

CERES Faculty Workshop

# **Adapting Assignments for Online Courses**

Thursday, August 13

# Student Feedback from COVID Spring

- Challenges with unstructured group projects (no assigned roles)
- Challenges completing long papers without scaffolding
- Concerns about privacy in classes using Proctorio to administer closed-book exams
- Concerns about heavily-weighted assignments, particularly final projects

# Overview of Best Practices

- Give feedback early and often
- Scaffold larger assignments like research papers
- Avoid closed-book tests and exams, when possible
- Assign roles and provide structure when assigning group projects
- Be flexible
  - Work with students on access issues and accommodations
  - When possible, provide for multiple means of engagement and expression

# Writing Assignments in the Remote Environment

- Scaffold longer writing assignments
  - Create separate assignments for each stage of the process, providing feedback and grades throughout the semester
- Consider reducing overall length of assignments/including more short papers rather than one long paper
- Incorporate consultations with individual students, especially for research papers – help them frame research questions they can address with available online resources

# Student Presentations

- Tailor approach depending on class size and student access issues
- Synchronous, in-class presentations work best for smaller classes and shorter presentations, or for student presentations/student-led discussions on assigned readings
- Larger classes can be broken up into small groups (in breakout rooms or separate meetings) for synchronous presentations
- Asynchronous presentations work well for longer presentations or larger classes – assign students to view and provide feedback on X number of peer presentations

# Evaluating Participation

- Include a mid-semester check-in or mid-term grade for participation – provide feedback and opportunity to improve
- Provide clear guidelines/rubrics for discussion board posts, blog posts, etc.
- Incorporate opportunities for asynchronous participation – do not rely solely on participation in synchronous Zoom sessions
- Be mindful of connectivity/access issues when evaluating synchronous participation

# Group Assignments

- Provide clear structure for group assignments and assign roles to each student
- Survey students and form groups based on availability/time zones
- Include opportunities for asynchronous engagement on group projects – the Collaborations tool in Canvas is great for this

# Tests and Exams

- Consider alternatives to exams – short papers, etc.
- Avoid closed-book, timed exams when possible
- Be mindful of access issues when setting up exams in Canvas



# Resources

- CNDLS Guidebook: [Rethinking Assessments for Remote Teaching](#)
- CNDLS Guidebook: [Peer Learning](#)
- CNDLS Guidebook: [Writing Online in the Disciplines](#)
- CNDLS Guidebook: [Accommodations and Accessibility](#)
- Video: [Using Peer Review](#)
- Tipsheet: [Writing in Class in a Virtual Learning Environment](#)
- Tipsheet: [Oral Student Presentations in a Virtual Environment](#)
- Tipsheet: [Handling Assignments Remotely](#)