

Dept. of Art History and Communication Studies

McGill University

Remote Course Delivery Guidelines

June 25, 2020

In light of the global Covid-19 pandemic, Fall 2020 teaching and learning activities at McGill University will primarily take place remotely. The following guidelines for remote course delivery have been developed collaboratively by the members of the Department of Art History & Communication Studies (AHCS). They are subject to existing and forthcoming McGill University and Faculty-level regulations and guidelines, including relevant codes of students' rights and responsibilities and collective agreements between the university and its teaching staff.

The guidelines refer to several McGill-specific regulations, resources, units and offices, many of which have analogues at other institutions. McGill-specific acronyms include: TLS (Teaching and Learning Services); OSD (Office for Students with Disabilities); AGSEM (Association of Graduate Students Employed at McGill – McGill's TA union); MyCourses (McGill's online course management and delivery platform).

Contents:

- 1. Seminars 2
- 2. Lecture courses - content delivery 5
- 3. Lecture courses - student engagement 9
- 4. Lecture courses - course requirements 21

Important Links:

[University Guidelines for Remote Delivery](#)

[TLS – Remote Teaching](#)

[OSD – Accessibility with remote learning](#)

[McGill Library Teaching Services](#)

[AHCS Teaching Tools Summary](#)

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1. Seminars

1.1 Platform/software:

- [TLS Tools Table](#)
- Zoom ([TLS guide](#)) (Present, share screen, breakout rooms, chat, polling, etc.)
- MyCourses ([TLS guide](#)) ([IT guide](#)) (Discussions, Groups, Quizzes, Surveys, host materials, grading, announcements, etc.)
- Camtasia—screen capture/video editing (available at www.mcgill.ca/software)
- Polling@McGill
- [Microsoft Teams](#) (for group work)

1.2 Class meetings

- May be reduced from 39 hours to approx. 20 hours
- 3 credits = 135 student hours of work (1 credit = 45 hours)
- Shorter modules of ‘in-class’ time mixed with variety of assignments
- Instructor lectures / presentations of approx. 12-20 minutes (recorded and posted), then class discussion or other activities (smaller groups work on questions and report back to larger group, etc.). Instructor presentations can be posted prior to class to enable starting class with discussion or other activity.

1.3 Assignments

- Reading responses (post on ‘discussions’ before class)—can thread these so that small groups interact with each other’s responses
- Smaller assignments can be given a check, check plus or check minus rather than a number or letter grade. Can also be counted as part of participation grade.
- Students do oral presentations and peer review each other’s work, write response papers, etc.
- Break research paper into smaller components as a multi-stage assignment (annotated bibliography, proposal, point-form outline, short presentations, etc.)

1.4 Synchronous/fixed

- Live Zoom classes
(N.B.: schedule Zoom classes from MyCourses; it will be automatically recorded and captioned for students to watch later) [more info](#)
- Zoom chat (discussion, share links, etc.)
- Share screen—Power Point, YouTube, etc. [more info](#)
- Zoom Break-out rooms [more info](#)

- Some students may not be comfortable with recording and posting class discussions. We think it might be better to post the instructor presentations and presentations that students have prepared in advance, but probably not student in-class discussions.

1.5 Asynchronous/flexible

- For students who are not logged in to class, there can be another component for them to work on remotely instead of joining the class discussion (short writing assignments, responses, annotations; if a small group then they could do some group work, etc.)
- For seminars we assume that most students can and will show up for class time and the number of students who can't due to connection/time zone issues will be small and it's possible to meet with them individually for 20-30 minutes per week.
- Students unable to meet at fixed times can be "clustered" to facilitate interaction
- To facilitate close reading and textual/visual interpretation, collective documents can be "marked up" iteratively using comment function
- Parts of recorded Zoom class shared on MyCourses
- Recorded presentation slides on Power Point, upload to MyCourses
- Recorded presentation slides on Camtasia, upload to MyCourses
- Recorded, directly in MyCourses or in audio program like Audacity
- Discussions (MyCourses) [more info](#)
- Groups (MyCourses) [more info](#)

1.6 Discussions

- Asynchronous discussions (outside of class time)
 - "Discussions" tool (MyCourses) allows you to create a discussion board with topics, where students can have discussions in a thread, post reading responses and other work.
 - "Groups" tool (MyCourses) for group assignments and discussions; you can add students to separate groups where they can discuss and share files, do peer review, etc.
- Synchronous discussions (in class)
 - Zoom reactions (raise hand, wave; found at bottom of screen) and feedback (yes, no, etc.; found in participants window)
 - Zoom chat (direct and to the group; share links)
 - Break-out rooms

1.7 Presentations

- Student presentations
 - Make the presenter a co-host (from list of people in meeting) to allow them to share their screen (for Power Point or other media).

