cleaning and disinfecting high-use common areas and workspaces, including handrails and door handles, at regular intervals, additional care should be taken to wipe down and disinfect public-facing surfaces used by multiple people.

Instructors will be provided with disinfectant and sanitizer to use in the classroom and it is highly recommended that instructors disinfect areas with which they come in contact. It is also highly recommended that students wipe down their desk and seating area as they enter the room. There will be disinfectant wipes at various locations around campus for the University community to use to sterilize any areas with which they will come into contact and regular use of hand sanitizer and proper hand washing is recommended.

LAB CLASSROOMS

Given space limitations for lab attendance, many lab courses have selected alternating attendance to conduct in-person lab work with streaming or alternative work assignments for students not attending in person.

Guidance on the cleaning protocols and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary in lab space will be determined by CDC guidelines and specific requirements will be determined with the department based on the needs of the individual courses and assigned lab space.
Utilizing UAlbany Supported Instructional Technology

INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS

To provide the greatest consistency and continuity for our students and to ensure your students work is in a secure space supported by UAlbany ITS, faculty are asked to use ZOOM and Blackboard as the primary educational resources. Please note that international students may not have access to social media and common internet sites.

BLACKBOARD

A Blackboard shell has been created for every fall 2020 course and faculty can and should begin developing their courses in Blackboard at this time. As we adjust the schedule of classes, ITS and the Registrar will closely monitor any impacts on Blackboard courses as a result of these changes. In mid-July, ITS will communicate to the faculty regarding detailed steps to address any such impacts, including the potential to migrate content between blackboard shells, if necessary, and will provide assistance to faculty with this process as needed.

ZOOM

Zoom offers video, audio, wireless screen-sharing, polling and breakout rooms. The following resources are available to help you learn about Zoom and how to integrate it into your classroom: Get started on Zoom, learn the basics, explore more features, and add Zoom class meetings to Blackboard courses. Visit the Zoombombing Resources page to protect your class from unwanted interruptions and UAlbany Zoom backgrounds are available, download and use UAlbany-themed Zoom backgrounds.
Despite the unusual times, the University at Albany maintains its commitment to the special responsibility of academic integrity and truth that binds us together as a community of scholars, a responsibility embodied in the Standards of Academic Integrity outlined in the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins. As we make necessary adjustments to the modality of education delivery during the COVID-19 crisis, we face new challenges but our commitment to academic integrity remains unchanged.

Courses with complete or partial online delivery of exams and assignments may face particular challenges that are new for many instructors. ITLAL has developed an instructor guide detailing teaching practices that minimize student cheating in online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses: https://albany.edu/covid-19/examples-of-teaching-practices-to-minimize-student-cheating.pdf

The university is exploring online software options that restrict the testing environment during the completion of an assessment. We are moving forward with the selection of a system at this time and once finalized additional information will be available about how to incorporate this software into your course.

Instructors should also keep in mind key provisions of the enforcement of these standards: As always, the course instructor is responsible for determining violations of academic integrity in courses, qualifying or comprehensive exams, theses and dissertations. Should a violation occur, instructors should follow procedures articulated in the Standards of Academic Integrity by completing a Violation of Academic Integrity Report (VAIR) and communicating with the student and either the Office of Undergraduate Education or the Graduate School, as appropriate. All policies with respect to penalties, notification, grievances, and adjudication, described in the Standards, will apply.
Recognizing that many faculty will be teaching courses in new ways for the fall term, the following are guidelines to help prepare for your courses.

**DEVELOP COURSES IN THE MODALITY DESIGNATED**

*Review Academic Planning Timeline document: [https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/course-development](https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/course-development)* and, for online and hybrid instruction, the [Rubric for Online Teaching]. Faculty should use this rubric as they begin planning their fall courses.

*Seek assistance with course preparation:* All areas of the university and all its faculty and staff share the goal of providing high-quality learning experiences for our students even as instructors move to teaching in modalities that, for some, are new and unfamiliar. As part of this shared responsibility, the university is making a multitude of resources available to instructors as they develop plans for effective instruction, particularly in online or hybrid courses. It is crucial that instructors avail themselves of these resources in order to ensure the best possible teaching and learning environment in their classes.

