Course Guidelines for Spring 2021

History of This Document

At the end of June 2020, the Deans’ Office sent information to faculty about teaching formats for Fall 2020. That document shared provisional guidelines for online and hybrid courses that the deans prepared in consultation with department chairs, program directors, and the 2019-2020 Curriculum Committee. The document indicated that the deans would work with department chairs and the Curriculum Committee to develop a comprehensive set of guidelines for online and hybrid courses that would be distributed to faculty members over the summer.

This document provides these more detailed guidelines. The deans prepared an initial draft and forwarded it to the 2020-2021 Curriculum Committee for them to revise and approve in light of their statutory role of overseeing the College curriculum. The Curriculum Committee revised the document, sought feedback from department chairs and program directors, and produced a final version.

On August 10, 2020, the College announced that all instruction for Fall 2020 would occur online. The Curriculum Committee subsequently revised the document a final time to reflect the solely online format for courses. For future reference, it is retained as an appendix content specific to in-person and hybrid courses.

Some faculty requested that the guidelines be revised to include specific language they could either use verbatim or tweak appropriately for their specific courses. The Curriculum Committee drafted and approved sample language for required and recommended syllabus information and added these statements to Appendix A. The updated document was shared with faculty on August 31, 2020.

In preparation for Spring 2021 instruction, the Curriculum Committee reviewed the guidelines and added information about expectations for in-person courses and courses that would be offered primarily online but which also might include occasional in-person components. The Curriculum Committee shared the draft with department chairs, program directors, and the AGC for further feedback and incorporated their feedback into this version prior to sending it to all faculty on December 22, 2020.

During discussions about these guidelines, faculty members expressed a longer standing concern that syllabi have become overburdened by required and optional policy statements. One suggestion was that College-wide policy information should be placed in a central location. Students would be required each semester to read and certify that they understood this information, and faculty members and syllabi could refer students to this location for further
information. This would also ensure that policies are up-to-date. Faculty members would continue to be encouraged to discuss these policies as appropriate on their syllabi and during class. The Curriculum Committee plans to pursue this suggestion, but the committee also recognized that it would not be feasible to implement this approach before the start of the Spring 2021 semester and that, in the meantime, it would continue to offer the enclosed guidelines.

Faculty should note that the information contained herein are “guidelines.” They are not absolute requirements. They leave room for flexibility under differing circumstances. They will not be used as the basis for evaluating faculty performance. No one set of recommendations can adequately account for the needs of every faculty member and every course. They are meant to outline the Curriculum Committee’s sense of best practices and provide a reference framework for course construction, especially for the different learning environments we are experiencing during 2020-2021. They are highly recommended, but not meant to be considered as mandatory.

Overarching Guidelines For All Courses

Spring 2021 courses will be offered fully in person, fully online, or primarily online with some in-person components. These courses will continue to reflect key principles central to the excellence of the Holy Cross learning experience, including:

- sustained interaction between students and faculty and between different students in the class in order to create an intellectual community in the class;
- substantive engagement with course materials to broaden students’ disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary knowledge and perspectives;
- a range of assignments to develop students’ skills and to assess students’ learning, as appropriate for the course goals and format;
- opportunities that allow students to integrate learning across courses.

Contact Time: Spring 2021 courses should follow our normal guidelines, as stated in the College catalog. Each one-unit course has 150 minutes per week of required “contact” time for each student plus work to be completed outside of class that is expected to take 8-10 hours. This structure conforms to the federal credit hour regulation, with which we must comply to maintain accreditation. For in-person courses, “contact time” generally consists of regularly scheduled face-to-face class sessions. In an online or primarily online format with some in-person components, “contact time” may include both required synchronous and required asynchronous components. Synchronous components should primarily include meetings of students (or groups of students) with the faculty member. They may also include required meetings between groups of students. Asynchronous components that students are required to

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1 For details, please refer to the College catalog section on “Holy Cross Course Credit” under “Academic Guidelines” (https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/). See also NECHE's “Policy on Credits and Degrees” (https://www.neche.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Pp111_Policy_On_Credits-And-Degrees.pdf).
complete may include the viewing of presentations or engaging in other activities via Canvas or Moodle. These activities should, to the extent possible, reflect the academic expectations we would have for the time spent in class.

