Winterizing Your Course

There may be times during the semester when classes are cancelled due to inclement weather, a campus emergency, or personal illness. One way to conduct classes and connect with students during a disruption (without scheduling a make-up course) is by moving part of your class online. Below are some suggestions for how you might present information in place of a lecture along with some assignments and assessments that can work well online. Also included are suggestions for identifying appropriate resources.

**Presenting information**

1. Share your lecture notes; make sure to save them first as an accessible .PDF. You can upload them to LATTE via the “add resource or activity” function. See the section on Creating Accessible Materials below for directions.  
   Creating Accessible Materials

2. Share your accessible PowerPoint – if you use the notes feature, make your notes visible. Consider adding narration – this tutorial from Microsoft will provide directions. Alternatively, ask LTS for an account with Anthem for creating PowerPoint presentations with audio.

3. Create a short audio podcast (keep it under 15 minutes in length) where you: explain a difficult concept or technique, outline the key ideas, provide an overview to the readings, or provide a short lecture. Learn how to record a podcast (Audacity, Garage Band) Include a link to the transcript of your podcast to ensure that all students can access it.

4. Include a podcast created by someone else. (iTunesU, OEDB (Open Education Database) or type the topic + podcast into a search engine. A transcript should accompany Podcasts.

5. Create a short video to demonstrate a process or technique, perform an experiment, act out a role-play (BlueJeans, Zoom, or Anthem) Videos should be captioned and where possible, contain audio description. For more information, see the Accessibility resources at the end of this document.  
   Creating Accessible Materials

6. Show a short video clip: type topic + video into Google, iTunesU, Open University, TedTalks, TedED has video with suggested activities and questions. All official Ted Talks are captioned. All videos should be captioned, and where possible, contain audio description.

7. Make a screen capture or whiteboard capture of a demonstration of problem-solving, online techniques, or computer-based processes (Anthem, Awwapp) Screencasts should be captioned or accompanied by a transcript.

**Students Interacting with Content**

There are several ways that students can meet in groups to work collaboratively. You might consider one of the following: conferencing software such as ZOOM or BlueJeans, Google hangouts, Google Docs, or LATTE groups or discussion forums.

1. Post 1-2 problems related to concepts, formulas, or methods that students typically have the most difficulty with and require extensive analysis. Students post their solution; explain the method they used to reach it and why they chose it. Students comment on the solutions of others – why they think their solution is different and more/less effective.

2. Post a case study and assign students to teams to analyze it. Provide the standard guiding questions: What is/are the issue(s)? Based on what you have learned to date, how should the issues be resolved? What is your basis for this decision? Student groups post their responses; others comment and pose additional questions.
3. Ask students to post two articles (or links) with differing opinions on a topic. Have students work in teams to summarize both positions, provide their opinion and post two new digital resources that back that opinion.

4. Ask students to create a Google site or to use social bookmarking (Diigo) to provide curated/annotated original source materials and articles relevant to a key concept in the course. Share a link to the site through the Discussion Forum in LATTE or a Google doc; or invite other students into the Diigo group.

5. Break the class into teams. Assign each team a different question related to the course material that you planned to address in an upcoming class and ask them to summarize and share their response. Each team should review the summaries of the other groups and respond with a question or comment.

6. Using the topic(s) of an upcoming class session, have students provide information on the topic from some combination of social media, newspaper, popular press, or an academic article and write a short reflection evaluating the different audiences, goals and formats for the pieces of writing.

7. Using newspapers from diverse locations and/or time periods (http://news.google.com/newspapers or Brandeis Lib Guide http://brandeis.libguides.com/news), ask students to analyze differing reactions to a particular policy/event that relates to an upcoming topic in the course. The analysis can be shared and a discussion held.

8. Jigsaw: Break students into teams and assign each team a different topic from an upcoming week’s lesson. The group members are responsible for summarizing assigned and recommended readings along with identifying additional resources that expand on their topic. Then, restructure the groups so that each student is in a group with a new set of members. Each member of the new group is responsible for educating others on the topic they investigated within the original group. (Google presentation, PowerPoint)

Evaluating Students’ Knowledge

1. Have students create test questions for the material – select the best and have students answer in teams, sharing their answers with the entire class.

