**Note to Instructors**

Dear Faculty and teaching staff,

We recognize that the upcoming academic year will likely require you to adjust your classroom practices to ensure that students have the opportunity to successfully complete your course during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Online Preparedness Taskforce would like to offer ways to consider classroom issues that are likely to arise during this coming academic year. The following document provides instructors with ideas and recommendations for addressing these topics, including sample syllabus text. Another aim of this resource to help ensure that students are informed of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on both the face-to-face and online classroom. Communicating on the following topics early in the semester will benefit both students and instructors by establishing clear expectations for the coming academic year.

The following is intended only as a resource and its applicability to your individual teaching circumstances is likely to vary. Some of the content below are ideas for consideration whereas in other instances we include suggested text. The material below can be edited to fit your circumstances, as necessary.

Best wishes,

The Remote Teaching and Learning Preparedness Taskforce

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# General Student Protocol for Online Classes

Most students will be new to the online environment, and online etiquette (or, netiquette) may be new to some students. Therefore, it may be helpful to include in online course syllabi protocols that are unique to the online classroom. These reminders may help students with the learning curve associated with online learning. Below is sample text that may be included in online class syllabi:

# Student Protocol for Online Classes - Sample Syllabus text

**The online classroom has some unique protocols.**

1. In an effort to support fellow students who are located in areas with limited bandwidth (often rural and remote locations), all students are advised to turn off their video cameras, unless asked to open them by their instructors.
2. Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
3. When wanting to ask a question, students can generally use the chat function or the raise your hand feature. Some instructors will stop periodically to address questions. Each course instructor will inform the class of their preferred way to address student questions.
4. Students and instructors have a right to a welcoming and respectful learning environment. Just like unauthorized recording of a class in a face-to-face environment is a violation of privacy norms, so is unauthorized student recording of online classroom sessions. If you wish to have access to recordings of a class, this may be possible under certain circumstances. Please refer to the section on recording of synchronous classes for more details and reach out to the instructor.
5. Since your instructor may record any or all classes for reasons articulated in the recording policy, remember that personal information shared in an online environment is part of a digital record.
6. Being a good digital citizen means that we remember that even when a screen separates you from your instructor or classmates, we must all treat each other with the respect, politeness, and professionalism that is expected from a face-to-face environment. If you wouldn’t say it in a face-to-face environment, it is probably not a good idea to say it an online environment.
7. Because tone is sometimes difficult to read and express in an online environment, particularly in the chat box, it is best practice to avoid sarcasm.
8. Be accountable in the online environment: be present, mindful, and participate.

# Privacy Policy

*To be added.*

# Statement of Changes to Course Evaluation Plan- Sample Syllabus Text

The 2020-2021 academic year is taking place in exceptional circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing and while a vaccine is currently in development it is not currently available. Therefore, it may be incumbent upon us (both faculty and students) during this academic year to quickly adjust the course assessment plan and/or delivery method with little or no notice to protect one another and mitigate the spread of the virus while ensuring that all students have access to a fair and safe learning environment. Please reach out to your instructor if you have questions or concerns.

# Recording of Synchronous Classes (both In-Person and Online)

One of the impacts of the pandemic, whether you are teaching face-to-face or online, is that there is likely to be an increase in the requests for class recordings. Instructors may choose to record their classes for a number of reasons, including:

* Following best practice in online teaching and learning that instructors record their synchronous classes.
* Offering students the opportunity to review the video recordings in order to help reinforce their learning in the course.
* Accommodate students who may be unable to attend due to time zone issues.
* Provide students who are symptomatic and self-isolating the opportunity to follow a face-to-face course remotely when they are feeling well enough to do so.

How lectures are recorded and distributed may vary by individual instructor. It is important to ensure students who enroll in the course can make an informed choice about their privacy and whether they consent to be recorded. Therefore, it is highly recommended that instructors either have a discussion during the first day of class during which options for recording all or some future lectures in the course are discussed collectively (including whether the instructor will categorically refuse to record any lecture) or include text in the course syllabus establishing guidelines for class recordings. We provide suggested guidelines below and approaches to recording class sessions. Please feel free to use or amend the text below to your own classroom circumstances.