**Synchronous Interaction in Online or Primarily Online Courses:** As a general rule, at least half of the required contact time (i.e., 75 out of 150 minutes per week) in online courses or courses that are primarily online with some in-person components should be synchronous. Department of Education and NECHE guidelines require that online courses entail “regular and substantive faculty-student and student-student interaction” and that this interaction is consistent and initiated by the instructor. While a variety of possible course structures can meet these requirements, it is clear that Holy Cross courses cannot consist solely of asynchronous components; furthermore, office hours alone do not provide sufficient engagement between faculty and students.

Moreover, student survey responses about spring and fall courses indicate a strong desire for regular synchronous components that allow them to directly engage with the faculty member, as well as with one another. Faculty may encourage students to use Zoom or Google Meet to facilitate this latter interaction.

**Online capability:** All classes must be designed so they can move fully online at any point during the semester.

**Recording of Class Sessions:** Some students have accommodations arranged through the Office of Accessibility Services that require the recording of class sessions as a matter of ADA compliance. In courses in which no student requires recording of classes as an accommodation, faculty members may decide whether or not to record class sessions. Faculty might, for example, decide to record synchronous sessions of online or in-person courses so that the material can be accessible to students who are in different time zones, who encounter technological difficulties, who cannot attend class for health or other reasons, or who might benefit from the opportunity to review the material later. Alternatively, faculty might determine that recording would interfere with or inhibit discussion for a variety of reasons, including the nature of the topics being covered or the format of the discussion activities. Faculty members

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3 A summary of selected results from the Fall 2020 student survey on remote teaching and learning is available here: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BRniOyEqWKsPZ1M7-2atnzyD-EdxAhnB/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BRniOyEqWKsPZ1M7-2atnzyD-EdxAhnB/view).
4 For information about academic accommodations and online courses, see: [https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/covid19/academic_accommodations_and_virtual_learning.pdf](https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/covid19/academic_accommodations_and_virtual_learning.pdf). The Office of Accessibility Services has prepared a video for faculty about their services, the process through which students request and receive academic accommodations, and how OAS has addressed faculty concerns about the recording of classes: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRCpVlSqKB8&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRCpVlSqKB8&feature=youtu.be).
5 Recorded class materials and other materials that are personally identifiable (including, but not limited to, a photo) must be used and stored in a manner consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”): [https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/deansoffice/160819_ferpa_summary_for_faculty.pdf](https://www.holycross.edu/sites/default/files/files/deansoffice/160819_ferpa_summary_for_faculty.pdf). Moodle, Canvas, and Panpoto are by default configured to be FERPA compliant.
who make a decision not to record should be prepared to find other ways to provide access to the materials for students who might be ill or otherwise not able to attend class.

For synchronous class sessions that will be recorded, the College will provide technological assistance for the recording itself and to make the recording available to students in a secure manner. Students will be required to sign a written policy regarding the appropriate use of these recordings. The administration of these forms will be handled by the College. Videos of class sessions will be made available in such a way that they cannot be downloaded, saved, or shared with individuals who are not enrolled in the class.

The syllabus and online course materials should inform students about the class recording policy. Please note that Massachusetts law forbids secret recording; if a class is to be recorded, those present should be notified. We strongly recommend providing this information on syllabi, with reminders during class sessions as appropriate. Suggested statements for syllabi that faculty may adapt as needed are as follows:

For Faculty Not Planning to Record Class Meetings:

“PLEASE NOTE that, consistent with applicable federal and state law, this course may be video/audio recorded as an accommodation only with permission from the Office of Accessibility Services.”

