
From: Lynn Cooley, Dean of the Graduate School <grad.dean@message.yale.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, June 24, 2020 12:07 PM
Subject: Plans for Fall 2020 Graduate School courses and teaching

Yale

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

In this message:

Plans for Fall 2020 residential/remote instruction [outlining the rationale, policies, and resources](#) that will be available to graduate students. An explanation of [plans for online course registration](#).

June 24, 2020

Dear graduate students,

We are writing to update you on how Graduate School and Yale College faculty are planning for the Fall 2020 semester in light of the current public health situation. All of us are committed to ensuring that your education continues to be rigorous and engaging. Faculty have devoted countless hours to refining their courses and are eager to welcome you this fall.

This memo describes how Fall 2020 plans will specifically affect graduate students in their roles as students/researchers and as teaching fellows. It contains three sections: Planning for Residential/Remote Instruction; Policies and Resources for Remote Instruction; and Registration and Pre-Term Advising. We encourage you to read it in full.

Planning for Residential/Remote Instruction

Given the uncertainties of the fall semester, we have asked instructors to plan their courses with a residential/remotemodel in mind. This model assumes that most students in GSAS will return to New Haven to live off campus as well as on campus in less dense conditions than previous. Classes will be offered primarily using remote modalities for online attendance.

In certain exceptional cases, classes that cannot be conducted entirely online (such as lab- or studio-based courses) may have in-person components applying social distancing measures if the public health situation permits. Some additional decisions about content and delivery will take place at the departmental level in keeping with public health constraints.

We considered a number of possible models for fall teaching: each model, including the residential/remote approach, has drawbacks. However, residential/remote offers the following advantages:

- **The residential/remote model is flexible.**

The residential/remote model permits us to transition swiftly to a fully remote scenario should we need to adapt to changes in the public health situation.

- **Remote teaching allows us to adapt at the local level.**

If we need to quarantine locally or isolate members of our community, remote teaching allows quarantined or isolated instructors/students to continue teaching and learning.

Should we need to contact-trace, remote teaching reduces opportunities for contact and simplifies the process.

Remote teaching also allows faculty or teaching fellows to remain at home with their children if schools are closed, if they care for vulnerable people, or because they are vulnerable to infection themselves.

- **Including a residential component enables students who rely on university housing to return to campus.**

Students who can return to campus will have communities in which to learn together as much as is possible with social distancing measures in place. Students can also learn from home without impeding progress toward their degrees.

This model allows us to accommodate students who prefer not to return to campus or are unable for any reason to get to New Haven in time for the first semester.

- **The residential/remote model limits face-to-face student interaction with faculty and staff.**

This helps to reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19 to vulnerable members of our community.

Policies and Resources for Remote Instruction

Graduate School and Yale College Faculty have come together with staff and student representatives to form the FAS Academic Planning Committees and Task Forces. These groups have spent hundreds of hours developing an extensive set of resources to help instructors prepare their courses for remote delivery through investments in technology and innovations in pedagogy. These faculty-developed resources complement the resources already available through the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning.

Evaluations for undergraduate and graduate courses will take the form of letter grades. GSAS will use the H through F grading scheme. Any further adjustments to policies (for example, regarding incompletes) will be announced in the coming weeks.

Registration and Pre-Term Advising

GSAS and Yale College will adopt a pre-registration and advising system that allows for advance planning while preserving students' ability to explore new courses. This change affects those of you taking courses as well as those of you serving as Teaching Fellows.

From August 10-21, Yale College students will participate in an online early course registration

“shopping” period. On August 21, they will submit their course selections. Classes will begin on August 31, followed by a shop/add/drop period that will run through the first week of classes.

The Graduate School will follow the same schedule, with the difference that the shop/drop/add period will not close until September 11.

The upcoming semester will be experimental and could be challenging in ways that we may not yet be able to see. We will learn from our successes -- as well as the outcomes we may not expect - to become better with each step. Thank you for the effort and dedication you bring to meeting the challenge of finding creative new ways to continue our mission of learning and teaching even while we are constrained by the pandemic circumstances.

Sincerely,

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