- Students not available during class time could pre-record a presentation in Zoom, Power Point, or Camtasia
- Record and post presentations on MyCourses
- Students can peer review presentations (provide a template, some guidelines)

1.8 Student consultation

- Fewer 'in class' hours, more time spent on assessments and individual feedback to students
- Office hours—make app'ts (email, phone, zoom, etc.)
- Set parameters so that this does not mushroom into constant emailing

1.9 Feedback

- A few weeks into the class, a good idea to solicit student feedback about what is working / what could be changed
- Make adjustments and check in periodically throughout the semester
- Could also have students do self-assessment exercises to gauge their own learning outcomes and motivation

1.10 Access to seminar and research materials

- MyCourses – host or link to PDFs, Power Point, video, audio, etc.
- [Creating links to McGill Library resources in MyCourses](#)
- [Online Course Reserves and other materials](#)

2. Lecture courses - content delivery

2.1 Accessibility and equity in relation to course content

Someone who must take the course asynchronously must not be disadvantaged:

- almost everything that is synchronous should be recorded (turn off recording for sensitive discussions)
- asynchronous does not have this problem
- Make sure your recordings are captioned. Upload all audio material into MyCourses lecture portal to have it automatically transcribed (lectures, meetings, and powerpoints with audio). This guarantees accessibility for students who are in noisy environments or are hard of hearing.
- Real accessibility means text for the hard of hearing and audio for the hard of seeing. Some things to do: fill out the “alt text” field for images, so that people who are listening rather than reading can know what’s in the image; and audiodescription of video, so that people listening rather than looking can have a sense of what is going on. In Word and PowerPoint, Microsoft has a built-in accessibility checker. Learn more here: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f>
- Additional resources for accessible syllabi: <https://www.accessiblesyllabus.com>

2.2 Platform(s) for lecture delivery and course management

- MyCourses: all course materials
- Zoom inside MyCourses: all meetings
- Powerpoint: slideware -- record your lecture with each slide
- Camtasia: allows for actual video editing, free at McGill. Can also do audio editing in it.
 - Jonathan recommends that if you get into more serious audio editing, you use something other than Camtasia. Audacity is a free alternative with a somewhat hard to learn interface but all the features you would need. There are many paid options. Check with Jonathan or Caitlin if you want advice on paid options.

2.3 Fixed/synchronous and/vs. flexible/asynchronous delivery

- A mix is ideal.
- Ultimately, this is the instructor’s decision so long as synchronous is almost entirely recorded. However, this disadvantages remote students and then they are essentially watching an 80-minute video while synchronous students get real-time interaction.
- Student comprehension of 80 minute recordings is pretty low. TLS strongly recommends delivering classes in segments: 10 minute lecture, online activity or self-test, visit a website, another lecture, etc. An example from TLS is below. It assumes a smaller class but could be adapted with different activities and less micromangement.

Making a plan: A sample 1hr Zoom class

Minutes	Activity	Description
5	Whiteboard	On entry, have students think about a question and write it on the whiteboard.
2	Poll	Ask a question that engages and determines personal relevance for the topic of the mini-lecture.
10	Mini-lecture	Deliver mini-lecture. Use Annotation features in Zoom to mark up your PowerPoint slides.
2	Poll	Ask one or more questions for a knowledge check.
10	Breakout room	Assign students into individual breakout rooms to work in small groups.
10	Debrief	Ask each group to appoint a "reporter" to summarize the main points of their discussion.
2	Chat	Ask students to contribute to chat where they are still confused.
5	Debrief	Clear up misconceptions that were shared in the muddiest point chat.
5	End session	Summarize the sessions activities, set up expectations for next class

Adapted from: <https://it.umn.edu/services-technologies/how-tos/zoom-teach-online-class-sessions#agenda>

Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

7

2.4 Delivery of lecture, images, audio and video materials

- Make everything available in MyCourses and make materials for each week available in the same place so it is easy to find.
- Important course documents (syllabus, assignments, etc.) should never be more than 1-2 mouse clicks away.
- Record lectures live in Zoom.
- Record audio in slides in Powerpoint. Use the most straightforward slide show (a series of still images).
- Materials elsewhere on the internet should have clear links in Zoom, but audiovisual materials and external documents should ideally be stored inside MyCourses, except when the file size is too big (see below)

2.5 Access to course readings and other materials (including audio-visual materials)

- When possible, upload all materials to MyCourses in advance (including multiple video clips). Make access to materials simple and intuitive. E.G.: all materials and links for a given class/week in one place, in addition to a 'master' course outline, so students don't have to go back and forth between course outline, list of A/V materials, list of readings.
- Activate the "student preview" function in MyCourses, and look at your course website from a student's perspective.
- Links to library books and PDFs should be available in MyCourses. If you are assigning a chapter from an electronic library book, download it and post it rather than have students look for it.

- If you are assigning magazine or newspaper articles, download and post PDF articles from library or personal subscription, to avoid advertising and minimize browsing.
- Avoid links to paywalled things (save to your computer in an easily shareable format like pdf, mp4, mp3)
- For A-V material, it depends on the size of the file. You can embed short clips in a Keynote or PowerPoint presentation. Note however that PowerPoint's management of media materials takes some figuring out.
- When A-V files are too big, upload them to your OneDrive and post a link in MyCourses so students can download
- Avoid links to YouTube or other sites that track and have ads. If a clip is on YouTube, better to download or embed it.
- The department is investigating a subscription to YouTube Premium for everyone teaching to enable downloading videos in decent quality

2.6 Hardware and software tools/tips/best practices

- The #1 rule for learning any software (or technical skill) is to define your needs as a user FIRST. Do not start by trying to learn what all the platforms and software can do. This is a major distraction from teaching. THEN, use tutorials and manuals to acquire the skills you need in order to teach your course well and ignore everything else that the software or platform can do.

Links to tutorials:

MyCourses, Zoom, TLS online teaching sessions: See Caitlin's wonderful document.

Camtasia: <https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-camtasia-how-to-make-a-video-tutorial.html#>

How to link to a OneDrive file in MyCourses so that you can have students watch a longer video:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/share-onedrive-files-and-folders-9fcc2f7d-de0c-4cec-93b0-a82024800c07?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us>

Once you're logged in and in the drive, right click the file to be shared; select "Anyone with the link"; and then you get a link you can post anywhere (including in MyCourses).