For Faculty Planning to Record Class Meetings:

"Lectures may be recorded and made available to students registered for this class using the [insert capture system used]. Duplication or redistribution of video capture recordings by any other party without the consent of the course instructor is prohibited.”

Assessments: Each course must include multiple assessment opportunities over the course of the semester. For in-person or hybrid classes, faculty members will need to be prepared to offer online assessments to students who are participating remotely. As a reminder, the Curriculum Committee generally recommends that a final exam or other final assessment, such as a research paper or project, be worth no more than 35% of a student’s grade for the course. Required course activities should not be conducted and required work should not be due during College breaks or days with no classes scheduled across the College. For courses scheduled to meet more than once per week, the Curriculum Committee strongly recommends that assignments not be due and tests not be administered in the class session immediately following a break.

Learning Management System: Syllabi and other course materials should be accessible online via Canvas or Moodle. As you design your course, please refer to this checklist of course components that the Digital Teaching and Learning Task Force prepared during Summer 2020.

6For more information, see https://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/massachusetts-recording-law.
Syllabus requirements: The Faculty Handbook provides general information about what should be included on course syllabi. Each semester, the Curriculum Committee, in consultation with the Class Deans, provides faculty with more detailed information and suggested language for required and optional College and course policies that should be included on syllabi. The Curriculum Committee also provides guidance about required and optional syllabus and course components for new course proposals. Faculty should expect to include the following elements on their syllabi:

Required course-specific information

- Professor’s office hours and location (Zoom or other virtual location information for remote office hours), email address, and means for communicating with the professor
- A course outline that includes a list of readings and/or schedule or list of topics and activities
- Details regarding due dates for assignments/assessments
- Details regarding grade breakdown for assignments/assessments
- A brief description of the purpose of the course
- Both the specific course goals and the general learning objectives; these may be particular to the instructor, or they may be set at the departmental level

Required College-wide information (See Appendix A for sample statements providing this information)

- A statement on Academic Integrity (with appropriate link; for additional guidance on academic integrity in online learning environments, please consult this guide on course assessment and exams)
- A statement on Student Attendance at Class and Excused Absence Policy (with the appropriate link)
- A statement on Requests for Reasonable Accommodations (with appropriate link) and available resources through the Office of Accessibility Services (with appropriate link)
- A statement about Recording of Classes (see suggested language in Remote Access and Recording of Class Sessions)

Recommended information

- A statement on Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting (see Appendix A)
- A statement on Diversity and Inclusion (see Appendix A)
- A statement on textbook affordability (with an appropriate list of available resources; see Appendix A)
- A statement on study strategies and resources for students (as appropriate)

Office Hours: Office hours for Spring 2021 will generally be online; this applies even if both the professor and student could meet on campus in person. At this time we are recommending that faculty who wish to hold in-person office hours do so in an on-campus location other than

7 https://lms.holycross.edu/hcmoodle/pluginfile.php/33563/course/section/13115/Syllabi.pdf
the faculty member’s office in order to observe physical distancing and the special cleaning protocols that cannot extend to faculty offices, as recommended by the Holy Cross epidemiological consultants. Seminar rooms and other spaces may be made available for this purpose. Even if the course is fully in-person, the faculty member should hold at least some of their office hours online. In the spring 2020 surveys, students indicated that they tended not to reach out to faculty if scheduled office hours were not regularly held. They also reported that they found “live” virtual consultation with their professors more effective than consulting by email. Thus, faculty members are expected to have specified office (or “student”) hours each week, as well as to be available by appointment. Since departments have differing standards for the number of office hours, faculty should consult with chairs and/or use their best judgment in configuring sufficient numbers of office hours (both scheduled/drop-in and by appointment) to adequately support student learning. Keeping in mind these differences and the principle that faculty ultimately determine the number and type of office hours appropriate for their courses, the Curriculum Committee, informed by our sense of current practices as indicated on the syllabi that we have reviewed, suggests a general guideline of two scheduled office hours per week per course.

