Equity/Inclusivity and Access in Fall 2020 Instruction
Suggestions for Syllabi and Course Planning
Mariselle Meléndez and the LAS Instructional Delivery Team
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I. Inclusivity:
All instructors should consider the urgent need to consider Equity/Inclusivity and Access issues in their Fall 2020 teaching. With our changes in instruction, and the stresses student are facing, extra efforts are needed to make sure we serve the diverse range of students. Instructors who attended the Online Teaching Academy this summer have focused on this already, including the following points:

- The "digital divide" is accentuated by online teaching approaches. For many reasons, a considerable fraction of our students do not have the technology hardware, expertise and/or access that instructors may take for granted. Some lack the quiet physical space to pay attention to online sessions.
- Campus has programs to help bridge the digital divide. LAS has the "ATLAS Share" program, to assists students obtain adequate computers and/or internet connectivity. It is described here: https://atlas.illinois.edu/student-information/atlas-share
- Asynchronous activities are more flexible for students with technology (and life) challenges, and time-zone issues, in the current situation. For synchronous courses, increasing asynchronous activities may be helpful.
- Many disabilities are accentuated by online formats, the use of masks in classrooms, and/or the stress of change.
- Given the current upheaval in many lives, increased structure, clear expectations, more frequent feedback, and extra empathy will help many students.

Each course is unique, so each instructor should work to address these issues as they apply to each group of students.

Syllabi are a key focal point. When preparing your syllabus and finishing your course planning, please take into consideration the following recommendations and questions:
1. Include an **Inclusivity Statement** in your syllabus. See an example in Appendix 1; develop a statement that fits each instructor and course.
2. What are the daily challenges that my diverse array of students might experience? As an instructor, how am I delivering my course so that all those students are receiving the same quality experience?
3. How will I create and sustain a safe, encouraging, and motivating environment in my online/hybrid course?
4. How will my class encourage student-to-student connections and collaborations in an online/hybrid course? What particular challenges does the online/hybrid format pose to student connection and what will I do to overcome them?
5. What approaches will I use to maintain and enhance communicate with my students?
6. Do my class content and/or teaching methods implicitly or explicitly privilege any one demography over the other? How can I undo that privilege?
7. What assumptions does my syllabus make about the digital literacy of my students- and that of my TAs? How can I adapt the syllabus to accommodate individuals with differing degrees of digital literacy?
8. Does my syllabus include authors and readings that address a diverse audience; how might I diversify the material by being more inclusive of women and underrepresented scholars/authors?

II. Accessibility
Here are some basic accessibility principles to keep in mind as you create or revise your syllabus and finalize teaching plans for fall semester 2020.

- Please include a **disability statement in your syllabus** (See examples in Appendix 2 below)
- Always **describe and explain images** in power point presentations, for students with visual disabilities
- **Computer-generated captions** in videos are often unreliable. Campus provided help with captioning in the spring semester and will likely do so again in the fall.
- **Communicate** early and often with DRES-registered students and with DRES access specialists. Different students will have different needs and levels of comfort coming to you. Let them know that lines of communication are open. Be aware, too, that DRES access specialists are available to help articulate needs and develop solutions.
- **Clarity.** Make your syllabus as clean and clear as possible (large font; ample spacing; eliminate italics, underlining, and unnecessary hyperlinks, which make it harder for students to read text; use consistent formatting). Be clear in laying out expectations for participation, standards of evaluation, and due dates. Presenting this information clearly can help students prepare and can significantly reduce mental and physical stress.
- **Content.** As you assign and/or create content for your class, work to make it fully accessible. Are texts available in digital format? Do videos have closed captioning? Are course resources available directly on your Moodle / Compass page? The fewer clicks required to reach an item, the more accessible it is.

Note that many steps taken to help DRES-registered students benefit all students by creating a more welcoming classroom for everyone.

Accessibility/disability Resources:
Much of the above was distilled from the DRES pdf document "Learn How to Support Students with Disabilities" *(separate pdf document)*.

Another excellent resource: UI System "Ten Principles for Enhancing Course Accessibility":
https://www.uaps.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=808247&pageId=877044

Many links to additional accessibility resources are listed on the CITL "Basic Accessibility Resources" page: https://cdn.citl.illinois.edu/courses/other/diyintensive/accessibility_resources.html#pdf

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Appendix 1: Inclusivity Statement Example
The effectiveness of this course is dependent upon the creation of an encouraging and safe classroom environment. Exclusionary, offensive or harmful speech (such as racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.) will not be tolerated and in some cases will be subject to University harassment procedures. We are all responsible for creating a positive and safe environment that allows all students equal respect and comfort. I expect each of you to help establish and maintain and environment where you and your peers can contribute without fear of ridicule or intolerant or offensive language.
(Thank you to Professor Robyn Deterding (AHS) for granting us permission to share the above statement that they include in their course syllabi)

Appendix 2: Example disability statements:
Below are several different types of examples that instructors can put on their syllabus. It is recommended that all instructors include the standard statement on their syllabus and make reference to this several times throughout the semester to create a welcoming environment for students with

disabilities to disclose and request accommodations. Many instructors want to go above and beyond this statement so additional examples are included.

Standard Statement
To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website.

Enhanced Statement
To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website. If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting "Sign-Up for an Academic Screening" at the bottom of the page.

Enhanced Statement with Resources
To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website. If you are concerned you have a disability-related condition that is impacting your academic progress, there are academic screening appointments available on campus that can help diagnosis a previously undiagnosed disability by visiting the DRES website and selecting "Sign-Up for an Academic Screening" at the bottom of the page.
If you are interested in obtaining information to improve writing, study skills, time management or organization, the following campus resources are available to all students:
Writer's Workshop
Undergrad Library
217-333-8796
Content Warning
"If you are a student with a disability (or would qualify as a student with a disability) who will be significantly affected by traumatic course content such as (specific reading/video/blog) or words (imagery/tone/situations) please contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES, you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 333-4603, e-mail disability@illinois.edu or go to the DRES website.