

The First Class in Zoom

On campus our students come into class knowing a lot about how class will work just through their prior experience. Even then, it is typical to spend some time setting the expectations for how the classroom experience will work. In Zoom this is even more important because the environment is so new. Here are some things you should address in your first class meeting:

1. **Your practice/expectation with respect to cameras.** It is OK to tell students that you'd like them to put their cameras on in class and also OK not to do this if you don't feel comfortable asking it of them. Either way, it is important to let students know what you expect.
 - If you will be telling students that you want their cameras to be on, also **let them know how they can ask for an exception if they need it.** This allows flexibility for specific situations without leaving every student free to just turn off their camera. Let students know that if they want more privacy, they can use a virtual background.
2. **How you will manage participation.** Setting expectations will help encourage participation. Should students use the raise hand function (Participants > Raise Hand) to volunteer to speak? Or should they raise their actual hand in front of the camera? Should they put questions in chat? Or should they just jump in? Will you be cold-calling or warm-calling? Will you be expecting a certain level of participation or evaluating participation?
3. **How you will use the Zoom chat.** You can choose whether to allow open chat, whether to restrict students to sending chats only to the teaching staff, or whether to turn off chat entirely. Allowing chat is a good way to give students the opportunity to tell you if something is going wrong (like when you think you've shared your screen but they're not seeing it or if your audio has gotten unclear) and also a good way to let students ask questions, but it can be a distraction for you and for the students. Tell the students how you want them to use the chat, whether you will be looking at it and when, whether a TA will be looking at it and answering questions (good idea!), and whether it is OK for them to keep it closed and ignore it. This will differ a lot from class to class, be explicit about what you want in your class.
4. **Keeping focus in the room.** You may want to tell students to shut down other applications on their computer during your class and to put away their phones to avoid distractions.
5. **Microphones.** With more than a few people in Zoom, open mics cause problems. So tell students that when they are not speaking, they should keep their mics muted. This is pretty obvious, but having said it makes it feel less intrusive later

when you or a TF needs to mute someone.

6. **Zoom basics and where to get tech help.** All students will have had the opportunity to get oriented for remote learning through the Academic Resources Center and many will have taken classes in Zoom in the spring. It is not your job to teach them to use Zoom. But you may want to point out Gallery View or Side-by-Side mode, especially if you prefer for them to look at the class in a particular way. It is a good idea to tell them where they should go for tech help (perhaps first chat to a TF for some help, then call or email the help desk) so that you set the expectation that you are not the one to troubleshoot the issue with their headphones.
7. **What will happen in case of an outage.** Tell them in advance what you will do if your internet connection goes out and what you will do if there is a Zoom outage. Having a plan for this ahead of time, however simple, makes everything feel under control when something technical goes wrong. A simple way to handle this is to tell students that you expect them to stay available and look for an email from you with instructions for 10 minutes. Then send an email that either says that everything is OK and they can rejoin the session or with instructions for the alternative way you'd like to complete the class session.
8. **Last only because it is not new for online: Set expectations for class climate and mutual respect in the classroom.**