Best practices for audio recording lectures: two posts from Jonathan here:

<https://superbon.net/2020/06/17/recording-your-lectures-1-the-one-thing-your-can-do-to-improve-your-students-listening-experience/>

<https://superbon.net/2020/06/18/recording-your-lectures-2-the-one-thing-you-can-do-to-improve-your-recording-experience/>

2.7 Resources and best practices for instructors interested in critical pedagogy, feminist approaches to online learning, creating conditions for inclusive student engagement:

- FemTechNet developed an online course as a DOCC (Distributed Open Collaborative Courses), in response to critiques of MOOCs. This emerged in a wholly different context than ours, and in 2013, but there are interesting ideas about engaging students in online projects. See for example their ‘Key Learning Projects’ page, where they describe assignments such as Wiki Storming, Object making and exchange, and Keyword videos. <https://femtechnet.org/get-involved/self-directed-learners/key-learning-project/>
- This is an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Ed* about best practices. Most of it is advice you will have heard already, but the section on “Scaffolding” is interesting, because it’s about how to reduce the anxiety inherent to new online learning:

“Here are some examples of how to scaffold activities in an online course. When possible, make these an opportunity for you to give incremental feedback so students know whether or not they are on the right track: Let’s say you want students to record a video presentation of their research topics. It’s hard enough to give a good presentation without the video-recording element. So help your online students gain practice with the technology before they have to use it for a high-stakes project. For example, in the first week or two of class, give them a low-stakes, low-stress assignment: Ask them to record and post a two-minute video introducing themselves to the class.”

(source: <https://www.chronicle.com/interactives/advice-online-teaching>)

3. Lecture courses - student engagement

This section highlights some principles of practice for fostering, facilitating and managing **student engagement** in AHCS lecture courses in the context of remote learning. It addresses some strategies for designing and managing your online course with student engagement in mind; using modes of assessment that are based on different kinds of student engagement; drawing on affordances in MyCourses and Zoom for student engagement with course materials and each other; and keeping things as simple and straightforward as possible. It aims to help you prepare to explain and model how students can use the tools of student engagement online most effectively. Consider talking with your students about how you plan and design your course with student engagement in mind.

Platform information: We include slides from TLS webinars that directly relate to student engagement to help illustrate these suggestions and guidelines. **To keep things simple and to limit the number of platforms we use, we suggest using MyCourses, and Zoom while in MyCourses for lecture meetings and recordings and online office hours.** Note: lecture recordings are automatically captioned, for accessibility, when you record in Zoom through MyCourses. If needed, another chat/meeting platform like Microsoft Teams is available through McGill's Office 365 suite. We also include information here about Polling@McGill (also rather unfortunately called Turning Point), for those who are interested in incorporating quick polls and easy surveys into your courses to foster more student engagement.

By **student engagement**, we mean:

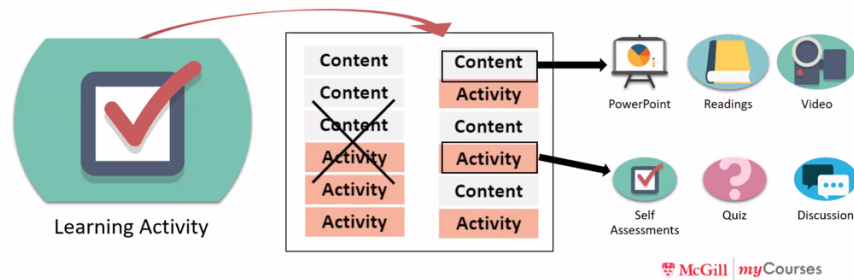
1. How students engage with course materials (texts, examples, visual and audio works)
2. How students engage with each other, peer-to-peer (discussion, course activities, co-production of assignments, etc.)
3. How students engage with professors, instructors, TAs and other teaching staff (Q&A, office hours, etc.)

This guide is organized around these three forms of student engagement, in both asynchronous and synchronous contexts. We conclude with some general advice on student engagement.

3.1 Student Engagement with Course Materials

3.1.1 TLS highly recommends using flexible forms of student engagement with course materials: going modular. Consider breaking up, if you can, longer lectures into smaller units of lecture material and other course content (e.g. images, infographics, videos, podcasts; see diagram). Mix up portions of content with portions of activity time. This approach will enable students to more effectively engage with course materials in remote teaching. It can be helpful for students to have breaks built into the materials we post online as well – state it on your lecture slides, for instance. Reminding students to take breaks can help avoid burnout from online learning. The first TLS diagram below illustrates flexible (asynchronous or synchronous) student-content interaction. The second TLS slide models what a 1-hour lesson plan might look like using this framework.

Flexible activities: *Student-content* interaction



Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

18

Making a plan: A sample 1hr Zoom class

Minutes	Activity	Description
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7

3.1.2 Utilize the Chat function in Zoom if you will be holding synchronous class sessions to enable students to respond to lecture material and course content. This can be an effective mode of content engagement for students and helps instructors and teaching assistants run Q&A sessions in a class session. Chat can be turned on and off at different times in a Zoom class session. Specific times could be set aside during a lecture to check the chat. TAs could oversee and moderate the chat as the lecture or other synchronous course content is being delivered. TLS advises that courses over 25 students should use a moderator in Zoom.

