

Academic Continuity Guidance – Fall 2020

Academic and College Policies

Academic Calendar

The CollegeNow Calendar for the Fall 2020 semester can be found here:

<https://www.tompkinscortland.edu/academics/timeline>

At this point, deadlines have not changed from how they are usually set. Instructors may begin teaching classes before the class start date listed on the calendar.

Registration and Certificates of Residency

Detailed information on registration and certificate of residency will be shared separately. Enrollment for credit will still be through the online registration portal on the CollegeNow website, and auditing students will need to complete the “paper” form (which can be filled out electronically). Contact CollegeNow for registration and login assistance through email (collegenow@tompkinscortland.edu), phone (607-844-6503, 607-844-8222 x4396, x4311, x4328), or our new text-only number (will be posted on our webpage in Sept). Requirements for Certificates of Residency will be noted on the application materials once we have that information from each County’s finance department.

Changes to Registration/Grading Status

Audits

In general, students must be registered for credit or audit by the registration verification deadline. If there is a significant change to the instruction of the course (either for the whole class or for individual students), including but not limited to a change in instructor, teaching modality, or access to course materials, we will consider late changes from credit to audit.

Withdrawals

While we are not officially extending the deadline for students to withdraw from a class, there will be no WF grades this semester. Therefore, for practical purposes, you have until January 19, 2021 to withdraw students with a WP and not harm their GPA. Both W and WP affects a student’s credits earned/attempted ratio, which hurts academic standing if the percent goes below 50%.

Incompletes

Any requests for incompletes must be received by the end of the course (when grades are due). Do not request an incomplete unless there is a plan approved with the student for how the

coursework will be completed. All work and grades must be submitted by 4 weeks into the next semester else the incomplete reverts to an F grade. Requests for an incomplete must be submitted via email to Rhonda at rmk@tompkinscortland.edu.

Attendance Policies

We are asking instructors to offer flexibility for students during this semester and consider multiple ways for students to demonstrate attendance or participation. There is still great potential for students' lives to have even more significant upheaval than usual because of COVID-19. We expect that instructors make reasonable arrangements to work with students who miss class for valid reasons, especially when they are able to inform instructors ahead of time of the missed class. Also, some students may need to miss face-to-face classes because of quarantine or illness. Please assure students that you will work with them, as that may help ease stress/worry/anxiety during a troubling time.

Instructor Absence

We understand that instructors may experience prolonged absences. CollegeNow must be notified of such absences and provided information regarding the long-term substitute teacher, as would be expected under "normal" circumstances of extended absence pre-COVID (such as family leave).

Due to the fluidity of the current situation, the possibility that schools may need to close on short notice, and the likelihood that instructors and/or students may need to be absent for extended periods, instructors are encouraged to develop a plan for how instruction can be delivered online (even if you had planned to teach in-person).

Student Conduct and Health Requirements

These are determined at the local level, by your schools, including how to handle situations in which a student refuses to wear a mask or social distance in a classroom.

Online Learning Management Systems and Video-Conferencing Platforms

The College is not requiring a specific platform be used for CollegeNow courses. While we will continue to provide Blackboard for all CollegeNow sections, you may choose to use the platform that your school provides (examples include Google Classroom, Schoology, Canvas, etc.).

Within the online platform, instructors should post the course outline, an up-to-date list (or calendar) of assignments with deadlines, links to any live online class sessions or videos, and appropriate class content (notes, PowerPoints, assignments). Students should also be able to monitor their grades regularly throughout the course, whether through the online platform or other tool.

Additionally, there are many video conferencing programs, such as Google Meets, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Both Google Meets and Microsoft Teams feature accessibility tools, including live-captioning. Microsoft PowerPoint and [Google Slides](#) both have options for captioning of the instructor's speech (for Powerpoint, it's the Presentation Translator Plug-in). Teams is adding enhanced features (similar to Zoom), including breakout rooms.