Additional Guidelines for Specific Course Structures

1. **Fully in-person**: These courses will follow our customary structure. All in-person sessions will follow physical distancing and other safety protocols required by the College. At the time of the production of these guidelines, those measures include the maintenance of at least six feet of distance between students, the configuration of seating so that students all face in the same direction, the wearing of masks, and staggered starting and ending times. Different posted protocols may govern the use of other class meeting spaces, such as in outdoor areas. Faculty teaching in-person classes should be prepared for some students to participate remotely, either for the entire semester or a portion of it, depending on their circumstances. Classrooms have been configured with large monitors, cameras, and microphones to facilitate remote participation. Regularly scheduled office hours should include online options.

2. **Fully online**: As noted above, required synchronous components should constitute at least half of the total contact time (i.e., 75 out of 150 minutes per week). Course components should be available via Canvas or Moodle. As you design your course, please refer to this Fall 2020 checklist of course components from the Digital Teaching and Learning Task Force.

3. **Primarily Online with Some In-Person Components**: These other formats vary. They can include flipped classroom models in which lectures are provided online (synchronously or asynchronously) and the professor holds in-person sessions for a portion of the class at a time (“sections”). Or the class might be divided such that Group A meets in person while Group B simultaneously participates remotely for one session, then Group B meets in person with Group A participating remotely for the next. Finally, the course might consist of largely online sessions with occasional in-person meetings of all or a portion of the class. Whatever the details of the format, the total required remote and in-person components would be 150 minutes per week per
student for a one-unit course, with at least 75 minutes of synchronous contact. Remote components can be asynchronous or synchronous. In-person components must follow physical distancing and other safety protocols, as noted above.

2020-2021 Committee on the Curriculum

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Sylvia Schmitz-Burgard
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Enclosures: Appendix A
APPENDIX A

Sample statements for required and recommended syllabus information
(Faculty may use verbatim or modify as appropriate for their course)

1. SAMPLES OF REQUIRED COLLEGE-WIDE INFORMATION

Academic Integrity
(note: the syllabus statement must include a link to the College policy,
https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#academicintegritytext)

All education is a cooperative enterprise between faculty and students. This cooperation requires trust and mutual respect, which are only possible in an environment governed by the principles of academic integrity. As an institution devoted to teaching, learning, and intellectual inquiry, Holy Cross expects all members of the College community to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any violation of academic integrity undermines the student-faculty relationship, thereby wounding the whole community. Students in this class are required to read the full text of the College’s Academic Integrity Policy and to abide by its standards.

Attendance and excused absences (note: the syllabus statement must include a link to the College policy,
https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#coursepoliciestext)

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to fulfill all obligations of the course as outlined on this syllabus and discussed during class. [Provide course policy on attendance, absences, and class participation]. Students should also read and abide by the College’s Class Attendance Policy.

[n.b. Given the current situation, it is unreasonable to expect that students will be able to provide confirmation or medical documentation of their illness. The Class Deans are not going to be able to provide excused absences in the spring. We will thus need to trust our students on illness-related matters. This will be true of normal attendance as well as in-class exams. Please bear in mind as well that the remote learning format may also mean that students are absent from synchronous sessions for a variety of technological, health, or personal reasons. Faculty members are encouraged to be flexible and to be prepared to provide access to the materials for students who might be ill or otherwise not able to attend class.]
Accessibility Resources and Requests for Reasonable Academic Accommodations (note: the syllabus statement must include both a link to the College policy, https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#coursepoliciestext, and to the resources of the Office of Accessibility Services, https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/office-accessibility-services).

The College of the Holy Cross is committed "to providing students with disabilities equal access to the educational opportunities and programs available at Holy Cross in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Massachusetts laws." (https://catalog.holycross.edu/requirements-policies/academic-policies/#coursepoliciestext).

