

Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee (ASCC)
Stony Brook University

Covid-19 Pandemic-Related Provisional Remote Learning
Academic Year 2020-2021

Guidelines for Syllabus Modification

The ASCC is an independent standing committee of the Arts and Sciences Senate. It exercises faculty authority over curricular content and changes in curriculum for the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, and the School of Journalism. As such, the committee regularly reviews changes in delivery method, and thus the proposed temporary changes in delivery method from in-person to remote instruction fall clearly under its purview.

The ASCC offers this document in the context of the university's development of its "Plan B" for remote instruction in the F20 term. It supplements the "Guidelines for Undergraduate Online Instruction Courses and Submission of Proposals," the third form found here: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/ascc/forms.php>.

Whereas CELT is training instructors, assisting in the revision of syllabi for the exigencies of remote instruction, and focusing on other practical details of the transition, the ASCC provides the following general guidelines for instructors and departments to consider as they create temporary online versions of their courses. Adherence to these guidelines will figure prominently in the committee's evaluation of all syllabi submitted for provisional online certification¹.

Students will be taking these courses in crisis-conditions. Hence, although they need to follow CELT's best online practices and receive temporary approval by the ASCC, these courses should not be thought of as standard online courses. We urge instructors to recall that many students will find themselves forced to learn remotely under unusual and difficult conditions, which demand special consideration as you plan your courses' online versions. In particular: think carefully about the technical requirements of the course; the timing of instruction; instructor availability; and minimizing high-stakes assignments. In general, strive for equity, accessibility, and flexibility.

Please apply the following guidelines before submitting syllabi for review.

- 1. Review your stated learning objectives for the course, as well as the learning outcomes associated with any course SBCs.** If the SBC requirements as stated in your original syllabus are compromised in the transition to remote teaching mode, make it clear in your revised syllabus (where the SBCs are listed in your syllabus) how you plan to meet SBC learning outcomes in the

¹ On 2 April 2020, NYSED notified universities that courses not previously registered in the distance education format are granted only temporary approval at this time: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/nysed-coronavirus-guidance-colleges-and-universities_0.pdf. Accordingly, the ASCC's provisional certification for large courses (100+ students) usually taught in Javits will expire on the last day of the Spring 2023 semester or whenever Javits renovations are complete, whichever comes first. All other ASCC provisional certifications expire on the last day of the Spring 2021 semester or whenever social distancing ends, whichever comes first.

new version. This may require the modification of assignments and learning activities or development of new ones.

2. **List your office hours** and detail how students will be able to attend them remotely (e.g., via Skype, Zoom, Google Meet).
3. **List all technical requirements.** See also “technology requirements,” item #13 in the “Guidelines for Undergraduate Online Instruction Courses and Submission of Proposals.”
4. Inform students lacking access to the requisite computer setup or internet speed of **available help**. For laptop loans: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/studentaffairs/student-support/>; for IT support: <https://it.stonybrook.edu/services/itsm>.
5. **Keep technical requirements to a realistic minimum;** for any requirements outside of the university’s adopted systems, please consult CELT. See also the Platform note in the “Guidelines for Undergraduate Online Instruction Courses and Submission of Proposals” (p.1).
6. **State how students will have to access course content,** especially if any of that content will not be available through Blackboard.
7. Any **synchronous meetings** need to be at the regularly scheduled class time. Be aware that many of your students may live in distant time-zones, making synchronous courses burdensome or impossible. Provide video recordings or other materials to help students catch up when unable to attend live class meetings.
8. **Final exams** must be given in accordance with the university-mandated day and time: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/registrar/registration/exams.php>
9. Online courses should have **interactive components**. Make sure your syllabus clearly conveys how student-faculty and student-student interactions will be fostered. Revisit p.1 of the “Guidelines for Undergraduate Online Instruction Courses and Submission of Proposals” for further detail on “What online courses are,” “What online courses are not,” and “Interaction.”
10. Clearly state how **assessment** will be conducted. Think ahead to the end of term, and make sure all stated evaluation criteria can be clearly judged in the revised format.
 - a. How will **attendance** be gauged? Perhaps as regular participation over the term, keeping in mind that synchronous presence cannot reasonably be required during a crisis.
 - b. How will **participation** be construed? Consider asynchronous options, like discussion forums on Blackboard or VoiceThread.
 - c. If you wish to require that **cameras** be turned on to verify attendance or improve participation, please keep in mind that this may present challenges to certain students.
11. Confirm your **format for assessment is practical** and appropriate for remote teaching:
 - a. Make assignments as **flexible** and assessment as **generous** as possible.
 - b. Convey a clear method for handling a greater than usual number of **late/missed assignments**.
 - c. Consider **minimizing high-stakes assignments or exams**, instead stressing a number of low-stakes assignments. For additional suggestions, see “Method of evaluation” in the “Guidelines for Undergraduate Online Instruction Courses and Submission of Proposals” and CELT recommendations here: <https://www.stonybrook.edu/celt/services/assessment-online-assessment/assessing-students-online/testing-recommendations>

1 May 2020