Putting your course online in a hurry

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Many courses at McNeese meet face-to-face or hybrid, however, if you need to adjust a course online in a hurry, we have resources to help serve students who cannot make it to campus.

For anyone trying to move course content online, it can be challenging to translate what they already do well in a face-to-face classroom into an online classroom environment. The most important thing to consider is how to clearly communicate with students about expectations and course requirements. We recommend using the Moodle Announcements tool for whole-class communications, and to provide a predictable course structure for students. Below, are some models you might want to consider as you're getting started moving some or all of your course online.

For Lectures and Larger Courses → **Which traditionally use live classroom lecture, video, homework assignments, quiz, Live Q&A sessions, and other on campus types of activities.**

In a lecture-based class, the instructor will typically prepare lecture slides and a handful of check-in activities with students to ensure that everyone is making sense of the content. After class, students may have practice sets or other homework to complete. Students in larger classes may also have the opportunity to attend office hours with a course Teaching Assistant (TA) to ask questions and go over challenging material.

How would this class format work online? Consider this possible model as a place to start: **Lecture Video. Homework Quiz. Live Q&A Sessions Online.**

1. **Create several modules** in the content area of your Moodle course to contain all the materials and activities for your class meetings. Make sure to name the modules in a way that its contents are easily recognizable to students. Add a description to the module selecting the "Turn editing on" button. Then select the pencil next to the Module name to rename it. To add the description to the module, select the gear icon below the module name and then add the description to the summary text box. Once the module is renamed and the description has been added, outline clearly for students the specific steps they will need to complete the activities in the class meeting by adding activities and resources to the module. What will the need to watch? Read? Complete? Submit? Discuss? etc.
2. **Build your video lectures** using the BigBlueButton tool in Moodle to create a video in which you talk over your lecture slides. A couple of important tips for making educational videos:
   ○ In general, breaking up a longer lecture into several videos of no more than 10 minutes long is a good idea. It is both easier for you to produce as the instructor, and easier for your students to watch. Longer videos with no breaks between are just not as effective.
   ○ Consider adding captions to your video to make it even more accessible to students. Captions can be edited as well. This knowledgebase has articles to recommend how you can quickly transcribe and add captions for your videos.
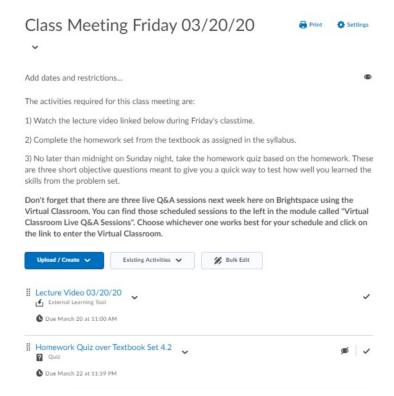   ○ Add your finished video lecture or a URL to the video in the module.

You could also consider the following online classroom options:

Create quizzes as check-ins. If there are typically independent homework assignments after the lecture, giving students a way to check in and make sure that they are progressing on the homework can be useful. Create a short, low-stakes quiz after each homework assignment and then add a combination of True/False, multiple choice, and

other objective questions to ensure that your students are getting what they need from the homework assignment. For this type of quiz, err on the side of shorter and lower stakes. This is not a test of student knowledge, just a check-in to let the instructor and student see progress.

Finally, schedule with Microsoft Teams or BigBlueButton a virtual classroom meeting for regular office hours or Q&A sessions where students can talk one-on-one or in small groups with a Teaching Assistant (TA) or the professor. Creating one separate module just for virtual classroom meetings might help your students locate these more easily. After you create the virtual classroom meeting in either Microsoft Teams or BigBlueButton, add the activities or meeting URLs to the module. Then, on the day and time of the meeting, click on the meeting you want the students to join. Adding activities and URL links in your course that will take students directly to the meeting room. Consider creating a link for each one of the virtual classroom meetings you plan to hold during the semester.

In the end, your Moodle module might look something like this:

For Seminars and Discussion-Based Courses → Which use Readings, Journals, and Live Discussion On Campus.

In a small seminar, students will probably read one or more resources before class, think through how the materials relate to themselves, to the major themes of the course, and to other course materials. Then, students come to class prepared to make sense of what they have read with the group. There may be a bit of lecture from the professor and a lot of discussion among the seminar participants.
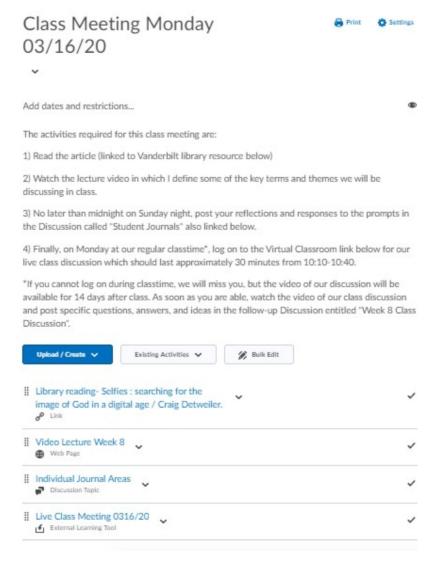
How would this class format work online? Consider this possible model as a place to start: **Read. Journal. Live Discussion Online.**

1. **Create several modules** in the content area of your Moodle course to contain all the materials and activities for your class meetings. Make sure to name the modules in a way that its contents are easily recognizable to students. Add a description to the module selecting the "Turn editing on" button. Then select the pencil next to the Module name to rename it. To add the description to the module, select the gear icon below the module name and then add the description to the summary text box. Once the module is renamed and the description has been added, outline clearly for students the specific steps they will need to complete the activities in the class meeting by adding activities and resources to the module. What will the need to watch? Read? Complete?

