

# COVID-19 (coronavirus)

## Resources for the Museum Field



### *Transitioning to Online Teaching in Museum Studies*

When you wrote your syllabi for this semester a few months ago, chances are you didn't imagine shifting to online teaching halfway through the term! Yet here we are. And the good news is that there has been a lot of conversation about how we can best continue to serve, support, and even teach our students.

The Museum Studies Network of AAM has collected tips for online teaching from experienced online museum studies faculty as well as others. We're pleased to be able to share these here. If you have additional questions or contributions, please share them with us and we'll circulate them to our community.

*These recommendations are not to be taken as legal advice or a definitive answer for any particular museum, but rather as a guide for preparedness for the field.*

### Teaching online when no one planned for it:

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1. For instructors, **online teaching is different from face-to-face teaching**. It requires a different set of skills and tricks—and those take time to develop. You are not going to develop them this week.
2. For students, **online learning is different from face-to-face learning**. It requires a different set of skills and a different degree of buy-in. If your students haven't taken online classes before, they will have a learning curve.
3. **Embrace the asynchronous**. Your students (and you) are juggling a lot right now. Discussion boards and blog posts can be written any time and reviewed by the rest of the class any time. If you assign group work, let the groups work out when they can meet. Keep it simple.
4. **Don't record a full lecture**. Students learn more effectively with short presentations and different types of delivery. Narrate a 10-15 minute slideshow and upload it to your institution's online learning platform.
5. **Be flexible**. Not all of your students will have the same level of resources available. Assume they are doing the best they can.
6. **Simplify**. This is not the time to ask anyone to become an expert in new software.
7. **Be patient**. Be kind. Be the adult.

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## Online resources for teaching:

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1. Zoom is a great tool for running online sessions that you can record and share: <https://zoom.us/>. Skype works well, as does FaceTime. Connecting via webcam can feel awkward at first, but it's worth it. It's nice to be able to make eye contact and nod.
2. Google Drive is simple and accessible to anyone with a Gmail account. You can use it to share documents, spreadsheets, etc. with your students; you can also use it to create collaborative documents that multiple people can work on.
3. Here's a link to an [online course survey](#) created by Sara Ronis (St. Mary's University) for her students. Ronis asks her students what resources are available to them off-campus, if they've taken online courses, and if they have particular concerns. You can make your own version and ask students to complete it.
4. This [co-authored Google doc](#) is a source for sharing online teaching resources.
5. In [this twitter thread](#), Bill Harder (American University) shares his experience taking classes online unexpectedly.
6. If you've never been on Twitter, it is a good resource these days. [#AcademicTwitter](#) and [#CovidCampus](#) are active threads from faculty sharing experiences during this time. [#MuseumFromHome](#) is a thread of online museum tours and events.

## Resources specific to teaching museum studies:

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1. [Museum Computer Network](#) has compiled a [guide to virtual museum resources, e-learning, and online collections](#). Not only can your students use the resources listed; they can also think bigger thoughts about how and why museums share information, and how museums relate to their communities.
2. UNESCO has opened its digital library. [Look up museums and you'll get 21,622 hits](#)—plenty for students to explore if they can't get to those books you put on reserve in the library!
3. There are many solid museum [podcasts](#). There's [Google Arts and Culture](#). There's [online content created by museums](#). Send your students to explore these sites and report back to the class about what they found and how it relates to your topic.

## About those internships:

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1. Many of our programs require an internship course, so that means that we have many museum studies interns who are facing disruption as museums close.
2. It's early days yet, so we are figuring this out as we go. No one has a magic bean we're all scrambling.
3. MSN recommends open, clear, and empathic communication between the program, the student, and the museum. We all need to be flexible and creative.
4. Have you developed some strategies that work? Share them with us! Let's pool our knowledge so we can support our students more effectively.

Thanks to Stephanie Brown and Sarah Chicone of the Museum Studies Network for contributing to this resource. If you would like to contribute to a resource guide, please contact AAM's Content Team at [content@aam-us.org](mailto:content@aam-us.org).