**Accumulated Department Updates**

*(Emails from Prof. David Jones)*

*Most recent update is listed first*

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# **3/25/20 – Part II**

1. **Following up**: I have officially confirmed my interpretation from this morning: We ARE allowed to post/distribute class materials and/or assignments during “no teaching” periods *as long as the “****due date****” is on a “teaching” day*.
2. **Office hours specificity:** I have been instructed that your syllabus MUST specify “how office hours will be held [and] when during the week they will be held”. NOTE: the number of weekly hours listed *must not be less than your contractual obligation*.
3. **Campus access rules**: “Send an email to VP Cobb at [katherine.cobb@baruch.cuny](mailto:katherine.cobb@baruch.cuny), with a justification for retrieval of item(s) needed to provide essential instructional or student-related service. Access will be determined by VP Cobb on a case-by-case basis.”

# **3/25/20 – Part I**

Sorry for the long email. Please read everything carefully and follow all instructions.

1. **New CUNY Academic Calendar**. This is unfortunate, but it is externally imposed by CUNY Central, so there is nothing we can do about it. During the periods of “no teaching” please do not hold any live class or have any assignment or exam due date fall on one of those days. However, it is possible that you MAY be allowed to post/distribute class materials and/or assignments *as long as the “****due date****” is on a “teaching” day*. (Chairs are seeking confirmation on this specific latter point, but we will not receive it before 7pm this evening--I will let you know once I hear officially.) The calendar below IS official:

Originally, there was to be no teaching during April 8-16 (Spring Break). That has changed.

NEW Academic Calendar:

March 25-26: teach

March 27-April 1: NO teaching (“Recalibration Period”)

April 2-April 7: teach

April 8-10: NO teaching (shortened Spring Break)

April 11-May 14: teach (students who affirm that their religion prevents certain activities during April 11-16 should be accommodated)

1. **Syllabi**. Frustratingly, this calendar change means you may have to do yet another revision of your syllabus—at least in terms of the due dates. As a result of this new development, I am shifting my own due date for you to send your syllabus to Sherina. Please re-revise your syllabi and send the new document to Sherina by 9am MONDAY, March 30. (Please do this even if you have already sent her something before.)
2. **In case YOU get sick**. As you revamp your course to account for the new calendar, keep in mind the (tiny) possibility that *someone other than yourself may have to complete your course for you*, should you become ill. With this in mind, I ask you to do all of the following:
   1. **Clear directions.** Your re-revised syllabus that you send Sherina must be very explicit about what assignments are due when, and how a student’s total grade should be calculated.
   2. **Files**. Please create a single electronic file folder that could theoretically be accessed by the department in case of emergency (e.g., a hidden folder on your course Blackboard page, or an electronic Dropbox folder). NOTE: all materials will remain your intellectual property. This folder you create (or your course Blackboard page) should contain:
      1. up-to-date grades for all assignments that students have already completed
      2. any course materials you have pre-prepared for future lessons (recorded lectures, Powerpoints, 3rd party videos)
      3. all student assessment tools you have prepared for future assessments (exams, paper assignments, quizzes, etc.)
   3. **Buddy system?** If you can think of another instructor in the department who, in a pinch, could finish your class and vice versa, *please* coordinate with that person and then send me an email informing me of your pre-arrangement. (If you cannot, I will assign an emergency backup). In the event this contingency is activated, **I will arrange for pro-rated extra pay**.
   4. **Inform me.** Most importantly, if you become too ill to complete your teaching assignment, please inform me immediately!

Thank you for your careful attention to these requests, and for your continued dedication to your students and this department.

David

# **3/23/20 – Part II**

Sorry that I have not previously been 100% clear about this, but it seems that details about the Pass/Fail option are still being worked out.

It IS the case (as I noted before) that the deadline for switching to P/F is extended.

However, Baruch/CUNY have not yet worked out whether or not to waive some or all of the standing conditions/restrictions for the number and type of classes that P/F can be used for.

The standing restrictions and conditions of the P/F grade are:

1. The Pass/Fail option is valid for students in the Weissman School of Arts & Sciences.
2. Students are allowed only ONE Pass/Fail option during any semester.
3. Students are allowed only TWO Pass/ Fail grading options (grades) toward their undergraduate degree. This option may NOT be exercised within the credit area/requirements for a student’s major, minor, or towards the fulfillment of general education requirements (the Required Core, Flexible Core, and College Option of the Pathways curriculum, or Tiers I, II, and III of the Common Core curriculum). [POL 1101, 2260, 2332, 2001 may be taken as flexible core by some students]
4. Students are not allowed to use the Pass/Fail option for: CMP/ENG 2800; CMP/ENG 2850; or 1000-level courses offered by the Department of Natural Sciences.
5. The pass/fail grading option may not be used for the additional BA requirements – the pre-Weissman Core: COM 1010 and foreign language, or for students following the Common Core Curriculum, foreign language, natural science, and cultural studies.