Using Chat

Helpful for students to engage with you and with each other

Strategies:

- Choose who students can chat with (Host only, Everyone, etc.)
- Designate a moderator: answers questions, lets you know when to address the questions
- Pause interactions
- Disable Chat

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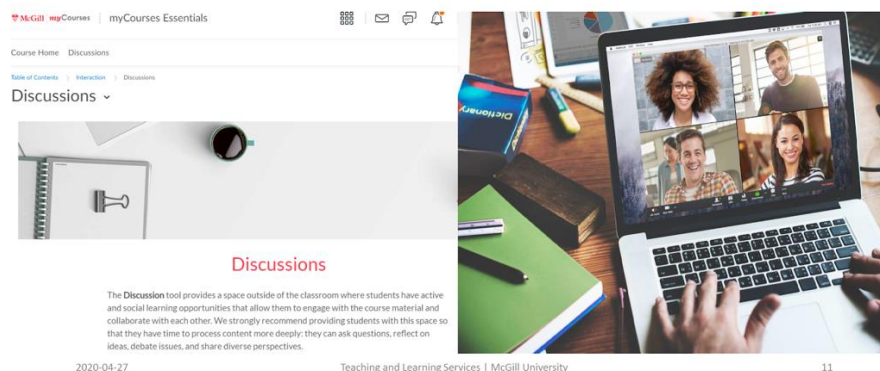
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3.1.3 For synchronous teaching in Zoom, TLS recommends using **breakout rooms** to enable students to work together on course projects, discussing course/lecture material, developing arguments, building interpretations of texts they have read, etc. If you organize breakout rooms for your students, tell them whether you will be dropping into those sessions or not, so they know whether they have privacy or not to speak together away from you as the instructor. Tell them what to expect. TLS has found that incoming students particularly like breakout rooms in Zoom: it helps them get to know one another. It is advisable to build peer and self-assessment into the use of breakout rooms to encourage self-moderation and self-reflection. Teaching assistants could help with the setting up of breakout rooms.

Image retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-do-breakout-rooms-in-zoom>

5. Design ways for students to work together

fixed schedule, flexible schedule



The image shows two side-by-side screenshots. The left screenshot is from a MyCourses interface, displaying the 'Discussions' section. It includes a navigation menu with 'Course Home', 'Discussions', 'Tools of Course', 'Interaction', and 'Discussions'. Below the menu is a header image of a desk with a notebook and a pen, followed by the word 'Discussions' in red. A paragraph of text describes the Discussion tool as a space for active and social learning. The right screenshot shows a laptop screen displaying a Zoom breakout room with four participants in a grid view. The laptop is on a desk with a green notebook and a pen.

2020-04-27

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11

For information on setting up breakout rooms see: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476313-Managing-breakout-rooms>

3.1.4 Utilize the **discussion forum** in MyCourses to get students responding to course material, demonstrating how to make claims, and modeling arguments. Student participation in discussion forums can be used as assignments for remote learning and are especially useful for asynchronous student engagement.

- a. Instructors and teaching assistants can “seed” or “stem” discussion in the forum by posing questions related to course material, asking students to pose a question there, or setting out another kind of prompt (e.g. “Safiya Umoja Noble argues that search engines are _____ (fill in the blank)” or “what is one way Safiya Umoja Noble would respond to the idea that search engines are neutral technologies”). For shy and anxious students, seeding the discussion can take the pressure off of them for getting a conversation started, helping to encourage broader participation in discussion. Modelling different ways of reacting to and commenting on material can help foster student discussion of course concepts and ideas.
- b. **Post media examples** that students can briefly comment on based on a reading or course concept, etc. The slide below provides an example of how to organize Discussion forums in MyCourses for flexible, asynchronous student engagement with course materials (as modeled here: for reflection, self-assessment, and reading-based discussions).

Flexible activities: Discussion boards

Student-content

Reflection

Self assessment

Reading-based discussions

Topic	Threads	Posts
Unit 2: Food Production - Techniques, Issues & Health Impacts ⌵	0	0
⚙ Includes assessment.		
Topic 05 Lesson 01 Activity 04: Organic Foods ⌵	0	0
Topic 05 Lesson 02 Activity 02: GMO Crops - A Global View ⌵	0	0
Topic 06 Lesson 02 Activity 02: Colourful Foods ⌵	0	0
Topic 06 Lesson 03 Activity 06: High Intensity Sweeteners ⌵	0	0
Topic 07 Lesson 02 Activity 04: Risk of Adverse Food Reactions ⌵	0	0

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- c. TLS suggests **creating rubrics** and/or **rating schemes** if you plan to assess student engagement with course material in discussion forums. The slide below shows an example of what this might look like. You can learn more about sample rubrics [here](#) and [here](#).

Flexible activities: Recommended practices

- Basic
 - Ratings
 - Up-vote
- Sophisticated
 - Rubrics
 - Assessment

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Timely discussion contributions				
Responsiveness to discussion and demonstration of knowledge and understanding gained from assigned reading				
Adherence to on-line protocols				

Feedback

Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

23

3.1.5 Utilize the **Quiz tools** in MyCourses to set up regular, grade-able ways to get students responding to and demonstrating comprehension of course materials (multiple choice, short answer, longer answer, etc). There are 11 different question types you can select using the Quiz tool in MyCourses. They are grade-able in MyCourses and can be directly linked to your grade book. The TLS slide below articulates the kinds of assessment for which the Quiz tool is most useful. The tool has a lot of features, and the TLS webinar on this topic is very worthwhile.

What is the Quizzes tool best used for?