2. Students provide a summary of the readings for an upcoming class that is posted and shared with others as a PowerPoint or Google Slides.

3. Ask students to share a question or identify something that is unclear about a specific reading or set of readings or of the latest class. Assign teams to answer/clarify by including specific citations or new articles.

4. Students share their paper via Google Docs. Assign a peer editor or a team to review and ask questions.

5. Create a survey, knowledge quiz or test in LATTE or in Google forms. This is helpful in identifying concepts that may require more or less of your time in an upcoming class.

6. Have students prepare the script for a 60-second public service announcement on a key concept in the course.

7. Students create and post a policy statement based on key concepts in the course. Classmates pick one and create an argument with the policies as presented.

8. Have students do class presentations online instead of in class. Students can record presentations using BlueJeans or Zoom, which allows them to share visual content along with their presentation. Post links to the recording in a Discussion Forum in LATTE, and then have classmates provide feedback and ask questions.
Links to resources

Using Google Docs
- Faculty guide https://kb.brandeis.edu/display/LTS/Google+Faculty+Guide
- Google docs https://kb.brandeis.edu/display/LTS/Google+Docs
- Google sites https://kb.brandeis.edu/display/LTS/Google+Sites

Using LATTE
- Faculty Guide http://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/newlatte/faculty/index.html
- Setting up groups in LATTE: https://docs.moodle.org/26/en/Groups
- Create a discussion forum: http://lts.brandeis.edu/courses/newlatte/faculty/forums.html

Using Other Tools
- Ensemble, learn how to access and manage your media library on the campus-hosted video server
- Screen Capture software Anthem, Jing
- Software for editing sound recordings/podcasts (Audacity, Garage Band)
- Add narration to PowerPoint: record your slide show in PowerPoint
- “Lib guides” from the Brandeis Library: http://brandeis.libguides.com/
- Using Zoom
- Echo360 – Record class lectures now for use in future semesters.

Open Educational Resources (OER) Open resources vary in their accessibility. Please look for resources that have multiple ways to access the information; that can be used with only a keyboard; and do not require a mouse.
- Free resources for Economics, History, Philosophy http://www.theedvantage.org/FreeResources/
- Open Educational Resources (Textbooks, materials, videos, images) http://www.openwa.org/find-oer/
- Merlot (assignments, case studies, courses, articles, texts, reference material, simulations, etc.) http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm
- Ted Talks and Ted Ed TedTalks, TedED
- Video lectures from elsewhere http://freevideolectures.com/
- Interactive simulations (science and math) http://phet.colorado.edu/en/simulations/category/by-level/university

Creating Accessible Materials
When creating digital materials, it is important that they will be accessible to all of your students. Students with disabilities can access course curricula when the formatting of the course material allows use of assistive technology such as a screen reader or access to captions. Course material used for class or
uploaded in LATTE should allow this independent access by the student. Below are resources that should help you. If you have additional questions, please contact Academic Technology academictechnology@brandeis.edu or Beth Rodgers-Kay brodgers@brandeis.edu.

- When creating a file to upload to Latte, you will want to ensure that it is accessible. Please consult the guide to uploading accessible documents created by LTS. This guide has suggestions for working with .PDFs, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, video and audio files.

- Another source of information on how to make documents accessible can be found on the site created by the National Center on Disability and Access to Education.

- Blue Jeans is compatible with standard screen readers and can be accessed by the visually impaired. While it is possible for a visually impaired person to join a Blue Jeans call, it is recommended that they be invited to join the meeting via a standard web link (https://bluejeans.com/<meeting ID>) rather than via an automatically generated email from Blue Jeans, as it is difficult for a screen reader to identify the correct link. By using a standard web link for the meeting, it can be shared via an email, calendar invite, LATTE post or any other type of communication. Additional information about Blue Jeans accessibility features can be found at http://bluejeans.com/features/accessibility or contact webconferencing@brandeis.edu with any further questions.