Resources for Teaching Remotely

- Tools for teaching remotely
- Planning Ahead
- Communicate updates, changes, and other relevant information to students
- Holding Real-time synchronous lectures/meetings with recordings
- Pre-recording lectures and videos
- Collecting student assignments digitally
- Holding online discussions
- Share grades with students confidentially
- Administer digital exams, quizzes, or tests
- Support for Tablets / Digital Writing
- Remote Teaching Studios

Tools for teaching remotely

- Moodle: Course content, announcements, discussions, assignments, exams, and grades
- Panopto: Recording and sharing lectures and other educational videos
- Zoom: Live course meetings or discussions

Planning Ahead

- Download a listing of all the emails from Faculty Services for the students enrolled in your course
- Remind students to download or print a copy of the syllabus with your contact information
- Back up copies of any prepared teaching materials in case there is a disruption to network access.
- Install Swarthmore’s Virtual Private Network (VPN) to connect to Swarthmore network resources such as shared network drives, software using KeyAccess, and Banner from off-campus.

Communicate updates, changes, and other relevant information to students

There are several different ways you can communicate with your students via Moodle. One of the highly recommended ways is through the Moodle Quickmail feature when you need to communicate with your class. You can also use the Announcements forum to create messages that are displayed in Moodle as well as send to the students in the course. Every course is created with an Announcements item in the top section of the Moodle page. Alternatively, you can get the student roster with emails from Faculty Services and use your Swarthmore email to communicate with your students.

Holding Real-time synchronous lectures/meetings with recordings

Zoom is a web-conferencing solution that provides audio and video conferencing as well as screen-sharing capabilities. All Swarthmore faculty, staff, and students have a Zoom account for video web-conferencing. Go to https://swarthmore.zoom.us and sign in with your Swarthmore College username and password. You can use Zoom’s recording feature to record your meetings and publish them to Moodle so your students can view them later.

Equipment you will need:

- A computer or mobile device with a good internet connection
- Headphones or earbuds (optional)
- Microphone (if possible, a separate microphone can be better than your device’s built-in)
- Web camera (optional, most devices have a built-in camera)
- A phone (if you’re unable to receive audio via your computer, laptop, or device)

A few tips and tricks:

- As the host of the Zoom meeting, you can mute participants when their background noise becomes distracting.
- Zoom has a breakout room feature that allows you to put students into small groups and then bring them back for large discussion.

Additional resources:

- LinkedIn Learning Zoom training

Pre-recording lectures and videos

Panopto allows you to record your voice, PowerPoint slides, and computer screen to create videos for your course. After each recording, Panopto automatically publishes it to your Moodle course inside the Panopto Block.

A few tips and tricks:
Consider signing into Panopto and downloading the Panopto Recorder for a short test to see if it works for you BEFOREHAND.
Consider using a USB microphone and/or headset if at all possible to increase sound quality. One option many people use is pairing an existing Bluetooth or wired headset you might have for your phone with your computer. Media Services has some microphones available for checkout.
Panopto has an auto-caption feature, but you should proofread these once they have been created.
Some instructors draft scripts before recording, others might refer to a brief outline.

Alternative options for recording lectures

PowerPoint: Use PowerPoint to record a slideshow with narration

Tablets: Use an iPad or tablet computer with the Explain Everything app to record lecture notes with narration. iPads are available for checkout from Media Services.

Another set of tools for capturing your computer screen and preparing content for your students could be Snagit, which is a fairly simple screen capture and recording solution. If you need more power to edit the content you've captured, or need to capture more complex content and then add captioning and annotation, then a tool like Camtasia might be your next step. You can learn more about both tools through our Screen Capture, Recording and Editing page.

Collecting student assignments digitally

The Moodle Assignment feature allows students to upload assignments directly into Moodle. This is a popular feature commonly used by Swarthmore faculty to collect papers and other digital projects. It also allows you to provide feedback notes and submit their grades digitally, all in one place.

If students handwrite their work, it is possible to use a phone camera to capture an image of the document. It is best to use an app such as CamScanner or TinyScan to provide a higher quality PDF format output.

Holding online discussions

Moodle has a discussion forum activity in which a class can hold online discussions or respond to a prompt by the professor. As online discussions aren't a standard part of many Swarthmore classes, we recommend setting expectations for students concerning participation.

Alternative options for online discussions.

Piazza is a web service that provides space for online discussions. It can be integrated with Moodle.

Google Groups can be used to hold online discussions. Exchanges are usually via email but can be set for access via a website. Use the ITS Service Portal to request a Google Group. There is more information about managing Google Groups on our help site.

For real-time discussions, Slack offers a free version of their widely used chat service.

Share grades with students confidentially

Moodle allows you to communicate individual grades, category grades, and total grades with students. This is all administered through the Moodle Gradebook.

Administer digital exams, quizzes, or tests

Moodle has a Quiz feature that allows faculty to author multiple-choice and open-ended questions fairly easily. It also allows support for both matching and fill in the blank question types. The options available within the Quiz feature allow you to control when each quiz is available and what is released to students. Once a Quiz is published, there is also a feature enabling you to provide extra time and other accommodations that might be in place for specific students via Student Accessibility Services.

Alternative options for exams

Moodle assignments: For non-timed assessments, a Moodle assignment can be used to allow students to upload an exam or essay. Students can either work directly in a file or handwrite their work and take a photo of their papers and submit them to Moodle.

Support for Tablets / Digital Writing

ITS has a limited number of iPad tablets available for loan to professors. Using a tablet with the Explain Everything app makes it easy to record lectures with handwritten notes or annotations on top of an existing presentation. We also have a small number of Wacom tablets that can be connected to a macOS or Windows computer to allow handwriting in documents. Contact support@swathmore.edu to see if one is available.

Lafayette College has instructions for a simple DIY document camera using a phone: https://help.lafayette.edu/writing-drawing-demo-while-remote/. You can join a Zoom meeting from a computer and a phone, using the computer for controlling the meeting and the phone to share video of your writing.
Remote Teaching Studios

ITS has adapted five smaller classrooms as Remote Teaching Studios, based on a design from John's Hopkins University. We believe these studio spaces will allow for more dynamic remote teaching and the creation of better recorded lectures and teaching materials. The idea has met with great enthusiasm from faculty who will have access to the first of these spaces this week. Rooms are in Kohlberg 114, Kohlberg 328, Beardsley 305, and Science Center 102.

Reach out to mjones1@swarthmore.edu for more information. Rooms may be reserved through SwatCentral.