Video (Camera) Requirements for Students in Live Online Classes

We recognize that it may be important for students to be able to be seen while in a remote class session. However, we ask that instructors be clear about such requirements and have rationales for their existence. Before crafting your policies, consider the following. First, consider if the camera is absolutely necessary for students to complete learning outcomes of the course. Second, consider if it is vital for cameras to always be on or is it needed only for specific moments/assignments, and then consider appropriate times when exceptions can be made. Third, some students may be uncomfortable showing where they are viewing classroom sessions; consider making sure students are aware of ways to blur their background or show an enhanced background. Fourth, some students may lose bandwidth and need to turn off their camera (as this often helps when video-platforms lag) for valid reasons. Again, please make your camera policies clear for students.

Class Recordings

For courses with live meetings, whether in-person or via video conference, we encourage instructors to make recordings of classes and post them in a timely manner. Instructors who do not record class sessions should provide appropriate alternatives for students to make up class-work where appropriate, especially if students become ill.

Office Hours

We encourage instructors to have “Office Hours” available to students. If no office hours are held, then instructors must clearly communicate to students how to contact the instructor for help and questions, including if there are only certain hours that the instructor will respond (such as Mon-Fri 8-5). Generally, it is expected that instructors respond within 1 -2 business days. Some instructors find that setting aside time before and after class meetings is helpful for fielding student questions.

Site Visits

We plan to conduct “site visits” in order to help maintain connections between instructors and faculty liaisons. These visits should be structured around what works best for the instructor and liaison, whether in-person or remote, live or watching a recording afterwards; reviewing course materials and student assessments may also be acceptable. The priority for liaisons is to “visit” with all new CollegeNow instructors first, and then with those who have not been visited in the past 3 years.

Final Exams

Not all courses require final exams. Refer to the [Master Course Syllabus](#) for your course if you are unsure whether there is a final exam requirement. Final exams may be given in a synchronous or asynchronous manner, in-person or online, with proctoring or not. CollegeNow will provide notification if any changes to final exam requirements are approved by departments.

Student Course Evaluations

We are still planning to administer end-of-course evaluations through SurveyMonkey, though the format and expectations may be simplified.

Course Modalities

Definitions

Asynchronous Instruction: Direct instruction occurs online and not at a specified meeting time.

Synchronous Instruction: Direct instruction takes place at a specified meeting time; synchronous instruction may be in-person or online.

Class Time

Per SUNY guidelines, classes are supposed to contain the equivalent of 750 minutes of instruction per semester per credit. (Most lab and studio courses should have the equivalent of 1000 minutes per credit.) Thus, courses that are 100% asynchronous should create the equivalent of 750 minutes (or 1000 min for lab/studio courses) of class instruction per credit. Classes that are part asynchronous should create the equivalent minutes of class instruction to make up for what is not occurring in synchronous meetings. Classes are also supposed to contain as much as 1500 minutes of supplementary work per credit (time students spend on assignments, studying, preparing for class, etc.). This is easier said than done, and once a class become asynchronous in some way, the counting of minutes tends to become moot. That said, it is helpful to keep these in mind as you structure your course.

Considerations for Asynchronous or Synchronous Blended Classes

Minutes:

Synchronous classes meet required minutes through set meeting times. Asynchronous courses meet those minutes through online instruction. Blended courses mix those together. There is no one-size-fits-all formula for converting synchronous minutes/hours of instruction to asynchronous work.

Learning Outcomes:

When converting a course from synchronous to one that includes asynchronous work, please focus on meeting the learning outcomes of the course rather than accounting for minutes per se. Furthermore, we are not asking you to require more work of students in a given semester when crafting a blended class. We are asking that the format of the work be changed.

Flexibility:

Thus, focus on which aspects of a course could be moved to an online format that used to take place in a synchronous meeting. We trust your judgement in this matter, especially as it relates to meeting learning outcomes. Instructors, generally, have wide latitude to meet outcomes within the course modality for their class. Class sessions may include a wide variety of practices: discussions, Q+A, small group work, check-ins on progress, conferences, lecture (when appropriate), etc.

