

# Tips for Designing Remote Fall 2022 Courses

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## ABOUT

This resource aims to support instructors with effective remote teaching and learning during the Fall 2022 semester, with a focus on developing courses with available technology like [Canvas](#) in mind. This work is [grounded in research](#) and supported by [evidence from our own community](#). This guide aims to:

- Help you consider the content and assessment structures of your course
- Consider and select the modalities and pedagogies for the course
- Connect you with MIT-related resources

This resource highlights general practices that will work for a large portion of the MIT community; however, if you have a specific need or circumstance that isn't met by these strategies or you have further questions, feel free to reach out to the Open Learning Residential Education team at [ol-residential@mit.edu](mailto:ol-residential@mit.edu).

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## 1) ESTABLISH COURSE GOALS, CONTENT, & COMMUNITY

It is almost impossible to recreate residential work in an online structure. Instead you might...

### Start by reworking your course goals to take advantage of remote instruction affordances:

- Ask yourself and the instructional team "What are the most important things my students should know and be able to do when done with my course?" and structure the course content to align with the answer to that question.
- Regularly present the course goals to students and connect the individual modules and course content to them.

- A key learning from student survey results is that students value opportunities and options for direct interaction with instructors. During remote instruction or when in-person interactions are not an option, such interactions can be facilitated through technology like [Zoom](#), [Slack](#), and [Piazza](#). Related to this, set communication norms and expectations for the course in your syllabus and/or outlined on your Canvas site, and be clear about how students should contact teaching team members and each other.

### Consider assessments as opportunities to learn:

- Having frequent low-stakes assessments distributed over the course allow students to reflect on their own learning trajectory while working to reduce anxiety. Assessments can be facilitated through [Canvas](#), [Gradescope](#), and [MITx](#).
- [Authentic assessments and assignments](#) like projects, papers, case analyses, performances, presentations, and other non-exam assessments allow students to demonstrate complex understanding and application of concepts.
- Providing clear, timely, specific, improvement-focused feedback helps students to master skills and content. Canvas's [SpeedGrader](#) and [Gradescope](#) can be used to give actionable feedback.

### Create opportunities to build a community of learners:

- Consider how course activities can be reworked to allow students to come together to collaborate and learn together. These social learning opportunities are a key part of learning that happens on campus and can be supported remotely through tools such as [Zoom](#) (breakout rooms), [Canvas](#) (Discussions), [Piazza](#), [Slack](#), and [Perusall](#).

## 2) ENGAGING LEARNERS

**Modalities range from asynchronous to synchronous:** Consider what the correct mix of this will look like for your content and the way you want students to engage in learning.

- Asynchronous materials and videos can be a powerful resource that students can revisit and engage with when they are most ready to learn. If you're interested in reusing materials you created in a previous term, particularly videos, check out [this resource](#) with considerations for reuse.
- Record live lectures on Zoom and provide the recording to students via Panopto (which integrates with Canvas). Options include [classroom lecture capture](#) and [lightweight lecture capture](#) in certain rooms, and [self-service lecture capture](#).
  - Stand-alone long lectures often do not result in the desired content retention. Breaking up these recordings with opportunities for active engagement (i.e. [embedding questions into the video](#) or asking students to post a response to a prompt on discussion board) can produce better learning outcomes.
  - Provide students opportunities to check their understanding of asynchronously delivered materials and reflect on how that understanding is connected with course goals.
  - Take advantage of the limited synchronous sessions to offer students the opportunity to [actively engage](#) with course content instead of simply passively receiving information.
  - Build in a mix of modalities that build on and complement one another. How can you reinforce content explored during a synchronous discussion session with questions in an asynchronous discussion forum or vice versa? Providing students with multiple opportunities to engage with course content can deepen their understanding and provide a more equitable learning experience.

### Set clear and consistent expectations for students:

- It can be helpful to set routines around the modalities, activities, and assignments in the course. Make sure students know what to expect out of each type of session, how they will need to prepare in order to effectively engage, and how what they do will be connected with course expectations. For example, letting students know when TAs will be available for live Q&A on [Slack](#) can promote better and more regular engagement.
- [Centralize course materials](#) on your course site so faculty, TAs, and students can easily keep track of and navigate to materials. Additionally, setting clear due dates on the course site for when students should complete asynchronous assignments will increase the likelihood that they keep pace with the material.

### Pedagogy ahead of tools:

- Build your course to take advantage of good pedagogy and student engagement strategies ahead of trying to utilize every technology available. Using just a handful of key features in Zoom, [Canvas and tools integrated with Canvas](#) allow for the enactment of good pedagogy.
- Effective online pedagogies share many similarities with [quality residential approaches](#) and are centered on getting students to actively and critically engage with content.

## 3) LOTS OF SUPPORTS EXIST

- Colleagues (including TAs and Admins) from your department make up a vital community to help share ideas, create materials, and enact high quality instruction.
- Many departments have [Digital Learning Lab \(DLL\) scientists and fellows](#) who have extensive experience in this type of work and can engage in conversations with individuals and departments.
- Links to supports from [TLL](#) and [OL](#) can be found on

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & SUPPORT**

- Teaching and Learning Lab (TLL) Get Ready to Teach Remote Course: <https://canvas.mit.edu/courses/5377>
- TA Days: <https://tll.mit.edu/programming/grad-student-programming/ta-days/>
- MIT Canvas Resources for Instructors: <https://canvas.mit.edu/courses/3156>

**From [IS&T](#) Knowledge Base:**

- [Canvas Resources](#)
- [Panopto Resources](#)
- [Piazza Resources](#)
- [Gradescope Resources](#)
- [Slack Resources](#)
- [Zoom Resources](#)
- [Perusall Resources](#)
- [MITx Residential Resources](#)

**Examples of Innovations in Remote Teaching from MIT Instructors:**

- [Residential Digital Innovations](#)
- Past [xTalks](#) on [Canvas Tools for Teaching & Learning](#), [Canvas Tools for Assessment](#), [Slack](#), [Lightboard](#), [Assessments & Assignments](#) for remote learning, and [Building Community](#) in a remote classroom
- [TLL's Fresh Perspectives series](#), featuring instructor insights on teaching remotely

**You can also get support from:**

- [DLL scientists & fellows](#)
- [OL Residential Education team](#)
- [TLL's Get Ready to Teach Remote site](#)
- [Tips for Remote Teaching \(by students, for instructors\)](#)
- [Science of Remote Learning](#)

For questions or to schedule a consultation, please contact [Aaron Kessler](#) or [Lauren Totino](#).