Dear Colleagues,

What follows below, together with the associated solution guides, constitute a basic roadmap to teaching on-line. We intend it to help you in preparing your courses for Spring quarter. We recognize that some of you have extensive experience teaching on-line or at least using Canvas, the UW's course management system; others may have never used Canvas. So, in devising these guidelines, we're aiming to meet you where you are, so to speak.

Aside from the technical aspects to teaching on-line, we wanted to provide some advice on how to approach the task we face, in teaching this way with little advance notice. We recommend that you not put too much pressure on yourself as you adapt your course(s) to an on-line format. The Coronavirus crisis is causing us all to scramble to adapt to a way of life that none of us could have imagined a few weeks ago, and it is putting added demands on our already busy lives.

Therefore, we urge you to aim for a very basic approach as you design your first lectures and/or discussion sections. To that end, for example, you might consider not replicating every feature of an-in class session or power point, such as breaking up a large lecture class (50 plus students) with discussion in Zoom or Canvas. As you develop skills over the course of the quarter, you can move beyond the basic format.

We welcome your questions and feedback on this guide, and look forward to helping you teach our students.

- Glennys

This is the table-of-contents for the solution guides we have prepared. Note that if you scroll down further, you will also find some varying perspectives on the broader challenges and opportunities of online teaching.
A range of voices on teaching online

There is a tremendous amount of information out there on online teaching—enough to be overwhelming. Moreover, the prescriptions for online teaching often go far beyond what is possible in the short time we have to retool existing courses—and may, in fact, simply end up being discouraging.

In an effort to moderate the flood, we have tried to provide some perspectives on the "big picture"—that is to say, a manageable sampling of interesting viewpoints on online teaching in history. However, this is not to imply that you can—or should!—take all of these pieces of advice to heart. Rather, the hope is that this will provide food for thought as you engage with a new set of challenges, and perhaps a starting point if you wish to investigate further on your own.

- "High-quality online teaching is more difficult and demanding than its face-to-face counterpart. It requires more upfront planning and preparation and more individualized feedback and assistance.

  History classes, in particular, are generally more adaptable to an online format than many other courses, precisely because the skills we value involve words and critical reflection—the ability to read closely, identify and weigh evidence, engage in informed debate and discussion, and write analytically and persuasively. These are qualities that are readily transferable to the digital realm."
  - Steven Mintz, "Transitioning to Online Teaching," Perspectives on History

- "But teaching online wasn't that different from the classroom experience I was accustomed to. It was often more fun than standing at a lectern working through a well-worn set of PowerPoint slides. The trick was making it as personal as possible and accepting that sometimes, the technology fails and you figure it out. In fact, instructors should look at this as valuable practice: Even without a communicable disease making the rounds, the online college experience is likely to become more common with lower overhead for universities and greater flexibility for students."
  - Lisa Kaufman Hogan, "Professors, Don't be Scared," Slate.com

- "Whether you've taught online a lot or a little, chances are you didn't enjoy it as much as teaching in person. Maybe you didn't experience that fizz after a particularly invigorating face-to-face class. Indeed, according to a 2017 Educause survey, only 9 percent of academics prefer to teach 'in a completely online environment.' That means a whopping 91 percent of us don't. ... For all of those reasons, you may not feel fully invested in your online teaching practice. Yet it can be just as rewarding as teaching in a bricks-and-mortar classroom, if in different ways. Good teaching is good teaching"
  - Flower Darby, "How to be a Better Online Teacher," Moving Online Now

- "The best piece of advice I can give an instructor embarking on teaching online for the first time is to not expect it to feel like the face-to-face class. That is like comparing an apple to an orange. However, built with the right kind of structure, an online class can still have all of the experiences of a face-to-face class, albeit in a different way. A sense of community, content exploration and discussion can all be structured in an online class."
  - Gretchen Kreahling McKay, "Take My Advice," Inside Higher Ed

- "[Y]ou have to run your course so that there is constant dialogue with students. You can have outstanding course content, fascinating primary sources and challenging assignments, but it is critical that you interact with the students frequently so that the students stay engaged and feel like you are constantly present in the course. The dialogue should be varied and can include video chatting, discussion boards, emails and voice-recorded comments providing feedback on assignments."
  - Amy Porter, "Take My Advice," Inside Higher Ed

- "It's easy for students to spend a lot of time in front of screens for their online school. As much as possible, we're assigning
students tasks that get them up and moving and away from their devices. ...

- **Videos:** Students can also write and perform plays, or create and cook recipes and conduct interviews, and submit these assignments through video.

- **Workbooks and drawing:** Many of our classes at school intentionally used workbooks and paper-based tasks instead of laptops to reduce students' screen time. We're continuing this by having students complete some assignments on paper, taking a picture of their completed work, and uploading the photo to submit the task."
  - Laurel Schwartz, "What Teachers in China Have Learned," Edutopia

- "Many of our students... must learn in a space they do not control. Siblings are learning online; parents are working from home; grandparents are watching TV; in middle-class families, a domestic worker is making lunch; and all of this swirls around the student as they try to commandeer the family computer for their classroom slot. Students noted that learning from home is noisy, unpredictable, and imposes on everyone else around them. Some also reported that it was difficult to join a lecture via video – due to busy or bad internet connections, or due to the problem of forcing their siblings or grandparents into 'exile' while the student monopolized a room or a computer or wifi"
  - Jason Petrulis, "Teaching a Large Lecture Class Remotely," Gender Studies, University of Hong Kong

---

**Source URL:** https://history.washington.edu/online-teaching-general