Online Learning

What it is

Online courses are courses that take place fully in an online environment using tools such as **Canvas** (DU's primary learning management system), **Zoom** (A web-conferencing tool that allows people to meet virtually for a class or working session), and **Kaltura** (A video creation and management tool). Online courses can be synchronous, asynchronous, or ideally a mixture of both. Critical to the success of online courses is clear course organization that allows students to easily navigate the online environment

> **Synchronous**: a delivery modality in which work and participation requirements take place at specific times, often using a program like Zoom.

> **Asynchronous**: a delivery modality in which work and participation requirements may take place at different times and elements of the coursework and learning materials would be available with a degree of flexibility rather than only offered at a specific time.

Online Course Design Checklist

At a minimum, all Online courses should include the following:

o   An emergency/contingency plan (i.e. a statement in the syllabus about what will happen if classes are canceled)
o   A welcome email sent to students at the beginning of the quarter that includes your contact information
o   A student introduction to using Zoom (and activated instructor account)
o   Digital resources to replace physical ones where possible (i.e. readings, handouts, assignments, etc.)
o   An online syllabus
o   Online assignment submission areas
o   An online gradebook

This Setting Up Your Canvas Course video gives you step-by-step instructions for accomplishing those tasks.

Best practices:

> **Post an introduction and welcome video** to create instructor presence and allow the students to know you beyond just text. Ideally, you will post videos regularly throughout the term.

> **Create a welcome page, announcement, or email** that includes your introduction video, your contact information, and detailed instructions for how students can get started in your class.

> **Thoughtfully structure your Canvas course** in a way that is easy for students to navigate. Consider using one of DU's Canvas course templates.

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Have students introduce themselves. This can be asynchronously through Canvas or synchronously through a Zoom session (or both!).

Incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous elements into your course. Be mindful of course time and make sure any synchronous recordings are shared with students for those who could not attend or those who want to review.

Ensure consistent instructor presence and student presence to keep students engaged.

Provide frequent feedback to help keep students on track.

Encourage class community through groupwork, peer-reviews, and providing space for students to communicate.

Explore technology tools outside of Canvas and Zoom that can enhance student engagement and learning. Do not incorporate too many – one other tool is enough.

- Some tools to explore: Adobe Spark, FlipGrid, Padlet, Perusall
- Talk to your colleagues within your department about other tools they might be using.

Additional Resources:

- Darby, F., & Lang, J. (2019). *Small teaching online.* Jossey-Bass.
- Asynchronous and synchronous e-learning
- OTL Blog, Ways to Meet the Instructional Time in an Online Format
- OTL Website, Resources for teaching at a distance
- Canvas Guide: How do I edit the syllabus in a course?
- Canvas Guide: What are assignments?
- Canvas Guide: How do I use the gradebook?
- Canvas Guide: How do I upload a file (reading/handout) to a course?
- Video, Setting up Your Canvas Course

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