Practice activities



Low-stakes knowledge checks



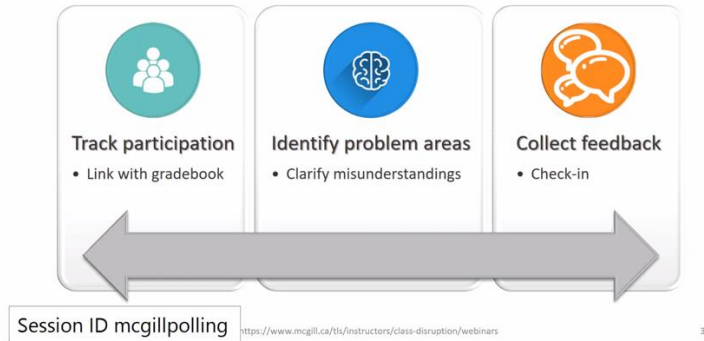
Open-book exams

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4

3.1.6 Consider **using polling and surveys** in your class, especially if you are doing synchronous class meetings. It can enable another form of student engagement with course materials (and your lecture content!), help you see what students are thinking, check whether they are understanding the material, and so on. TLS has a good webinar on using polling tools in Zoom, and through Polling@McGill. The latter has a lot more flexibility, and you can save the polls once the class session is over. Note: if you use Power Point for your lecture slides, you can build polls via Polling@McGill right in your slide show. It should be possible in Keynote as well through the “Anywhere polling” option in Polling@McGill. The slide below offers some possible uses for polling, while the second slide shows how you could incorporate polling into a class plan.

What can you do with the results?



Planning to use Polling? Think about...

When to ask a polling question?



Content	10min
Poll	2 min
Content	10 min
(Re)Poll	2 min
Content	10 min

Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/its/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

11

3.1.7 Overall, consider how to build student engagement into your course assessment and learning outcomes. The diagram below provides some ways of thinking about *how* to assess different forms of student engagement according to the learning outcomes you establish for your course.

Consider Combinations

Learning outcome	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate knowledge, capacity to structure information, and communication skills • Defend an argument 	Multi-stage oral presentations, peer feedback, infographic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate writing and reflection skills • Explain concepts or ideas • Evaluate evidence • Identify flaws and inconsistencies in an argument • Develop research and synthesizing skills 	Discussion posts, peer feedback, multi-stage term paper, portfolio
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain concepts or ideas • Demonstrate analysis, problem-solving and evaluative skills • Apply theoretical concepts or content to new situations or real-life problems 	Quizzes, short answers, open-book exam

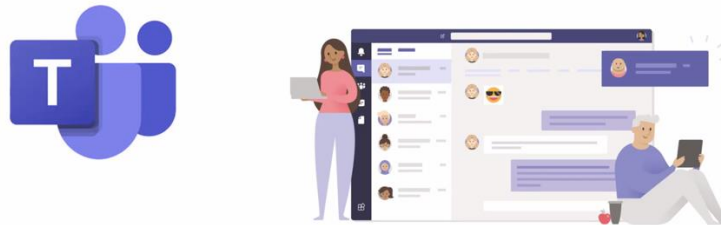
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7

3.2 Student Engagement with Each Other

3.2.1 Encourage students to set up group chats in platforms like *Microsoft Teams* or *Slack*. *Microsoft Teams* is available to students through Office 365. It is difficult for instructors to set up groups for students, so let students self-organize on Microsoft Teams or another platform to work together on group projects, for instance. With all discussion forums, it is a good idea to establish some **discussion guidelines** and **netiquette expectations**. Some of us already use these in our teaching, so feel free to ask us for models. For resources on netiquette, check [here](#) and [here](#) (the latter one is old school, from 1991. It still applies today.).

Flexible activities: *Student-student* interaction



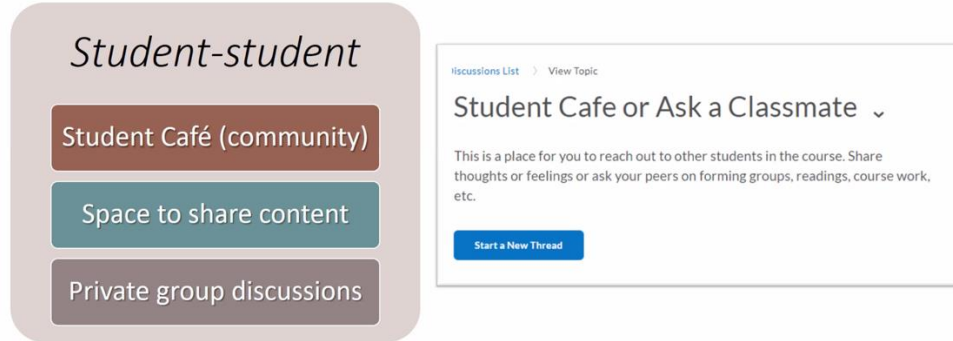
- **Microsoft Teams** is available for all McGill students as part of Office 365
- Integrated chat, video-calling, shared document repositories, etc.

Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

19

3.2.2 Utilize the discussion board in MyCourses to enable students to talk with each more socially, to share content and resources with each other, and to have private group discussions. TLS refers to this as the “Student Café” model, as appears in the slide below. This could be a space where the instructor does not check in so that the chat stays private for students. In addition to text-based discussion forums, consider how **students might use audio to record verbal responses** or offer discussion prompts to others. Some students prefer to write by hand: consider enabling them to **upload digital photographs** or **scanned images of handwritten responses** they might have in the context of an asynchronous discussion.

