

Etiquette in Online Classes

Dear Students,

Most of us – both teachers and students – have had a lot of exposure to online teaching through digital conference channels over the past few years. The checklist below contains some reminders about how we can make the online version of our course go as smoothly as possible for all of us. **Please note**, that this list may be adjusted to suit the needs of specific courses, so please always check the list belonging to the correct course. It may help to have the list open in the background for reference, during the online session.

PREPARATION

✓ We have found it useful if your personal profile in Canvas includes some kind of **profile picture** (ideally a photo of you) that helps to quickly identify you online, and distinguish you from others.

✓ **Install Zoom/Teams** on your computer, and play around with it a little before your first class. Your teacher will let you know which program they will be using.

For Zoom: You can watch a YouTube tutorial, such as this [one that shows how to use Zoom with Canvas](#), or [this one that is slightly more elaborate and aimed at both students and teachers](#), to get acquainted with it.

For Teams: [Check this page for how to install and start up Teams as a student](#).

✓ **Check all audio and video** in advance – it is best to do a quick check before each class, especially if you have moved your computer or changed any settings recently.

For Zoom: You can visit <https://zoom.us/test> or

For Teams: Access the settings to make sure all is working ([this video will show you how](#)).

✓ Please **notify your teacher** before class, if you are not in possession of a working camera or have other technical issues (In most cases, you can still listen in and chat with your microphone).

✓ Try to find a relatively **quiet place for online classes**, and make clear to any housemates that you are “not to be disturbed”.

✓ Think about **your background** – keep it “user friendly” if at all possible (more about virtual-backgrounds, below).

GENERAL BEHAVIOURAL ETIQUETTE DURING SESSIONS

✓ Please, **be on time** – especially in the beginning, it may take some time to get everybody to join and start the class. Other than that, simply think of your online sessions as you do about scheduled classes (though obviously you cannot use public transport as an excuse for being late).

✓ **Wave when you want to speak**, e.g. during a discussion

For Zoom: Use the Reactions button to virtually raise your hand

For Teams: Use the Raise button to virtually raise your hand

✓ **Mute the microphone when listening** to a teacher or fellow student for a longer time. There is always the chance of unexpected background noises in our homes. With so many “homes” coming together at the same time, this can become a problem.

✓ **Be aware of audio & visual settings** – check occasionally whether audio and video are on or off.

✓ Try to look **into the camera**, especially when you speak. This may feel unnatural, but you will get used to it. There may be the temptation to look at yourself, and start adjusting your posture, hair and clothes. Remember that you don't do that during offline classes either, and people are used to seeing you as you are. It's fine. You're gorgeous.

✓ **Contribute through chat** where appropriate, but be aware not everyone can process all information channels at the same time – this includes your teacher. Please keep your chat contributions on topic and related to the content of the class.

✓ **Account for silences** to avoid confusion. If it is your time to say something, and you need some time to find the right Word document, or you get distracted by the cat, or the doorbell rings, simply tell people what is going on.

✓ Please, refrain from other **unrelated parallel activities** such as doing the dishes, preparing dinner or knitting a scarf. This can be highly distracting for everyone else, as well as for yourself: multitasking is a myth.

Most importantly, **be kind and considerate**. Help each other, including your teacher, with any technical issues or questions that may come up. We have all been thrown into these circumstances at record speed, without much preparation.

TECHNICAL ISSUES DURING THE ONLINE SESSION

- ✓ If you **lose the connection** , simply try to rejoin by clicking the link again.
- ✓ If all fails, **notify your teacher** asap of what you missed through an appropriate channel.

AUDIO BEST PRACTICES & TIPS

- ✓ Any speakers should not be too close to the microphone, to **avoid feedback loop**
 - Turn down your speaker on your computer, if necessary
 - You can also adjust your audio by clicking on the up caret (^) next to the microphone icon
- ✓ **Mute your microphone** when possible, it really helps
- ✓ In loud or echoing surroundings, a **headset is preferable** , if you have one.

VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS

- ✓ If you use a virtual background, make sure it is **non-moving** , so that it is not too distracting. (Much though we may appreciate the beauty of Niagara Falls, the PowerPoint slides are a much better preparation for the exam, and we want to keep our eyes on them.)
- ✓ Be aware virtual backgrounds work best **against real backgrounds that are not too busy** or colourful. A single solid colour is preferred.
- ✓ **Do not wear any clothes in the same colour as your real background** . Your body will likely disappear and your head will float in space against your chosen virtual background. Though this may be fun in a creepy way, it is also quite distracting.

Happy online learning!



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