Instructors should contact their [Faculty Liaison](#) if there are questions regarding acceptable changes to assessment and instruction.

More Detailed Overview of the Models

Blended In-Person Synchronous and Online Asynchronous

Class instruction is a blend of in-person (set meeting times) and online asynchronous (instruction not occurring at a specified meeting time).

A common example is a 3-credit course that meets on one or two days per week at the school; additional instruction and assignments occur through an online platform such as Google Classroom, Blackboard, Canvas, Schoology, etc. Students attend class meetings and perform work and assignments outside of the class meetings. Students are expected to participate in the online environment heavily.

For courses that include labs and other hands-on activities, the in-person time will likely focus on such activities. Because that time is limited, consider using the class's remote meetings, videos, or learning platform to go over directions, demonstrate equipment or procedures, review data, prepare reports, and anything else that does not need to occur in-person.

Students must have ready access to Internet/wifi and computers to perform class work.

Blended Live Online Synchronous and Online Asynchronous

Class instruction is a blend of live online class/labs (set meeting times) and online asynchronous (instruction not occurring at a specified meeting time).

For example, a 3-credit course might meet on one or two days per week online via Google Meets/Teams/Zoom; additional instruction and assignments occur through an online platform such as Google Classroom, Blackboard, Canvas, Schoology, etc. This type of class typically requires attending class meetings (either live or demonstrating participation by watching and responding to a recording of the class) and performing work and assignments outside of the class meetings. Students are expected to participate in the online environment heavily.

Some courses, such as those in the arts, sciences, or technology fields, have a significant hands-on component that makes 100% online instruction more complex due to labs, studios, software, or equipment requirements. Faculty liaisons are preparing recommendations (such as software alternatives, demo/simulation sites, and "remote-friendly" labs); this information is being shared via Blackboard and email (and sometimes by video conference) as it is available. Please contact your [liaison](#) or Victoria Zeppelin (vcz@tompkinscortland.edu) for guidance if you are unsure about acceptable adjustments for a fully remote course.

Students must have ready access to Internet/wifi and computers to perform class work. In addition, schools need to assure that students have access at home to any special software, hardware, or other materials that may be needed for their courses; this might require sending kits to homes, expanding software licensing to include student computers, etc.

Online Synchronous Asynchronous

Class instruction is 100% online asynchronous (instruction not occurring at a specified meeting time). Instructors post lessons, assignments, videos, and other course material in their online platform (such as Google Classroom, Blackboard, Canvas, Schoology, etc.). Students are expected to actively participate in the online environment and meet deadlines, but there are no specific class sessions they are required to attend. Instructors may utilize video conference sessions in this modality, but they are not requiring synchronous use by students. Instructors may make themselves available for class help/instruction (beyond typical office hours) at their discretion.

Some courses, such as those in the arts, sciences, or technology fields, have a significant hands-on component that makes 100% online instruction more complex due to labs, studios, software, or equipment requirements. Faculty liaisons are preparing recommendations (such as software alternatives, demo/simulation sites, and “remote-friendly” labs); this information is being shared via Blackboard and email (and sometimes by video conference) as it is available. Please contact your [liaison](#) or Victoria Zeppelin (vcz@tompkinscortland.edu) for guidance if you are unsure about acceptable adjustments for a fully remote course.

Students must have ready access to Internet/wifi and computers to perform class work. In addition, schools need to assure that students have access at home to any special software, hardware, or other materials that may be needed for their courses; this might require sending kits to homes, expanding software licensing to include student computers, etc.

In-Person Meetings

Class instruction is 100% in-person for all class/lab minutes. This is the closest to “normal” so I won’t be addressing any specific needs of these classes, except to note that instructors should be considering how to address absences (of the instructor or students) and the potential need to switch to remote instruction during the year.