Submit? Discuss? etc.

2. **Add any required readings** or other materials to your course. You can upload a document or other file by selecting the "Turn editing on" button. At the bottom of each module in Moodle, you will select the "add an activity or resource" link. From this menu, you can link to library resources or online materials like websites. You can also create a quick webcam video recording using BigBlueButton and giving students some of the supplemental information that would normally come out in class.

3. **Create space for thinking and reflection** with a private discussion group for each student or create an assignment where students can submit their answers to prompts about the reading and video before they come to the live class for the discussion. These private submissions can be submitted for a grade in the grade book, or the instructor can just scan them before class to make sure students are all on the right track.

4. **Finally, schedule with Microsoft Teams or BigBlueButton a virtual classroom meeting** for the day and time your class normally meets. This will provide your students with a link to enter the virtual classroom space for your class time. We strongly recommend printing off a handy quick start guide on hosting a virtual classroom meeting and keeping it next to you as you host the meeting in case any questions come up. Instructions and guides are found in the student and faculty knowledgebases on the Moodle taskbar (Faculty Help > Get Help; and also Student Help > Get Help).

In the end, your Moodle course module might look something like this:

Class Meeting Monday 03/16/20

🖨 Print   ⚙ Settings

⌄

Add dates and restrictions...   👁

The activities required for this class meeting are:

1) Read the article (linked to Vanderbilt library resource below)

2) Watch the lecture video in which I define some of the key terms and themes we will be discussing in class.

3) No later than midnight on Sunday night, post your reflections and responses to the prompts in the Discussion called "Student Journals" also linked below.

4) Finally, on Monday at our regular classtime*, log on to the Virtual Classroom link below for our live class discussion which should last approximately 30 minutes from 10:10-10:40.

*If you cannot log on during classtime, we will miss you, but the video of our discussion will be available for 14 days after class. As soon as you are able, watch the video of our class discussion and post specific questions, answers, and ideas in the follow-up Discussion entitled "Week 8 Class Discussion".

| Upload / Create ⌄ | Existing Activities ⌄ | ✏ Bulk Edit |

⠿ Library reading- Selfies : searching for the image of God in a digital age / Craig Detweiler.
   🔗 Link   ⌄   ✓

⠿ Video Lecture Week 8 ⌄
   🌐 Web Page   ✓

⠿ Individual Journal Areas ⌄
   💬 Discussion Topic   ✓

⠿ Live Class Meeting 0316/20 ⌄
   📲 External Learning Tool   ✓

For Other Kinds of Courses:

If neither of these two formats will work for you, here are a few other ways you might be able to move some of your course content online:

- **Expand your use of online textbook resources or other platforms you already use:** Many courses, particularly intro courses and surveys, require a textbook from a publisher that has developed its own online platform. It is possible that you are already using some online resources that come with the textbook. If your students are already familiar with the platform and the resources are there, consider expanding your use of these resources. Contact your textbook rep to see what may be possible and to ask if their online platform integrates with Moodle.
- **Use the Discussion Tool as a Text or Video Discussion Board:** Some courses just need more extended time for discussion. Consider using a discussion board to get students communicating asynchronously. You can set up a discussion board to be a large group discussion, you can put students in smaller discussion groups in BigBlueButton for a more manageable experience, or you can even give students an individual space for journaling or one-on-one communication with the instructor. One of the coolest features of the Discussion tool is how instructors and students can use text, audio, video, images, and web links in their posts. For a video discussion board, participants click to post, then instead of typing text into the text box, they record and add a Video Note to the Discussion text box. The result is a nice change from a text-heavy online course but doesn't require students to all meet at the same time like a virtual classroom meeting.
- **For labs, studios, and performance-based courses**, your hands-on approach to your discipline will undoubtedly require a unique mix of tools. It might be useful to think about what parts of your typical classroom experience are essential in the event you need to move your teaching online. For example, although hands-on work is far preferable, can hands-on work be replaced with carefully filmed demos followed by student reflection? Are there any non-essential activities that can be eliminated or replaced with less ideal, but also useful activities? For example, moving from a live performance to a filmed performance?

Tips for Transitioning Online and Keeping your Sanity

In case of any kind of emergency that may keep you or your students from campus, it's important to remember that the tools you need to teach online are already in place. For instructors moving course content online in a hurry, please also remember to:

1) **Keep expectations realistic.** Good online courses take a long time to build, but even given a week or two, we can create a useful, short-term experience for our students. Also, students may have unreliable access to technology when not on campus, which might require some flexibility from us as instructors. There will be some bumps in the road, but we'll work through them together.

2) **Capitalize on technologies you are already using plus one or two new ones.** No one can learn AND effectively use six new tools today! Start by doing more of what you already do. If you need to use new technologies, give yourself plenty of time to read up and play around with the new tool.

3) **Get help.** Connect with colleagues who are faced with similar challenges or similar kinds of courses. If you have questions about any Moodle tools, check out our articles in this Faculty Knowledgebase or reach out for support by phone or email to computer services or eLearning departments. Contact information for both departments is located on this knowledgebase homepage.

We have included additional articles to help with classroom management strategies to this knowledgebase. Also, check out recommendations for setting up your Moodle course.