## General Guidelines

* Students should be made aware early on that some or all classes in a particular course may be recorded so they can make an informed decision about their participation in the course. Instructors may discuss how recordings may be of additional important this year because of the extenuating circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
* The instructor should verbally remind students at the beginning of a class when a class is being recorded.
* To protect student and instructor privacy, no class recording should be shared with anyone but students enrolled in the course.
* For safety and security reasons, recordings should be made using Blackboard Collaborate only.

## Start-Stop Recording

Instructors and students may agree on a start-stop method to recording the class. This is useful in courses where discussions may be provocative or otherwise uncomfortable. A student may wish to attend and participate, but may be reluctant to have their contributions recorded. In these instances, it may alleviate concern if the student has the option to opt-in and opt-out of being recorded throughout the class. Using a previously agreed-upon phrase (e.g. “Off the record” or “For this room only”) the student is indicating they do not consent having their question or comment recorded as part of the class recording. When saying the phrase at the beginning of their comment, the instructor is to pause the recording and to resume it after the student is done asking the question or making the comment.

## Audio only Recording

To provide students in a face-to-face environment with the opportunity to maintain a comfortable level of anonymity if cameras are used in the online classroom, it may be agreed upon that an audio-only recording of the course be made available. Accompanying visuals, such as PowerPoint slides, may be circulated independently, if needed.

## Recording of Synchronous Classes- Sample Syllabus text

Please note that whether you are in a face-to-face classroom or an online classroom, the course instructor may choose to record classroom activities for various reasons, such as (but not limited to): sharing the recording with a student in the class who may be having difficulty accessing the class live because of low-bandwidth, sharing with a student who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and needs to self-isolate and has an approved request to access a recorded class, or helping a student who is in a different time-zone access the class material when the live class is offered at a difficult time. Alternatively, students who have received prior written permission from the instructor or with an approved Accommodation Plan in place may record classes. Students are reminded that the expectation within a synchronous online class and a face-to-face class is that students are present in real time, unless there is an excused absence.

Whether it is instructor or student initiated classroom recording, it is important to protect intellectual property and maintain the privacy rights of individuals. The following list governs the use of recorded lectures by instructors and students in this class:

1. Recordings are provided to students who are unable to attend the class (either face-to-face or virtually) and are not meant to replace attendance in normal circumstances.
2. The instructor recording a class will do so using the Learning Management System approved by the university (Blackboard Collaborate).
3. The instructor may only approve the distribution of the recorded material to students who are enrolled in the course and only while the course is in progress.
4. All permitted recordings made by students are for personal academic use only. Unauthorized distribution or display of recorded lectures, in full or in part, to anyone inside or outside of the course (including other students) without additional permission from the instructor and any other presenters will be subject to disciplinary action.
5. The recorded lecture is treated as the intellectual property of the instructor.
6. It is the instructor’s responsibility to ensure that any third-party intellectual property is used in accordance with the terms of the license governing the use of such intellectual property and applicable intellectual property laws.

Failure to abide by these principles may result in disciplinary action.

# Policy on Copyright

Copyright and intellectual property are a heightened concern in an online learning environment for many. However, the following sample syllabus text can be used for both face-to-face and online learning environments.

## **Intellectual Property Notice- Sample Syllabus Text[[1]](#footnote-1)**

These course materials are designed for use as part of the (enter course number:section) course at St. Francis Xavier University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian Copyright law.

* Copying this material for distribution (e.g. uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct under StFX’s[*Community Code of Conduct*](https://www.stfx.ca/sites/default/files/Community%20Code%20Senate%20approved%20Dec%202%202019.pdf)and the Senate Policy on[*Academic Integrity*](https://www2.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/sites/mystfx.ca.registrars-office/files/Academic%20Integrity-Mar_2015_0.pdf)and/or legal consequences for violation of copyright law if copyright law has been violated.