Flexible activities: Discussion boards



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22

Check out some [Best practices for setting up discussion forums for remote teaching](#) to learn more.

3.2.3 For resources on different discussion strategies – both synchronous and asynchronous – some links are included below from *Cult Pedagogy*, *Facing History and Ourselves*, and *The Sheridan Learning Center* at Brown University. These are useful for instructors, teaching assistants and students to know.

“[The Big List of Class Discussion Strategies](#)”: This resource defines the range of activities that make up class discussion. One of us has found the Socratic Seminar, Talk Moves, the [Thoughts, Questions and Epiphanies](#) model, and Teach-Okay strategies useful. The Fishbowl strategy could help students learn how to ask effective follow-up questions, model how to paraphrase texts, and elaborate on another person’s point. Some of these strategies may need to be modified for use in online contexts.

“[The Socratic Seminar](#)”: This guide helps teach people facilitation skills. It models discussion strategies specifically aimed at developing shared understandings of texts. See their [Socratic Seminar Stems](#) for examples of what teachers and students can say in the context of facilitating dialogues.

“[Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussion](#)”: There are many useful tips here, including a section on how to encourage participation (scroll down a ways).

3.2.4 Build assignments that are organized around students engaging with each other, and assessing each other’s work. Consider, for instance, having students co-edit an online publication/article/resource; use Google docs or another open writing platform that enable students to co-write, co-edit, and comment on assignments together. If you are able to break your larger assignments into smaller pieces, students can provide responses to and commentary on each other’s work in those smaller pieces. Students can also be given credit (graded or not, weighted, etc.) for their commentary and peer

review contributions. Importantly, assignments like these can accommodate asynchronous forms of student engagement.

For more on **peer assessment strategies**, see the following resources:

[Using Peer Assessment to Make Teamwork Work](#) (TLS)

[Peer Assessment Assignment Model for Writing an Abstract](#) (TLS)

[Peer Assessment Resources for Instructors](#) (TLS)

3.3 Student Engagement with Teaching Staff

3.3.1 Utilize the **discussion board in MyCourses** to talk with students. This can include a board for FAQs concerning course administration (advise students to consult this and post non-personal questions here, instead of by email). You can also use the discussion form to do Q&A with students, asynchronously. You can use it to get to know your students better: consider asking them to share current media and other resources they are using and would be beneficial to the whole class. Have them introduce themselves to you using the MyCourses chat. The instructor and TA could regularly check a discussion board dedicated to student/instructor engagement to make sure you do not miss a question to answer, etc. TLS recommends using icebreakers with students in the chat, to help get to know them and begin developing a relationship with them – this is even more important in a remote teaching context. Teaching assistants could play a key role here in setting up and overseeing discussion boards.

The image shows a screenshot of a MyCourses discussion board interface. The title is "Flexible activities: Discussion boards". On the left, there are two example discussion topics: "Ask the tutor or lecturer" and "Introduce yourself". On the right, there is a list of suggested activities: "Instructor-student", "FAQ's/Q&A", "Icebreakers", and "Reflective journals".

Course Forum and Topics (Informational) ▾
These are examples of general discussion topics you can provide to students to address different aspects of the course.

Topic: Threads Posts Last Post

Ask the tutor or lecturer ▾
Post any questions for yourself or one you would like me to pass along to one of the guest lecturers, regarding course material.

Introduce yourself ▾
Another small activity that can be used to develop a sense of community within your course. In general, the instructor should post first to give an example and then respond to the first few and then to others as they post. Here are some guidelines for the activity:
1. Contribute the introduction to the course subject matter and activities
2. Incorporate both professional and personal information and components.

Instructor-student

FAQ's/Q&A

Icebreakers

Reflective journals

Webinar recording and slides will be available at <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/webinars>

21

3.3.2 Consider **holding online office hours** that students in different time zones can attend. For instance, you could hold one set of office hours in the morning, and another in the late afternoon or evening, if that is possible for you, and/or your TA. Consider holding drop-in office hours on Zoom; students could sign up for a time that they meet you there one-on-one, or you could do group office hours. Perhaps establish the same Zoom link for all office hours conducted this way, that can easily be shared on the syllabus. Tell students not to share this link outside of the class, to avoid Zoom bombing. Consider ways

teaching assistants can help administer the structure for online office hours (helping set up Zooms, making sure announcements for office hours are regularly posted on MyCourses, etc.).

3.3.3 Protect your own time: with less face-to-face engagement where students can ask questions and you can provide quick and direct answers on the spot, some instructors might be concerned that they will be inundated with emails or other contact from students requesting advice or to ask questions. Consider **establishing a clear policy on email with your students** to help manage this and develop other ways to chat with and/or respond to students, including the Q&A discussion model suggested above. **Creating a FAQ for your course** could help mitigate the need you and your TA have to repeatedly respond to the same questions that could easily be answered in an FAQ or on the syllabus. Consider requesting the assistance of your TA to help construct the FAQ. Some students prefer to ask teaching assistants questions about course policies and protocols, so they often know up-close what kinds of questions students have.

3.3.4 Working with T.A.s: there are different ways (and models for) teaching assistants can assist with student engagement. We present here 4 models for thinking about how T.A. hours might be utilized in remote teaching contexts with student engagement in mind (some more traditional in orientation than others). These roles can be, and usually are, combined over the 180-hour teaching assistant contract.

