

Tips and Resources for Online Teaching in SBM UG classes in Spring 2020

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you are doing well. This email is a follow-up to my email dated January 15, regarding teaching SBM UG classes this coming Spring. Unfortunately, the possibility I had mentioned in that email has been realized, and we will have to start the semester in online (real-time, interactive, i.e., Zoom-based) mode. The first day of teaching will be February 19 (and there will be classes on February 20 despite a small number of exams scheduled for that day). When the government allows schools to reopen physically, as of now on March 2 but this might change, we will cut over to mixed-mode teaching where each student can choose whether to attend class physically or virtually in real time. Given this scenario, here are some tips and resources:

ZOOM RESOURCES FOR ONLINE-ONLY TEACHING

- The SBM repository for Zoom related resources is [here](#). This is constantly being updated so please check back once in a while.
- CEI's more comprehensive repository including FAQs is [here](#). This is also constantly being updated. I recommend you check it out even if you are familiar with Zoom, because they are collating best practices based on experiences of colleagues across the whole university.
- CEI has been sending several emails with training sessions for Zoom, including sessions on basics as well as advanced sessions on live polling, group work in breakout rooms, and whiteboard usage (the University is developing some attractive "whiteboard-like" visualizer options that you can use from your desk. Please ensure you are familiar with at least the basics (available [here](#)).

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR ONLINE-ONLY ZOOM TEACHING

- Conduct the class in meeting mode with Gallery view. Colleagues have mentioned that Zoom classes can be much MORE interactive than traditional face-to-face, but the mechanics are a little different so one needs to be mentally prepared.
- Record the session to the cloud (not locally). Share the recording with students. Pause the recording if the class is taking a break.
- Mute all participants from the beginning. Stop frequently to ask questions, check for raised hands, and ask students to unmute themselves if they want to speak. Mute them afterwards.
- Ask students to use headset and mike to reduce feedback and external noise.
- Consider disabling the chat function for everyone, so you don't have to divide your attention. Definitely disable the "private" chat option between students. Consider enabling chat ONLY when you or a TA is available to answer in real time.

- Building on our experience in Fall, I conducted a session on conducting online exams for colleagues whose exams were postponed from Fall to this month. You can find the session and slides on the SBM repository. Point #1 is please consider alternative options to traditional closed-book final exams – such as projects or term papers. Even open-book exams are more recommended.

After a few weeks of online-only mode (i.e., just when we are getting really good at it), we will have to switch to mixed-mode, with some students physically present and others online in real time. This presents additional challenges. Several SBM colleagues have tried mixed-mode in Fall for TPg classes, and the university is collating their valuable experience and will generate usable suggestions soon. Looking ahead, some suggestions include:

- Even if students are physically present in the classroom, ask them to be on Zoom with headsets and mikes. This facilitates conversation and group breakouts.
- The university is making arrangements for multiple wireless mikes to be used in classrooms so that virtually-present students can hear everyone's comments. From your end, please try and repeat / summarize comments and questions from students before answering.
- Even if you don't have a TA to constantly monitor the online students, you can ask a few students in every class to act as "referee" and alert you if someone online raises their hand.

These are just a few tips, and more will be coming. Meanwhile, please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks and good luck!

Anirban.

Anirban Mukhopadhyay

Associate Dean (Undergraduate Studies)

SBM