Any student who feels the need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Services (https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/office-accessibility-services) to discuss support services available. Once the office receives documentation supporting the request for accommodation, the student would meet privately with Accessibility Services to discuss reasonable and appropriate accommodations. The office can be reached by calling 508-793-3693. Students can also consult the "Remote Environment Accommodations" page: https://www.holycross.edu/health-wellness-and-access/office-accessibility-services/services-offered/remote-environment-accommodations.

If you are already registered with Accessibility Services, please be sure to get your accommodation letters and deliver them to your instructors in a timely fashion. Instructors need at least 4-5 days advance notice to be able to facilitate the process of receiving testing accommodations.

[You may also wish to add a list of other learning resources to your syllabi. These include:]

**Holy Cross Academic Resources**

Academic Services and Learning Resources (https://www.holycross.edu/support-and-resources/academic-services-and-learning-resources)

Center for Writing (https://www.holycross.edu/academics/support-and-resources/center-for-writing)

Writers’ Workshop (https://www.holycross.edu/academics/support-and-resources/center-for-writing/writers-workshop)

Class Deans (https://www.holycross.edu/mentored-learning/class-deans)

Library (https://www.holycross.edu/support-and-resources/holy-cross-libraries)

**Holy Cross Student Support Resources**
Recording of Classes

For Faculty Planning to Record Class Meetings:

Lectures may be recorded and made available to students registered for this class using the [insert capture system used]. Duplication or redistribution of video capture recordings by any other party without the consent of the course instructor is prohibited.

For Faculty Not Planning to Record Class Meetings:

PLEASE NOTE that, consistent with applicable federal and state law, this course may be video/audio recorded as an accommodation only with permission from the Office of Accessibility Services.

2. SAMPLES OF RECOMMENDED INFORMATION

Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting

Faculty members have requested language that describes their role as mandated reporters related to sexual misconduct and suicide attempts.

“As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as your professor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, any information that you disclose that addresses sexual misconduct or relates to a prior suicide attempt or an intention to attempt suicide requires my sharing that information with those on campus who are able to provide you with necessary resources.

Following the College’s Sexual Misconduct Policy, I will share information about sexual misconduct with the College’s Office of Title IX Initiatives. If you would like to talk to Title IX directly, they can be reached at 508-793-3336 or titleix@holycross.edu. For
more information, please visit the Sexual Respect and Title IX website. If you would like to discuss the matter confidentially, the following confidential resources are available to you: the Chaplains' Office, 508-793-2448; Counseling Center, 508-793-3363; Health Services, 508-793-2276.

Following the College’s Suicide Protocol, if you disclose a prior suicide attempt or an intention or plan to attempt suicide, I will share that information with the Chair of our student CARE Team, who will engage in appropriate outreach.”

Diversity and Inclusion
Samples of statements for use on course syllabi can be found here.

Textbook Affordability

It is expected that you will have textbooks and other required class materials in order to achieve academic success. If you are unable to purchase course materials, please go to the Financial Aid Office website (https://www.holycross.edu/financial-aid/financial-aid-office) to contact a staff member, who will be happy to provide you with information and assistance.

[Please consider adding a description of the ways in which the texts and materials for your class can be accessed at no or low cost to students. Options include:]

All readings for this course have been placed on Canvas or Moodle.

(All/most) textbooks are available as (limited/unlimited) access ebooks via the Library website (https://www.holycross.edu/support-and-resources/holy-cross-libraries). (Note to faculty: You can check CrossSearch to see if the library has e-versions of books you are using this semester and, if so, library staff will post or assist you in posting the links to your Moodle or Canvas page. They can also help you determine whether unlimited user access is available or appropriate.)

The Office of Multicultural Education Lending Library (https://www.holycross.edu/lending-library) rents books to students for free for the entire semester. To rent books for Spring 2021, please go to their website and fill out the Lending Library Spring 2021 Book Request Form. Books can be sent to students studying remotely.