

Teaching in a Time of Covid

- Important points to consider and resources in regards to Covid-19 when drafting the syllabus.
 - Good example of a syllabus
<http://www.4faculty.org/Demo/digdeeper/syllabus/syllabussampleweb.htm>
 - A resource for instructors http://www.4faculty.org/Demo/read2_main.htm
- **Addressing Changes to Expectations Given Current Events**
 - It's important to express compassion and understanding for students during this time as well as concern for their welfare. Be personable and authentic!
 - Address changes in leniency - state any accommodations for sick students or students with sick family to ease anxiety; explain how you will address late work
 - Students will be allowed to miss 1 more class session than usual* (see hybrid/in person for more information), students with sick family will have opportunities to review recorded lectures vs. mandatory presence during live lectures, etc.
 - Address rigor of the course - many students will be concerned about the “quality” of their classes and education this fall. Address what you are doing to maintain integrity of the material while allowing flexibility for students during this time.
 - The same course material will be covered and tests will be similar to previous years, however, attendance is more lenient this year. OR while exams are now online, the same material will be covered
 - Virginia Tech Wellness principles - include a statement that students are required to follow the Virginia Tech Wellness principles
 - Example from Faculty Handbook Section 9.9 - Classroom Conduct Guidance for Fall 2020
“Virginia Tech is committed to protecting the health and safety of all members of its community. By participating in this class, all students agree to abide by the Virginia Tech Wellness principles.

To uphold these principles, in this class you **must** do the following:
 - Wear a face covering during class, including as you enter and exit the classroom
 - Maintain the designated distancing guidelines of the classroom
 - Enter and exit class according to posted signage
- What should students do if they do not feel well?
 - All interfaces: asking for verification of illness by a medical professional is not appropriate. Faculty should accept a student's notification of illness. Syllabus should specify expectations for illness notification from student (ex. email

If you are exhibiting even very slight signs of illness, you **must** not attend class in person. Notify me by email and follow the instructions posted at <https://vt.edu/ready/health.html#tips>.”

- *Hybrid/in person - it is crucial that faculty communicate to students that they should not attend an in-person class if they feel the slightest bit sick, and also take no action that could encourage class attendance by those whose attendance might endanger public health
 - EX. rethink inclusion of attendance in the course grade
 - What happens if a student in class becomes sick?
 - Be open and honest about when you will notify them that another student in the class has been sick
 - What measures are you taking to limit exposure? - Students are concerned about their health. You can help calm these fears by listing what safe health practices you are implementing.
 - In the classroom, hand sanitizer provided by the university is located near the door. Seats are placed 6 feet apart. Seats will be assigned for the duration of the semester after the 1st day to limit exposure of students
- **How to provide assistance for those struggling students?**
 - Things to consider:
 - Mental health can be a serious challenge for undergraduate and graduate students. Especially during the COVID-19 outbreak, students are all feeling vastly increased stress.
 - Include a statement on the syllabus acknowledging that they may encounter stresses this semester and that you are empathetic.
 - Students can discuss their mental health with the instructors as much or as little as they are comfortable. Or the instructor can keep a policy of having at least one weekly individual checking with the students, preferably on video. It can help the students by providing them an opportunity to share their thoughts, fears, and concerns with the instructor. If someone could not attend these sessions, instructors can always offer other modes of checking-in, such as emails. The latter could be slower but certainly is as effective as the other one. Ensuring this, students feel their voice matters, and it helps them stay in a positive state of mind.
 - [Hokies' mental health and well-being is the top priority](#), and VT has a variety of resources available to hokies:
 1. [Cook Counseling Center](#)
 2. [Mental Health at Home](#)
 3. [Women's Center at Virginia Tech - Staying safe at home](#)
 4. [Veterinary social work blog](#)
 5. [Virtual support group for Chinese students](#)