

Memo

To: Arts Chairs, Directors, and Instructors; AFIW leadership; cc the Registrar

Re: Synchronous activities in Fall 2020 classes

Date: May 29, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

After consideration and consultation, we have decided that we will not ask the RO to schedule times in the schedule of classes for synchronous learning activities. In addition to creating conflicts for students that could be avoided, we would like to minimize the impact on Arts scheduling staff, whose work has been subject to great delay and uncertainty in the last few months. Instructors are welcome, however, to schedule synchronous activities with their classes.

We ask that instructors who wish to schedule synchronous learning activities in the Fall term to follow the advice below. In this advice, we are trying to balance the pedagogical value of synchronous activity with the need for students to have equitable access to course materials and activities and the barriers (home situations, computer equipment, employment opportunities, etc.) which might prevent them from participating consistently.

The Advice

1. Synchronous learning activities should be organized for no more than one hour a week for 12 weeks of the term.
2. The time for synchronous learning activities should be consistent, although you may wish to provide more than one option in the week to enable more students to participate. For example, you might offer two set times in a week in the hopes that more students will be able to join.
3. You may wish to consult the class (through a survey in Learn) about optimal times for holding synchronous learning activities. Be mindful, however, that students may join the class after the consultation has been completed, and that their circumstances in the term may change.
4. Synchronous activities should not include graded activities or be used to assess "participation."
5. Meaningful and adequate access to the same learning experience must be made available to students who cannot attend the synchronous learning activity.
6. Your course outline should inform the class that you will have synchronous learning activities, limited to one hour a week for up to 12 weeks, that there will be no grade directly associated with these activities, and that alternatives will be provided for those who cannot attend.

We welcome your feedback and comments.

Sincerely, Marty and Kathy