*A self-paced Blackboard Resource,* a set of core instructional tools, and specialized course development workshops are and will continue to be available. Instructors may also seek individual consultations. ([https://www.itlal.org/teaching-learning/workshops-events/current-workshops-and-events-schedule/](https://www.itlal.org/teaching-learning/workshops-events/current-workshops-and-events-schedule/))

*Determine your software or technology needs and submit any software requests by July 20:*

- **ITS Software Catalog:** Several software titles are available to faculty, staff, and students. Visit this page to learn more and request a license.
- **Software in Classrooms and Information Commons:** Registrar-scheduled classrooms and technology-enhanced spaces provide numerous software titles for
support course work. Visit this page to learn what's available.

- **On The Hub - Software Web Store:** Purchase software for personal use at significant discount prices made available exclusively through an agreement between UAlbany and select software publishers.
- To request specialized software that's not included above, email askIT@albany.edu.

**Utilize the library** services for e-reserves and support: https://library.albany.edu/reserves/faculty

**Review the Student Support Guidance** from the Disability Resource Center to ensure that your course is accessible to all students. https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/course-development

**Prepare to move online:** Faculty teaching in-person or hybrid courses should develop a plan for moving instruction fully online should the need arise. Using Blackboard for posting class materials (syllabi, readings, assignments, etc.), communicating, and other instructional activities (as appropriate) from the outset of the semester, even if class meetings are partly or completely in-person, is one of the best ways for everyone in the course to be prepared to transition seamlessly to online-only delivery during the semester. Assistance with navigating Blackboard is available from ITLAL and ITS.

**UPDATE YOUR SYLLABUS**

**Classroom Protocols:** Consider adding a section in your syllabus addressing the new classroom procedures. Suggested language below:

- **Classroom Health and Safety:** At the University at Albany, supporting the health and safety of all members of our campus community is a top priority. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we are following federal, state, and local public health guidelines, and these guidelines apply to all campus community members across all University spaces. To ensure that each of us has a healthy and safe learning experience within courses that involve in-person contact, all students, faculty members, staff, and visitors are required to adhere to the expectations outlined on the University's COVID-19 website: https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/health-safety.
- In class, please be sure that you enter the classroom wearing your face covering and keep it on for the entire class period.
- It is important to observe the social distancing markers in the classroom at all times, including when you enter and exit the classroom.
- Follow the posted classroom cleaning protocols upon entering/exiting the classroom.
- **Check here for expanded suggested syllabus language.**

**Academic Integrity:** Instructors should include reference to the university’s policy on academic integrity in syllabi and remind students of their responsibility to familiarize themselves with this policy.

**Online Expectations:** Consider adding a section in your syllabus that clearly articulates how you will be utilizing online learning resources and your expectations for student engagement.

**Office Hours:** Faculty should establish consistent office hours with clear instructions for students about how to connect during the designated times. It is expected that online instructors will provide virtual office hours, however for faculty teaching in-person or hybrid, both virtual and in-person options are available to accommodate faculty preference.

If offering virtual office hours consider using the Zoom waiting area to manage student flow or schedule individual meeting times with students.

**In-Person Office Hours:** For faculty who would like to hold office hours in-person, smaller classrooms that will not be used for teaching may be available for reservation through the EMS reserve system (https://uaems.albany.edu/virtualems/). Once the rescheduling process is completed additional information about this option will be shared with instructors.

**Absence accommodations/illness:** During these unprecedented times, we ask that instructors use their best judgement when accommodating student absences or missed assignments. Instructors should provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations consistent with existing policies (https://www.albany.edu/undergraduateeducation/92002.php).

For undergraduate students the Office of Undergraduate Education will only provide letters of excuse for prolonged absences (>5 days) or in exceptional circumstances. In other cases, instructors should make their own decisions and need not rely on this office unless necessary.

For graduate students the Graduate School does not provide letters of excuse for student absences, except in extreme situations. Students and faculty are expected to work out any necessary accommodations.