Since the deadline to decide is now far off (May 14), I suggest that you advise student NOT to change the grade status of their classes until these possible waivers are worked out. Again, I will let you know as soon as I learn the outcome of these discussions.

Sorry for adding confusion on this to you and your students. Feel free to blame me if your students are upset about this new info.

David

# **3/23/20 – Part I**

As we begin our first full week of distance instruction, I wanted to pass alone some key updates and recommendations:

1. **Campus closed**: The campus is now closed except “by appointment”. We have not yet been told who to contact for an appointment, but until then you can contact me. In any event, a visit would only be to pick up materials from your office, you will not be permitted to “use” the office. Note that the Library and all computer labs are also closed to students.
2. **Student textbooks**: Anticipate that many students may no longer have access to their print textbooks (they may by physically separated from them). Be prepared to suggest replacement online readings, which you should post or link to on your Blackboard page (or send via email). You can find online materials (e.g., periodicals, and sometimes e-textbooks) using Baruch’s Newman Library website: <https://library.baruch.cuny.edu/>
3. **Missing/sick students**: In order to assess which students might be “missing” from your class, I recommend that this week you assign a very easy assignment (e.g., BB survey or reading quiz) to see who responds (note that you can also set BB to track individual student usage by date). If you believe any of your students are “missing” (not responding to any of your prompts), please send an email notifying Art King: [art.king@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:art.king@baruch.cuny.edu). If a student informs you that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, please Notify Andrea Caviness: [Andrea.Caviness@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Andrea.Caviness@baruch.cuny.edu). Students who, for whatever reason, do not complete the rest of the semester can theoretically be given an INC grade at the end of the semester. Regardless of how frequently or infrequently they check in with you, you *cannot drop them*. You must allow them to complete any and all assignments, even if they only reappear on the last day.
4. **Redundancy reminder**: In this environment, use redundancy in your teaching wherever possible. Specifically:
   1. In live *platform*: If you plan live interaction on Blackboard Collaborate, be sure to also send a backup link to Zoom, in case BB proves unstable at that time (which has been happening) and vice-versa.
   2. In *content* format: If you do a live lecture, be sure to record it while you give it (this is possible on all platforms), the post it to BB so that students whose internet was not working at the time are still able to view it later.
   3. In *contact* format: I recommend that you post all communications with students as announcements on your BB page, then also check the box to send the announcement as an email.
5. **Peer teaching observations**: If your teaching was not already observed this semester, the observation is hereby cancelled, per CUNY. The possible exceptions are for Cipolina, Halbac, and Hughes—I am awaiting guidance for these special cases.
6. **Summer/fall?** Some have asked me: “Will CUNY continue distance learning for classes in Summer? Fall?” As of now, there have been no official statements in this regard. Nevertheless, I think it is wise to consider this as a real possibility. I will let you know as soon as I hear anything concrete.

Thank you again for all you are doing. Please stay safe.

David

# **3/20/20**

Hi again,

Sorry to add to your email inbox, but I wanted to check in with everyone and give a few updates.

1. **Office**: Given the confirmed COVID-19 cases of a Baruch administrator and a Baruch student, I recommend that you NOT come into Baruch if you can avoid it.
2. **Sherina**: For the same reason, Sherina will no longer be coming to campus at all. She remains on the job at home, M-F 9-5.
3. **Syllabi**: A reminder that you MUST revise each course syllabus (as described below) and MUST email these to Sherina ASAP—no  later than 9am March 26.
4. **Instructor problems**: If you are having problems that require my attention, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. I prefer email (at least initially) to help me keep track.
5. **Student questions**: If students have questions outside of the scope of your particular class, they can be referred to Baruch’s homepage, which has a link COVID-19 resources for students, both in reference to Baruch: <https://www.baruch.cuny.edu/coronavirus/>, and to CUNY more generally: <https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/>, including contact info for specific issues.

Thank you so much for your on-going hard work!

David

# **3/17/20**

Hi all,

Thank you for all of your diligence and ingenuity in revamping your courses on the fly. I have not heard any complaints from students yet, so that is a good sign that you are in-touch with them, just as I asked. I appreciate this!

