# Teaching During Inclement Weather

## A Guide to Remote Teaching Options during Weather Disruptions

**(Updated: 2/12/2025)**

## Introduction

Severe weather may impact learning due to travel restrictions, loss of internet access, and increased childcare responsibilities. Canceling classes entirely can also disrupt the learning process. However, with thoughtful planning, instructors can transition to online learning while providing flexibility to support students facing these challenges. We strongly encourage instructors to review the instructional arrangement options below to minimize the impact of inclement weather and maintain continuity in learning through proactive preparation for temporary remote instruction.

## Establish a Plan

To prepare for potential shifts to remote learning due to inclement weather, it's essential to establish clear expectations for your students. Develop a realistic plan detailing how instruction will continue and how assignment deadlines might be impacted. When preparing for potential shifts to remote learning due to inclement weather, instructors can consider two primary approaches: synchronous and asynchronous online instruction. Each method offers distinct advantages and challenges. An asynchronous approach is recommended primarily due to its flexibility and accessibility.

|  | **Synchronous** | **Asynchronous (Recommended)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Rationale** | Continue live classes using web conferencing tools such as Zoom or WebEx. | Provide course materials, such as recorded lectures, readings, and assignments for students to access at their convenience. |
| **Pros** | <ul><li>Allows real-time interaction between instructors and students.</li><li>Provides a set schedule, which can help students stay on track.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Offers flexibility, allowing students to engage with the content based on their schedule.</li><li>Can be beneficial for those who need more time to grasp complex concepts.</li></ul> |
| **Cons** | <ul><li>Potential technology issues can disrupt the learning experience.</li><li>Home environment can be distracting (e.g., noise, childcare responsibility).</li><li>Dependent on instructor and students' technology skills.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Creating materials online can take time.</li><li>Students may feel isolated and miss out on real-time discussions and feedback.</li><li>Without clear instructions, students may misunderstand instructions or content.</li></ul> |
| **Tips** | <ul><li>Be aware that you cannot require students to attend a synchronous session (unless it was part of the course description).</li><li>Encourage students to attend, but plan to also post a recording.</li><li>You may still need to post materials in Brightspace.</li></ul> | <ul><li>Consider extending due dates for assignments.</li><li>Consider putting all asynchronous learning materials in one module in Brightspace.</li><li>Create detailed instructions with an announcement on the course homepage.</li></ul> |
| **Resources** | <ul><li>Zoom (integrated in Brightspace)</li><li>WebEx</li></ul> | <ul><li>Brightspace Instructor Guides</li><li>Kaltura in Brightspace Guide</li><li>Kaltura Playlist for Instructors</li></ul> |

# Quick Preparation Tips

**Prioritize**: Minimally, it's important to determine what your students should do if you must shift to remote learning. Consider what you can realistically accomplish in meeting your goal to continue instruction. Postpone what can wait until later.

**Record a Quick Video and Post in Brightspace**: To ensure that students understand what to do, you may find it helpful to record a quick video for your students. You can record a video using Kaltura while in Brightspace. Refer to the Asynchronous Resources above for tutorials.

**Be Flexible & Compassionate**: In your planning, consider what challenges there might be for students during such a closure and how some flexibility might be appropriate. For instance, weather conditions may move school aged children to remote learning and/or cause outages in internet service. Please consider a compassionate statement encouraging students to let you know when such conditions arise.

**Add a Statement in Syllabus**: If you haven't yet, consider adding a section in your syllabus regarding inclement weather. Describe your plan and expectations during a campus closure.

# Syllabus Statement

Below are two sample syllabus statements that instructors can adapt based on their chosen approach to remote learning during inclement weather. The first statement is for synchronous online instruction, allowing real-time engagement, while the second is for asynchronous learning, providing flexibility for students who may face weather-related disruptions.

## Example Syllabus Statement for Synchronous Online Learning

In the event of campus closure due to inclement weather, our class will continue through synchronous online sessions using [insert platform, e.g., Zoom]. Please check the course Brightspace homepage by [add time when instructions will be available] for detailed instructions on accessing the live course. Attendance during these live sessions is strongly encouraged, as they will replace our in-person meetings. However, I understand that inclement weather may present challenges such as power outages or increased personal responsibilities. Therefore, all sessions will be recorded and made available [add where the recording will be posted] for later review. Assignment deadlines may also be adjusted to provide flexibility during such times.

## Example Syllabus Statement for Asynchronous Online Learning

In the event of campus closure due to inclement weather, our class will transition to asynchronous online learning. Course materials, including recorded lectures and assignments, will be made available in our Brightspace course by [add time when materials will be posted]. Please check the course homepage for updates and more detailed instructions. Students are expected to engage with these materials and complete any assigned tasks by the specified deadlines. Recognizing that inclement weather may present challenges such as power outages or increased personal responsibilities, deadlines for assignments will be adjusted to allow for flexibility. If you encounter any difficulties accessing the materials or have concerns about meeting deadlines due to weather-related challenges, please contact me [add contact method] to discuss alternative arrangements.

# Need Support?

- For technical help, contact the IT Helpdesk.
- For pedagogical help, contact a CELT Instructional Consultant.