

COMMS 100 ONLINE TEACHING

As we all know, this course will be taught online from now on and I have collated some important information for you to ensure your online study experience is going as smoothly as possible!

Online teaching will commence from 30th March onward, continuing with week 4 of the syllabus.

Semester One will be extended by one week (now ending 12 June). The midsemester break will not be moved. Assignment due dates have been adjusted accordingly.

In order to ensure that students can continue to participate in the course and learn at a distance we will deliver the course as follows.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

Canvas

Canvas remains our main tool for posting course material, major announcements and submitting assignments.

Lectures

Recorded lectures will be posted every week at the time they would normally take place (Wednesday 3 pm). It is a good idea to maintain your routine and watch your lecture right there and then (if you can...) instead of putting it off and potentially juggling a huge load of different lectures at the end of the week.

Lecture links will be posted to the weekly topic page each Wednesday.

Tutorials

We will do Q and A sessions via Zoom during allotted tutorial times. You can ask general questions about the course content or talk through your assignments (or wave to your peers). Students can sign up on a google sheets for a 15 min time slot (up to five to six students can sign up for the same slot). The google docs are distributed by your GTAs.

Ideally people should stick to their allocated tutorial times, but we realise that you might find yourself in an unfavourable time zone (etc). Please get in touch with your tutor to make arrangements.

Tutorials will not be recorded. This is a safe space to ask questions, make mistakes and exchange ideas.

Our tutorials turned Q and A sessions will not be mandatory. These sessions are meant to give you an opportunity to talk through questions (particularly those that are too long for emails) and get in touch with your GTAs about the content of the week.

OK, but how does Zoom work?

Your GTA will send you a Zoom link and you can participate in the session by clicking on the link (this will automatically download Zoom). You can also just sit in for a bit, if you don't feel confident to ask a question straight away. In general this is a low pressure environment though. We are all just hanging out in our living rooms ☺.

Students can also sign up for their own Zoom account. Just use your UPI to sign in at: <https://auckland.zoom.us/>

Tutorial Participation

In order to get your tutorial participation mark you have to do the tutorial preparation each week and submit them to Canvas by the due date. The prep questions will be posted early each week.

While your tutor will have a look at your prep, we cannot give individual feedback to each submission. If you are unsure about a particular concept or want to know what other people have brainstormed, make use of Zoom sessions, discussion boards (see below) or get in touch with fellow students on Piazza.

Office Hours

Office hours will run as usual, at the scheduled times, via Zoom. No bookings are required to participate in these slots but we will treat them as “walk-in sessions”. If there are too many students, you might find yourself in the Zoom waiting room and we will talk to you shortly.

If you find the Zoom conversation a little too confronting in the beginning, you can also turn off your video and audio and use the chat function to ask questions. Ideally though we'd love to see you!

Hours

To reiterate: All of our tutorial and office hours will stay the same. You will remain in your tutorial slot but have zero travelling time to get to class or offices!

Tutorial Discussion Boards

Each GTA will oversee a discussion board specific to their tutorial classes on Canvas. These discussion boards provide students with an opportunity to communicate with their class and tutor about assignments, general questions, and ideas from the lecture.

Discussion boards will be monitored by your GTA and they will collect general questions and answer them towards the end of the week. Occasionally we may also use these boards for group discussion etc.

Ideally, the discussion boards will reduce email traffic and enable each GTA to stay in touch with their students.

Podcasts and video clips

Each GTA will post a short weekly podcast to address questions on their discussion board and to stay in touch with students. We will use these to answer frequently asked questions about course content and to cover general assignment advice. Expect these near the end of the week.

Occasionally we may also post little clips that are relevant to the content or to help you with assignment prep in particular.

Where possible we will make a written version/ summary available to students as well.

Piazza

Piazza will run as usual. We will use this platform to conduct course and content-related discussion with the whole class. It's a quick way to benefit from the collective knowledge of your classmates and instructors. We encourage you to ask questions when you're struggling to understand a concept, term or idea and to find out what your peers have made of these ideas.

Students remain anonymous to each other, but we expect everyone to be respectful and polite in their communication. Please also take note that you are not anonymous to instructors.

We kindly ask you to not double-up question. Just have a look if the questions has already been posted by someone else.

Piazza is a particular great tool for collective exam prep and content-clarification.

If you haven't signed up to Piazza yet, please do so here:
piazza.com/aucklanduni.ac.nz/semester12020/comms100

Assignments

Assignment due dates have been postponed and the new due dates are published on Canvas. All assignments can be submitted online via Canvas.

Library Services

Library services are available online. This means you can still do your research as long as you are using the materials available online.

Library staff are available for students to help with assignment preparation online.

For further details check <https://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/>

- Assessment Help Drop-Ins will be available remotely via Zoom 12 – 4pm, Monday – Friday.
- Online resources – no change
- Workshops – available as self-paced videos for students to work through.
- Students can use Ask Us online form as well.

Empathy and Equity

Finally please keep in mind that this is an unprecedented situation for all of us and we simply don't know what personal situation each person is facing. I ask you to be kind and generous to your classmates and teachers. And to allow for a bit of trial and error as we figure out how to best deliver the course to everyone.

We will do our best to accommodate student needs as best as possible and we strongly encourage you to let us know if you have trouble accessing material, can't make allotted slots or feel in need of further support.

Ultimately, there are 500 people in this class. Not everything is going to go according to plan and we ask for your patience, a little bit of humor and cooperation as we figure this out together. In any case the COMMS 100 team and I are completely committed to delivering the course as best as we can.

Please take care of yourselves and each other.

We look forward to working this out together with you.

Kia kaha.

Jenny (with Amy, Laura, Erin, Jonathan and Grace)