## **Copyright Notice- Sample Syllabus Text1**

© [year], Instructor name. **These course materials are designed for use as part of the (enter course number:section) course at St. Francis Xavier University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated.**Unless a users’ right in Canada’s Copyright Act covers the particular use, you may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute this work without the instructor’s express permission.  Failure to abide by these restrictions may constitute grounds for academic misconduct proceedings and/or legal action against you.

The University Library guide to campus copyright is available here: <http://www2.mystfx.ca/library/campus-copyright>.

# Policy on use of Technology in the Classroom- Sample Syllabus Text

Instructors’ policy on technology vary and the following is a sample approach to technology in the classroom:

Students are permitted to use electronic technology in the classroom (both face-to-face and online) only if it directly supports the learning objectives of that class. All other uses of electronic technology (such as for texting, emailing, working on other class projects etc.) are not permitted, as they are often highly distracting, do not support a culture of learning, and are disrespectful to instructors and fellow students. Improper student use of technology in the classroom could result in sanctions being applied by the professor. To ensure this does not happen, consult with your instructor to avoid any misinterpretations.

# Sharing of Instructor PowerPoints- Sample Syllabus Text

Individual instructors have different practices in terms of sharing their course PowerPoint slides (PPTs). Some share only by request. Some do not share and instead direct students to the class recordings, if available. Some always post to Moodle and some only post for a limited time. Please contact the instructor for any of your classes about their practice regarding their PPTs.

# Academic Integrity

A positive approach toward academic integrity should be used at StFX as evidence shows that faculty can reduce dishonest behavior by taking steps to increase the engagement of students in the course. More engaged students feel a sense of ownership and are more committed to their learning. Faculty should make clear at the beginning of the course, and repeatedly throughout it, that as students begin and continue their university studies they are deepening their knowledge base and their ability to think critically about what they are learning. Instructors commit to holding students to the usual high expectations for academic conduct, which is part of the StFX culture.

There is research to support the notion that when a student is frequently reminded of the need for ethical behaviour, including as part of the assessment process, the studentis likely to behave according to academic integrity. One such way is to recommend students sign an Academic Integrity Pledge in which the student agrees to adhere to academic integrity policies. The academic integrity pledge can be found on the Remote Teaching and Learning website.

# Academic Integrity- Sample Syllabus Text

When we invoke the concept of academic integrity, we are speaking about a set of shared values, principles, behaviors, and skills that lie at the heart of learning and scholarship. Everyone in the StFX university community, including faculty and students, is responsible for upholding the values of academic integrity. Upholding principles of academic integrity includes authentically demonstrating your mastery of the knowledge, skills, and abilities within this course. Just as professors are required to uphold principles of academic integrity in their scholarship, you are asked as a student to meet academic integrity standards in their academic work in both face-to-face and online teaching environments. To learn more about your obligations as a student, please refer to section 3.8 of the academic calendar.

To signal your commitment to the principles of academic integrity and to reaffirm your commitment to the highest ethical academic standards, I ask that you read and sign the following academic integrity pledge and return it to me via email (**XXXX@stfx.ca****)** by  **date .**

It is recommended that you provide students with the academic integrity pledge as an attachment in an email to the class or post it on your Moodle page.

<http://www2.mystfx.ca/faculty-development/sites/mystfx.ca.faculty-development/files/Integrity_Pledge.pdf>

# Minimum Technology Requirement- Sample Syllabus Text

Taking and actively participating in an online course requires that you possess or have reliable access to some standard equipment. Included below are some recommended minimum technology requirements to ensure that you have proper digital access to the course. You can find more information on the minimum technology requirements here: [stfx.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1764/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=89348](https://stfx.teamdynamix.com/TDClient/1764/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=89348)

The following link will help you find your way with various software that you will need to use while enrolled at StFX: [bit.ly/stfx-new](http://bit.ly/stfx-new)

1. ##  **Modified from YorkU. Kindly cite York U if you are using it in your syllabus.**

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)