Important Information about Recording Virtual Classes

Recording Virtual Classes

The University strongly encourages you to record virtual class sessions so that students who are unable to attend a live session can later watch the recording.

Advance Notice of Class Recordings

Before recording a virtual class session, advance notice should be given to participants. It is recommended that at the beginning of each recorded session you orally remind participants that you are recording and that the recording is to be used as a reference resource for the class and not to be shared outside of the class. This oral notice should be captured on the audio recording. In addition, it is recommended that advance notice also be provided in your syllabus. You may choose to use the following statement:

Policy on Class Recording

I will be recording our class sessions for students who are unable to attend. You may choose to “opt out” of any recording, in which case you should contact me to arrange alternative ways to participate.

Faculty own the copyright to their instructional materials, and so students should not record any class sessions without my permission. For this same reason, recordings that I make of our class may not be posted online or shared with anyone other than students enrolled in this course.

If a student self-identifies as having a disability and asks to record your class, please be in touch with the Office of Disability Services first.

Limiting Access to Class Recordings

Because class recordings are covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), recordings that include personally identifiable information about students (e.g. names, images) should only be available to students in the class and should not be shared with other individuals or posted on the internet without the express written permission of all participants.

Allowing Students to Opt-out

While we strongly encourage you to record class sessions, we recognize that some students may feel uncomfortable about having their comments and questions recorded and disseminated to classmates on video, and that this discomfort may inhibit their participation and engagement. We therefore recommend that you accommodate student requests to opt-out of participating verbally in the recorded class session, but that you also provide opportunities for these students to participate and be assessed for their participation in other ways.

Below are some example of ways to encourage non-verbal participation:
- Polling students or asking them to vote on the answer to a question by “raising hands” or giving you a “thumbs up” sign (using the non-verbal response tools)
- Inviting students to participate in writing via the chat function
- Creating opportunities for asynchronous participation, such as discussion board prompts or collaborative annotation of a text or problem
- Reminding students that office hours are available as a time for them to engage 1:1, and that such sessions are not recorded

Restrictions on Recording Other than Virtual Classes

Please note that because of privacy, compliance, and legal considerations, the University prohibits the use of its electronic services, equipment, and systems to record non-public University meetings, activities, and events except when recording is necessary to facilitate University operations and serve institutional needs (see the University’s Acceptable Use Policy). The recording of virtual classes for the purposes of making them available to students regardless of their geographic location and time zone serves an institutional need and is therefore permitted. However, other types of recordings may be prohibited. For other examples of recordings that serve institutional needs, please refer to the Guidelines for Compliance with the Acceptable Use Policy under “Limits on Recordings.”

Transcripts and Captions for Virtual Classes

When virtual classes are video recorded, transcripts and captions can provide text versions of the video’s audio track. Captions provide synchronized text and appear within the video, while transcripts may be time-encoded but not synchronized, and appear alongside the video window. Transcripts and captions support learning, as they improve attention to, and comprehension of, audio and video content. They are especially helpful to students with disabilities, non-native speakers and students learning in a busy or noisy environment. Zoom transcripts also provide valuable metadata for a recording – students can search for a keyword in the recording, and then go to that section of it.

When courses are video recorded, the technology allows for auto-generated transcripts and, on some but not all platforms, captioning. However, it is important to note that in general, the accuracy level of auto-generated transcripts and captions is approximately 80%, so should not be assumed to be an exact representation of what was said in the video lecture. The following statement can be used on your course syllabus or as an announcement to advise students:

This course is being video recorded. The recording may include automatically generated transcripts or captions, which you might find to be helpful. However, please understand that in general, automatic transcript and caption accuracy level is approximately 80%. Accordingly, caution should be exercised in relying upon the transcript or captions as opposed to tuning into the audio component of the instruction. Assessments of your content knowledge will be based upon the content that is delivered visually and auditorily.

When a student enrolled in your course self-identifies as having a disability that requires captioning, auto-generated captioning is not sufficiently accurate and so additional services are
available to improve the accuracy of the captioning for the student. Professional captioning services are available for courses where a student has a need for the accuracy of human-created captioning. Contact Video Production Support at bctv@princeton.edu for more information and to arrange for this service. Communication Access Real-Time Translation (CART) services is available for courses where a student with a disability has a need for real-time translation. Contact the Office of Disability Services at ods@princeton.edu or 609-258-8840 for more information.

For additional information on transcripts and recording lectures in Zoom, please visit the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning website.