Faculty will be notified if a student has been quarantined due to COVID-19 and should develop a plan to work with students who experience this type of documented disruption.
Instructional Support for Course Development

Whether your course will be taught in the classroom, online, or in a hybrid mode, the Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL), Information Technology Services (ITS), and Online Teaching and Learning (OTL), have developed workshops, webinars, and related supports to assist you as you prepare your instruction.

WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

ITLAL has prepared a series of workshops on Course Design and Development to support your overall course approach, goals and strategies regardless of delivery mode as well as workshops to support a holistic transformation of a course to online delivery: https://www.itlal.org/teaching-learning/workshops-events/current-workshops-and-events-schedule/

Information Technology Services (ITS) has developed Technology Tools to Support Pedagogy webinars to provide you with the skill to apply technology solutions that meet your pedagogical objectives: https://wiki.albany.edu/x/ixv-AQ

BLACKBOARD FALL 2020 KEEP TEACHING COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING RESOURCE

All fall instructors have been added to the Blackboard resource: Fall 2020 Keep Teaching Course Development and Planning Resources. This is a self-paced structured guide through the process of designing and developing a fully online course with access to in-person support from ITLAL and ITS staff.
BLACKBOARD TEMPLATE

An enhanced course template has been added to Blackboard shells for all fall semester courses. This is an adaptable, plug-and-play template intended to enable instructors to structure their course content and activities according to the instructional mode determined for their course. The template includes tool-specific guidance designed to help instructors connect Blackboard functions to teaching strategies. The template also includes links to example Blackboard courses from colleagues in a variety of disciplines across the campus. Broad utilization of the template will provide a consistent learning environment for students as they navigate multiple online classes.

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTATION

ITLAL and ITS consultants are available for individual consultation and support and CDIT graduate students are available to assist faculty with course design. To request an ITLAL consultation for teaching-related concerns, visit https://www.itlal.org/consultations/. To request an ITS consultation for technology-related concerns, contact ITS at: https://calendly.com/ualbanyedtech.

REMOTE TEACHING BROWN BAG SESSIONS

ITLAL will offer virtual brown bag sessions every Friday at noon in this Zoom meeting. These are informal opportunities for instructors to share challenges and learn from the collective wisdom of their colleagues. Feel free to join anytime using the following link: https://albany.zoom.us/j/196111893?pwd=RDVoR2t1MWhqQmxOTnF4MUdLR3NKUT09.
Course Development and Quality Assurance

Each School and College will develop a plan to coordinate implementation and provide departmental level faculty support. Schools and Colleges are encouraged to designate a COVID Coordinator (Dean or Designee) who will serve as liaisons with the Academic Continuity group to share questions or concerns from departments. The coordinators will work with all instructors to ensure courses are meeting the Rubric for Online Instruction and to assist with course readiness to ensure all courses have a plan to move to fully remote instruction if it becomes necessary to do so.

Some Schools and Colleges may seek faculty and instructor volunteers to serve in a peer-to-peer capacity for course design and development help. Volunteers are invited to seek support from ITLAL as needed.

Adjunct Instructors and Teaching Assistants should work directly with their Dean, Department Chair, and their School specific COVID Coordinator to ensure compliance with all university and SUNY guidelines.

By early August instructors should complete the Rubric for Online Instruction.

Deans will submit a “Return to Teaching” report by August 10, 2020 confirming that all instructors are aware of their course instructional modalities and are prepared to begin teaching on August 24, 2020.

CONTINUED COMMUNICATION

It is critically important to keep the campus community apprised of the most up-to-date information. To that end, the COVID-19 website will be continually updated and information will be shared as it becomes available. In addition, the Provost and members of the UAlbany Forward Together Task Force will hold bi-weekly summer town halls to engage in conversation and hear feedback from the campus community.
Quick Links

Academic Planning Timeline
Rubric for Online Teaching
Expanded Descriptions of Teaching Modalities
Guide to disability accommodations in online learning
Teaching Practices to Minimize Cheating
Classroom Technology
Responding to Student Non-Compliance with COVID Policy
Suggested Announcement for First Day of Classes (In-Person)
EMS Classroom Reservation System
ITLAL Workshops
ITS Technology to Support Pedagogy
Remote Teaching Brown Bag Sessions