
Communicating on Zoom and Teams

Learning online and remotely using Zoom and Microsoft Teams means practicing [netiquette](#) to facilitate your learning and interactions with professors and peers. If you're new to these platforms, Laurier has web guides for students getting started with [Zoom](#) and [Teams](#).

The Deans of Students have set out [some guidelines](#) for courtesy and professionalism in the virtual classroom. In this resource, we're going to review good practices for communicating on Zoom and Teams. The aim is to help communicate effectively and professionally while using these platforms.

Cameras and microphones

It's a good idea to have your camera on at least some of the time; you may find that it makes you feel more connected to the class. But if you need or want to have your camera off, that's okay too; professors know that there are lots of good reasons to do so. Remember to mute yourself in large classes to avoid feedback and audio interruptions. Unmute yourself only when you are speaking.

Raising hand and making reactions

Using the hand raising and reaction functions on Zoom and Teams can be effective ways of participating in class. They show you're paying attention and engaged in what's happening. But remember that these functions can get lost in a large group setting, where the professor may be unable to see every student's screen. Also, consider the timing of your contribution so you don't interrupt. If a question comes up in class and there isn't an appropriate time to address it, follow up with the professor via email or during office hours.

Chat functions

The chat functions on Zoom and Teams are like the spaces of the classroom, where peers and instructors can read and respond to students' contributions. When enabled, these chat functions can facilitate discussion and address questions during learning. Keep in mind that not all professors keep the chat feature open during synchronous classes, however. Because the chat is like the classroom, it should be approached as a public space: what appears in the chat can be seen by everyone.

In the chat on Zoom and Teams:

- Use language that is professional, clear and respectful of others. Think before you write!
- Write in complete sentences to ensure you are understood. Writing a message over Zoom or Teams should not feel the same as writing an instant message or a text to a friend.
- Avoid sarcasm: remember that there aren't any visual cues in the chat room to help others interpret your meaning.
- Stay on topic and stay focused on the course material. Avoid informal chit-chat.
- Gauge the context
 - Follow the policies, rules, and guidelines provided in each class. Instructors' expectations vary regarding how formal students should be in the chat.

-
- Observe the conduct of peers to understand how best to communicate in the chat.
 - Remember that classes are often recorded, and that the chat transcript may be part of the recording. The host may also be able to view aspects of your interactions, such as “pinned” screens and private chats, under the parameters of the meeting.
 - Ask yourself: Does my comment or question have wider relevance? Raise personal and individual issues in a direct message to the meeting host (the instructor or TA) at an appropriate time or, even better, through an email that you send after class.