I have a few new items, and also a couple reminders.

1. **Office access**: While I recommend that you not come into the office, all of you are allowed to come in as you see fit. For example, if your internet at home is unstable, you may come in to use the office for internet. Be sure to bring your Baruch ID, and you will have to sign in.
2. **Sherina**: Sherina will be working primarily from home for the rest of the semester. We plan for her to be on campus for one half-day per week: Tuesdays, 11am-3pm. Otherwise, if you need assistance or have questions, please contact her using her regular Baruch email: [Sherina.Jonhn@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:Sherina.Jonhn@baruch.cuny.edu). She is on the job 9-5 M-F. I will also be around campus on-and-off.
3. **Revised syllabi**: A reminder that it is vital that you do 2 things: (A) fully revise your syllabi to reflect the changes brought about by the shift to distance learning. For example, you must explicitly state what platform(s) is/are being used (email? Blackboard? Zoom?), how and when office hours will be conducted, how assignments have changed, and how grades will be calculated.  (B) By 9am March 26 at the very latest, you must email the revised syllabi to Sherina. I will be asked for documentation of our transition plans, and I must have all your syllabi for this accounting.
4. **Dept’s COVID website**: Els continues to add new useful information everyday to our Dept COVID website: <https://baruch-polsci-onlineteaching.weebly.com/cuny-info.html>. I urge you to check in and browse for new items regularly. For example, advice for students who want to convert to P/F or withdraw, students who have limited internet, how to get a fully licensed (unlimited) Zoom account, how to do almost anything in Blackboard, etc. We are sorting through a lot of stuff. These are the most important nuggets, in our view.
5. **Communication with students**: This is a reminder to keep up your regular (at least once a week) communication with your students. Also, be aware that not all students automatically check their Baruch email, so don’t assume all your email messages are being received. You may want to try using redundant forms of communication, such as posting an announcement to Blackboard (for students who go there, but not check their Baruch email) and then also sending a copy to the announcement by email (with just the check of a box!).
6. **Redundancy of content**: If you are attempting to give a synchronous lecture, please also record it and post it in case students miss it live.

That’s enough for now. Keep up the great work!

David

# **3/16/20**

Sorry, below is a longer version of my previous email. Note the portion at the end about potential implications of P/F for financial aid and academic progress:

1. **Last Day to File for Pass/No Credit/Fail Option** - For eligible students that meet the requirements of our "Pass/Fail/No Credit Option" policy.(<https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/registrar/resources/CUNY-Uniform-Grade-Glossary-and-Guidelines-08012018-1.pdf> - Page 5), the University will move the deadline to Thursday, May 14, 2020. This is the published "Last Day of Classes," and before final examination week (05/16-05/22), and also prior to the "End of the Spring Term,"(05/22/2020). See note below on possible financial aid impact on students.
2. **Course Withdrawal Period** - Last Day to Drop with a Grade of "W." The current deadline date listed on the calendar is Wednesday, April 1, 2020. We will move that date to Thursday, May 14, 2020. This is the published "Last Day of Classes," and before final examination week (05/16-05/22) and also prior to the "End of the Spring Term." (05/22/2020).
3. **Incomplete Grades**- Students who receive an INC grades in the Spring 2020 term would generally be required to submit outstanding work, "according to a deadline established by individual colleges of the University but no later than the last day of the following semester." (<https://www.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/registrar/resources/CUNY-Uniform-Grade-Glossary-and-Guidelines-08012018-1.pdf> - Page 4). The University will allow students to submit incomplete work to faculty for resolution of INC grades for courses taken in Spring 2020 through the Fall 2020 semester, and the new deadline for faculty to submit Incomplete to Grade forms to the Registrar's Office for resolution will be Wednesday, December 23, 2020. This date coincides with the "Final Grade Submission Deadline" for Fall 2020 courses.

[Note on Pass/No Credit/Fail Option: Students should consult with their academic and financial aid advisor to confirm if such election will still allow them to count the course towards their major/degree requirements, if credit is earned with a grade of P. In order to receive this grade, a student needs to continue participating in academically related activities, complete all assignments, and take the final exam/culminating experience. If a passing letter grade is earned, the student will receive a grade of 'P' and credit for the course with no impact on GPA. If a failing grade is earned (F), the student will receive a grade of NC/NP which does not affect the GPA. Students must remain in compliance with Federal and State Satisfactory Academic Progress guidelines.]