Considerations for Contingency Plans

While it is impossible to plan for every possibility, the more you can anticipate and prepare for, the more likely you are to have equitable and fair solutions without having to scramble at the last minute. The CoE recommends developing Hybrid-Flexible (HyFlex) courses because they build-in options in case of another emergency classroom closure. A HyFlex course offers equivalent in-person and online lessons for every learning objective. Whether a student attends class in a physical classroom or engages in the equivalent Canvas lesson, they receive the same quality of instruction. Instructors who teach the same or similar classes can collaborate to distribute the workload in creating materials for such a course. Some faculty have also enlisted GSIs and IAs to help with recording videos and preparing materials (please remember that GSIs and IAs are students too and keep in mind the time that they are hired to work - typically a maximum of a 0.5 appointment for GSIs and about 10 hours/week for IAs; please speak with your department administrator to confirm).

We recommend that you discuss contingency plans with your teaching team and communicate them to students. The questions in the table below can help you prepare to discuss or begin a plan. As a general guideline, **please remember to teach with empathy and also take care of yourself.**

If your course is in a physical classroom and you have not prepared a HyFlex environment, what happens in the event of **another emergency campus closure**?		
How will students access and engage in learning activities?		
How will you check-in and support their learning?		
How will you assess student learning?		
How will you communicate with them?		
How will you build community?		
What happens if **you or someone else in the teaching team needs to take a break** in their work (in the event of illness - physical or mental, caring for sick relatives, bereavement, etc)?		
What self-care resources are available for you to use or share with others?		
How will the following course activities change?	*Who will do it?*	*How will it change?*
❏ teach the synchronous class		
❏ prepare and upload asynchronous videos		
❏ send class announcements		
❏ check-in with the students		

❏ setup and hold "office-hour" appointments		
❏ monitor Canvas discussion		
❏ monitor and answer questions on a message board		
❏ create and upload assignments and assessments		
❏ grade assignments and assessments		
❏ update the gradebook		
How will any changes be communicated to the students?		

How can a **student who needs to take a break** in their work (in the event of illness - physical or mental, caring for sick relatives, bereavement, etc) succeed in your class?	
What self-care resources are available for you to share with students?	
How will you build in flexibility into due dates and assignments?	*Options: allow reasonable extensions to due dates; allow students to drop one assignment; allow students to propose an alternative assignment to demonstrate or practice their learning.*
Will you allow incompletes (the student receives a temporary "I" on their gradebook and can complete work the following semester until a mutually agreed date)? If so, under what circumstances?	*Keep in mind that this increases your workload for the following semester.*

What happens if **you or a student loses power or internet access** during a critical time (e.g. during a class videoconference, or while uploading an assignment just before the due date)?	
If a student has trouble connecting during a videoconference?	*Options: record the videoconference and upload it to Canvas; provide electronic handouts and notes of any activities done during the videoconference, ask students to complete them and submit through Canvas. (Make sure the handout includes all of the nuanced instructions that you would have explained in the videoconference.)*
If you lose connectivity during a videoconference?	*Options: ensure that another member of your instructional team is prepared to teach; prepare an asynchronous lesson that addresses the same learning objectives.*
If a student loses internet access just before a due date?	*Options: build in some flexibility into your due dates (e.g. you're allowed to drop one assignment); frequently remind students to download/upload materials from/to Canvas with enough time before due dates.*

Syllabus Statements About Covid-19

It is a good idea to include parts of the plans that are relevant to the students in your syllabus. For example:

> ***Course Continuity/Contingency Plan****: In the case that we have to move class online due to unforeseen circumstances (like the Covid-19 Pandemic Winter, Spring, Summer 2020), we will "meet" via a combination of Canvas lessons with discussions, small group Zoom sessions with the instructor, and Canvas posts. We will adapt the class as best we can to maintain the same level of learning experience, while prioritizing your safety and stability. If we must utilize a course continuity plan, you will receive a detailed revised course schedule and clear instructions for how to proceed with the course. - from Taylor Sims' syllabus at UM

Also, consider acknowledging the challenging times due to the pandemic. For example:

> *We are all adjusting to the changes and regulations put in place in response to COVID-19. I hope that we will all work together as a community to adapt to these times and this new situation as best as we can. I have tried to add flexibility to our course structure and assignments to accommodate anyone who may now be lacking resources they originally thought they would have available. However, if you have suggestions for how we might support your learning in this course, during these trying times, please do not hesitate to let us know.*