- a. **TA as grader:** consider ways in which different modes of assessment in your course can be overseen by the teaching assistant. If you use a variety of discussion forum modes of participation, could the TA do the assessments for this participation/set of activities? Consider how TA hours might be used for grading quizzes or other larger assignments that are conducted through MyCourses quiz and assignment tools. For those who do not already use TA hours in this way, you might consider doing so.
- b. **TA as shepherd/monitor:** playing this role, teaching assistants could play a key role in discussion moderation, seeding and stemming the discussion forum, providing resources to students and links to relevant materials, overseeing the Q&A in MyCourses discussion forum and chats in Zoom (for synchronous course meetings), holding virtual office hours and student meet-ups, initiating social media threads connected to the course, and other possible tasks. This role can be very useful in assessing how students do peer assessment activities, discussion forum participation and engagement, and other student engagement strategies that fit into an assignment structure.
- c. **TA as co-teacher:** where possible or advisable in your case, consider whether the teaching assistant could offer supplemental, small-group, synchronous, or asynchronous sessions with students. This could function like a virtual “discussion section” normally held in person for large lecture courses. Consider if there is teaching material the TA could offer or produce, say, as part of a lecture. Some of us may already work with our teaching assistants in this way, but for those who do not,

or who have not considered it in the context of remoting teaching, it may be worth pursuing.

- d. TA as research liaison/writing resource:** Consider ways in which teaching assistants could guide students in accessing reliable research materials and help connect them to writing or research resources online at McGill and elsewhere. The TA might lead occasional Zoom-based sessions on particular writing or research skills, as well as assisting with the assessment of written work, brainstorming paper ideas, helping students learn how to turn an idea into research questions, and so on.

Some things to consider:

- How should/could TA hours be reimaged, and re-allotted, in the remote teaching context to best enable student engagement?
- What is the TA capable of doing and willing to try out to play some of these different roles in fostering, organizing, and assessing student engagement?
- What training might teaching assistants need to perform tasks related to these modes of student engagement? Those hours count as part of their contracted hours.

Some additional resources and links regarding teaching assistants can be found at [The AGSEM collective agreement](#) and the [AGSEM COVID related FAQ](#).

3.4 General Advice on Engaging with Students through Remote Instruction

- Keep things as simple and straightforward for you and your students as possible. Following [FemTechNet](#), we encourage “**minimum viable courses**”: “by this we do not mean less; it’s an opportunity to rethink what a class is and could be. For now, simpler is better” (from their statement on teaching in a pandemic).
- Work within your own and your students’ comfort zones -- ask them what those are; assess your own as well.
- Consider easing up on the number of readings you do and rethinking some of your assignment structures. Where possible, consider portioning out larger assignments into smaller ones.
- Think of ways to provide more time for student engagement as part of course hours and part of the assignment structure. Things are likely going to take longer to process for students, and for us as teachers.
- In an environment without in-person interaction, developing online modes of interaction with students where you get to know them as people and as thinkers is all the more significant. Consider how you might incorporate and value this work in your course, and how you might develop student engagement activities that foster it.

The following slide shows a list of resources TLS provides on student engagement. These links are available on the [TLS website](#).

Resources

- Remote teaching resources: <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption>
- Remote learning resources: <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/students/remote-learning-resources>
- Remote teaching checklist: <https://mcgill.ca/tls/files/tls/remote-teaching-checklist-tls.pdf>
- Assessment strategies (principles and examples): <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/assessment>
- Self-care for instructors: <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/strategies/faculty-arts-toolkit/self-care-instructors>
- Netiquette: <https://answers.syr.edu/display/AC/Netiquette>
- Equity website: <https://mcgill.ca/equity/resources/covid-19-best-practices-equitable-inclusive-student-centred-learning>
- Zoom how-to's: <https://mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/tools/zoom>
- myCourses how-to's: <https://mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/tools/mycourses>
- To customize your profile in myCourses: <https://youtu.be/Q6Ps-etvWw>

4. Lecture courses - course requirements

4.1 Course outlines and registration

4.1.1 Instructors should prepare two course outline documents for each course, as follows:

- **Course Syllabus** – conventional course syllabus including information that will not change over the course of the term, e.g.: course description, learning outcomes, course requirements, deadlines, contact information and hours, information re: accommodations, illness, academic integrity, additional resources, weekly schedule and reading list.
- **Course Delivery Guide** – a guide to the details of remote delivery in the context of the course, which may be adjusted over the course of the term. As per TLS guidelines (<https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/guidelines-remote>) this guide should include information regarding the following:
 - How you will teach the course (e.g., platform used, class times)
 - How learning activities (e.g., lectures, labs, conferences) will be conducted
 - Whether you will record your lectures (this is encouraged, see below)
 - Whether/how you expect students to participate in class discussions
 - How students can reach you
 - The methods of assessment you will use
 - How you will provide feedback
 - Your expectations for class conduct (e.g., respectful communication)

4.1.2. Course Outlines and Course Delivery Guides (excluding weekly topics and readings) should be submitted for Departmental review no later than August 10, 2020.

4.1.3. Course Outlines and Course Delivery Guides should be posted on the AHCS website from the first day of term until the end of add/drop period.

4.1.4. Instructors should refrain from early testing of material covered prior to the end of add/drop period. Requests for access to course material by non-registered students during add/drop period can be managed by Teaching Assistants.

4.2 Accessibility

4.2.1. The McGill Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities applies to remote delivery and must be observed (https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/rights-of-students-with-disabilities-policy-concerning-the_0.pdf)

4.2.2. Instructors should consult and apply Equity at McGill's *COVID-19 Best Practices for Equitable & Inclusive Student-Centred Learning* (<https://mcgill.ca/equity/resources/covid-19-best-practices-equitable-inclusive-student-centred-learning>)

4.2.3. Instructors should provide flexible (i.e., asynchronous; open-ended) access to required course materials to promote accessibility under diverse circumstances. This includes recorded lecture material and slides.

