

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 for online courses in which work and participation requirements take place at specific times only. A weekly 1-hour webinar that requires participation and is not made available for later viewing is an example of synchronous delivery.

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.

Best Practices

Post an introduction and welcome video to create instructor presence and allow the students to know you beyond just text. Consider posting videos regularly throughout the quarter/semester. Check out the [Kaltura Knowledge Base](#) for additional video resources.

Import the [OTL Canvas Template](#) to guide your course design process and save time while doing so. The template provides consistency across DU courses and comes with pre-populated content, including pages for assignments and discussion boards.

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.

Incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous elements into your course. Be mindful of course time and be sure to share instructional materials ahead of time.

Tip!

Download our [Canvas Course Checklist](#) to guide your Canvas course design process.

Have students introduce themselves. This can be asynchronously through a Canvas discussion board, or other educational technology software, like [Flip Grid](#). This can also be done asynchronously through a Zoom session.

Encourage class community through group work, peer reviews, and providing space for students to communicate and engage with one another. Consider educational technology tools to help facilitate engagement, like [Perusall](#).

Minimum Requirements for Canvas Courses

Instructors are required to populate the [Syllabus](#) in their Canvas course container. Consider using [CIDI Labs Design Tools](#) to enhance the organization, navigability and accessibility of your Syllabus page. Check out the [OTL sample syllabus statements](#).

All courses must include a space for students to submit assignments online. Any assignment created with the Canvas [Assignments tool](#) will automatically show up in Grades, Calendar, and the Syllabus Course Summary.

There is also the requirement to host all handouts, readings and other instructional materials in your Canvas course container. Consider linking these materials to the appropriate weekly or thematic [Module](#) for easy-access.

If your course is meeting synchronously, be sure to [set up your recurring Zoom sessions in your Canvas course](#).

Once you get your course set up, you'll want to make sure you [publish your course](#) so students can access it. You do not need to have the entire course built out before you publish. It is recommended to have these minimum requirements and content for the first week ready when you publish.

Additional Resources

- Darby, F., Lang, J. (2019). Small teaching online. Jossey-Bass.
- [Resources for Teaching from a Distance](#) (OTL webpage)
- [DU Teaching Toolkit](#) (OTL webpage)
- [Online Teaching and Learning Glossary](#) (OTL webpage)
- [Community from a Distance: How to Create a Vital Asynchronous Classroom](#) (OTL blog)
- [Engagement and Interactivity in Online Synchronous Learning](#) (OTL blog)

Need Additional Support?

Sign up for a one-on-one consultation with an Instructional Designer in our office using our [online booking system](#).

[Chat with Canvas Support](#) 24/7 365 days/yr.

[Contact the OTL](#) for additional support!