Office of Emergency Management
201 Palm Rd, Ithaca, NY 14850-2822
Tel: 607-255-8200
E-mail: oem@cornell.edu
Web: emergency.cornell.edu

Academic Continuity Planning

The purpose of this document is to provide resources for Cornell University faculty members that enables them to continue instruction in the event classroom instruction is interrupted for an extended period of time. Possible reasons for the disruption of classroom instruction include, but are not limited to:

- Severe weather events
- Unsafe conditions on campus
- Public health emergency

These resources assist faculty in continuing instruction in the event of an extended disruption to campus operations, including:

- Physical classrooms are inaccessible.
- Blackboard/Canvas is unavailable.
- External events affect regular academic continuity.
- Library services are unavailable.

When classroom instruction is interrupted due to disasters and emergencies, faculty may need to use alternative methods and tools to continue class activities at a distance. Class activities may vary depending on the subject and teaching methods used. However, the following would be core categories of class activities that course instructors may need continue:

- Communicating with students
- Delivering course content
- Encouraging student participation: Answering questions, discussion, group work, etc.
- Administering assignments, tests and grades

Preparedness

Be informed of how to receive CornellALERT emergency notifications.
https://emergency.cornell.edu/alert/ CornellALERT appears on the University home page, as well as https://emergency.cornell.edu/.

Technology alerts can be found on the IT Status Alerts page
https://itservicealerts.hosting.cornell.edu/allalerts

Verify your access to on-campus resources from home, including:

- Voice Mail https://it.cornell.edu/audix
- Email https://it.cornell.edu/facstaff-email
- Accessing Network Drives from Off-Campus https://it.cornell.edu/cuvpn
- Web Conference Services https://it.cornell.edu/webconf
- Academic Technologies https://it.cornell.edu/teaching-learning

Start of Semester

The start of a semester is a good time to think about how you would conduct classroom instruction in the event of emergencies and disasters. Items to consider include:

Updating your syllabus

- Adding course policies to your syllabus on how you will continue instruction in the event of emergencies and disasters.
- Adding a contingency plan to your attendance policy allowing for emergencies and disasters accommodating individual student situations.

Once the semester starts

- Encourage students to keep their contact information up to date in Cornell Student Essentials https://www.studentessentials.cornell.edu/ and inform you of any changes as soon as they occur.
- Ask students for an alternate email address and phone number. If you are using Blackboard/Canvas, you can create an assignment for this purpose. Once all students have submitted their information, we recommend that you download this information and store it in a safe place. **Note:** Please be sure to destroy student contact information according to FERPA guidelines. https://teaching.cornell.edu/resource/ferpa-technology
- Communicate to your students that class will continue and they are expected to keep up with the course work.
- Prepare a draft communication to send to your students referring to your syllabus contingency plan if a University closure is imminent.
- Conduct practice drills which will help you prepare to access all vital university systems from home.

You may also wish to record contact information of the key colleagues in your department and college (for example, your department head and administrative assistant), including names, primary and secondary email addresses, and phone numbers.

Backing Up Class Materials

To preserve academic continuity, we recommend using Canvas. All courses automatically have a corresponding Canvas course. You can access your Canvas courses via https://canvas.cornell.edu/

Having a backup of your teaching materials and student materials and then storing them in Canvas ensures that you can access class materials even if you can't access your office computer physically. It is also a good practice in case you have a hard drive crash. You can also save your backup files on a CD, flash drive, external hard drive, Box, or Google Drive.

Back up critical teaching materials including:

- Syllabus
- Lecture files and notes
- Discussion or forum topics
- Assignments with instructions and any files students need
- Quizzes
- Grades

You may also back up student submissions including assignments, discussion or forum posts, email messages, and any feedback you gave.

Lastly, encourage students to back up class materials including:

- Syllabus
- Class schedule file

- All materials they submit to you, including assignments, discussion or forum posts, and email messages.
- Your feedback
- Grades

Instructional Continuity Planning - Canvas Available

Canvas supports academic learning with the ability to communicate to students, deliver course content, facilitate discussion, administer assignments and tests, and track grades.

If you have your lecture materials written or otherwise recorded, then you just need to make them available by uploading them to your Canvas course.

You are encouraged to use the applications that you are most comfortable with to deliver course content. These options are listed here: https://teaching.cornell.edu/learning-technologies

Instructional Continuity Planning - Canvas Not Available

If class is interrupted and Canvas is also unavailable, you may need to use a combination of other tools to continue instruction.

An effective method for continuing instruction would be utilizing the combination of an online conferencing tool and file-sharing because they enable you not only to deliver lectures but also facilitate administering assignments and tests and encouraging student participation. You are encouraged to use the applications that you are most comfortable with to deliver course content. These options are listed here https://teaching.cornell.edu/learning-technologies

Practice

You may find it helpful to test your preparedness, and that of your students, to use alternate forms of instruction. We suggest that you perform the following:

- Send students a welcome email that contains your contact information. Tell students to save this email in a safe place. Maintain a copy for your own records. This ensures that you have students' email information, and students have your contact information.
NOTE: You can use Canvas Announcements to email the entire class.

- Send a test email to your students' alternate email addresses. This test message will help your students identify problems with spam filters or firewalls that may block your emails. Suggest to students that they add your primary and secondary email addresses to their approved recipient list.

- Teach one class period through Canvas technologies. This will give you and your students a chance to become familiar with the environment that will be used if classroom instruction must be interrupted.

- Teach one class period through a web-conferencing media, such as Zoom, requiring your students to attend from their residence. This will give you and your students a chance to become familiar with the environment that may be used if classroom instruction must be interrupted and Blackboard/Canvas is also unavailable.
https://teaching.cornell.edu/learning-technologies/collaboration-tools

- Post a class assignment in Google Docs and require your students to upload their assignments to this medium. This will give you and your students a chance to become familiar with the environment that may be used if classroom instruction must be interrupted and Canvas is also unavailable.

- Work from home for a day to ensure that you can maintain contact with your department's key personnel and retrieve necessary files from your office computer.