4.2.4. Instructors should learn and make use of accessibility tools available in their content delivery platforms (e.g., captioning) and facilitate and encourage peer-support (e.g., note-sharing; peer tech-support; discussion boards).

4.2.5. Solicit student feedback concerning accessibility needs and barriers in relation to your course design. This can be done using anonymous polling with write-in answers, anonymously via OSD, and/or voluntary individual email communication and one-on-one meetings. Feedback should be solicited at several intervals throughout the course.

4.3 Platforms

4.3.1 Instructors should use MyCourses for the following:

- posting Course Syllabus and Course Delivery Guide
- announcements/class email
- course materials (including lectures automatically recorded using Zoom via MyCourses, and slides/links)
- tests, quizzes and exams (including take-home exams)
- assignment submission, grading and feedback
- peer discussion groups

4.4. Assessments and Grading

4.4.1 Instructors should consult TLS Assessment Strategy guidelines:

<https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/assessment>

4.4.2 Flexible (asynchronous) delivery is recommended for required assignments, to ensure accessibility; release-deadline windows and time limits should be generous to allow for accessibility under diverse circumstances; written/open-ended quizzes, tests exams should indicate suggested completion times (not just time limits) and word/page limits. (Note: “Quizzes” function in MyCourses is very useful and flexible).

4.4.3. Instructors should post clear, explicit rubrics for all assignments and assessments early in the term. These should also address grading and feedback expectations.

4.4.4. Instructors should design exams, tests and quizzes on the assumption they are “open-book.”

4.4.5. Options for assignments/assessments:

- Multiple, low-stakes assignments distributed throughout the term
- Staged, cumulative assignments (e.g., term paper proposal, annotated bibliography, peer-assessed draft; final paper)
- Optional assignments with staggered deadlines (e.g. students choose 3 of 4 assignments staggered throughout term)
- Completion credit/no feedback for minor assignments (e.g. quizzes); graded credit/feedback for major assignments (e.g. exams and term papers)
- Peer assessment assignments (see: https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/files/tls/designing_peer_assessment_assignments_-_feb_2020.pdf)
- Randomized/shuffled questions from a pool (“Quizzes” in MyCourses supports this)
- Multiple choice exams. Here are some tips from Jonathan: <https://superbon.net/2020/06/11/multiple-choice-exam-theory-remote-teaching-edition/>

4.4.6 Deadlines should be enforced at instructors’ discretion, with due regard for the special circumstances attached to conditions of the pandemic and remote delivery under diverse circumstances. In the event of extensions and or missed assignments, clear and firm revised deadlines or make-up dates should be established and enforced.

4.5. Teaching Assistants

4.5.1 TAs may be assigned any duties that fall reasonably within the categories listed by the TA workload form as follows:

- **Meeting(s) with Course Supervisor** *Establish guidelines and marking policies; discuss the topics or material for conferences, as well as other concerns or difficulties with workload.*
- **E-mail communications, online course management, and other contact hours** *This can include contributing to content management systems, and monitoring/responding to online discussions*
- **Reading** *Read the required material for the class and other secondary material necessary for the preparation of conferences and class discussions.*
- **Preparation** *Prepare for conferences, discussions with students, and performances.*
- **Course Specific Training** *As required by the Course Supervisor*
- **Leading conferences, and/or demonstrating laboratory sessions** – *this can include participating in online break out groups*
- **Course Attendance** *Attend the course supervisor's regular lectures (this can include managing online chat during synchronous delivery)*
- **Invigilation** *Attend and/or be responsible for in-class exams*
- **Evaluation/Grading**
- **Office hours** *includes in-person contact, telephone conversations, e-mail and other electronic communications.*

4.5.2 It is recommended that TA training required for duties related to remote delivery (e.g., reviewing selected TLS webinars take place in the two week period before classes begin, if the TA is available (estimated 3-5 hours; to be reflected in TA workload).

4.5.3 Instructors should note the following provisions of [the AGSEM collective agreement](#) (See also [AGSEM COVID related FAQ](#)).

- 4.03 No private agreement relative to working condition different from those foreseen in the present agreement between an employee and the University are valid unless these have been agreed to in writing by the Union.
- 11.02.01 ... Appointments for a full teaching assistantship span of fifteen (15) weeks and involve an average of twelve (12) hours per week. Work may begin two (2) weeks prior to the commencement of the academic term and may continue two (2) weeks beyond the end of the academic term.

- 11.02.02 ... Any course-specific training required by the Course Supervisor shall be included in the hours specified in Article 11.02.01 and shall take place during the period of time that the employee holds the position. Such training will be provided with timely advance notice.
- 15.02.05 An employee has the right to refuse to perform a task if the employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the performance of the task would endanger their health, safety or physical wellbeing, or would expose another person to a similar danger
- 16.03.03 An employee may be absent from work ten (10) days a year without pay to meet obligations related to the care, health or education of the employee's child or the child of the employee's spouse, or because of the state of health of the employee's spouse, father, mother, brother, sister or one of the employee's grandparents.

4.6. Humanities-specific resources

Instructors are encouraged to consult TLS Discipline-specific Resources for Remote Instruction:
<https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/instructors/class-disruption/strategies/discipline-specific-resources>