

Procedure for Zoom Classes

PvP Seminar

Spring, 2021

We learned some things about Zoom classes in the last semester and a half. They have some advantages: (1) One-on-one dialogue probably works better in Zoom than it does in a large classroom. (2) It's easier to break down into smaller groups and then come back together than it is in classrooms. (3) Side conversations, polling, and hand-raising are easier than they are in a classroom. There are also some decided disadvantages: (1) Lectures do not work well in Zoom. (2) Students (and even the instructor) get tired faster in Zoom, and the technology makes it easier for the students to 'tune out'. (3) Even when students are not tired, it's a lot easier to be passive in a Zoom class than it is in an in-person class.

With these points in mind, I have adopted some simple procedures to maximize the advantages of Zoom and minimize its disadvantages.

- (1) There will be no lectures (inappropriate for a seminar anyway).
- (2) But if the classes are going to be devoted to discussion, we need to have something to discuss. So I'm asking you to post something on the Discussion Board before the class (before noon on the day of the evening class). What should you post? Anything, it need not be long. Something that interested you. Something that puzzled you. A couple of sentences is fine. Don't go over a paragraph or two. There are some very broad questions on the discussion board with each class.
- (3) Even with a small class with a group as diverse in interests and background as this one is likely to be, breaking down into smaller groups is likely to be fruitful. I haven't figured out yet quite how to do it, but the Background Questionnaire (attached) will probably give me some ideas.
- (4) If a question occurs to you in class and you don't want to raise your hand to ask it, use the chat function. I'm not very good at keeping track of chat, so I'm likely to ask someone (probably a different person for each class) to act as chat monitor.
- (5) Anonymity is a real problem when we were trying to create an interactive group at a distance. For this reason I am asking that you keep your video on during class. If you don't want people to see your messy room, put a background picture behind you or use a screen. (I use a green screen in the background of my Zoom; my office at home is even messier than the one at the Law School.) For the same reason, I am asking you to sign into Zoom with something that resembles your official name. 'Charlie Donahue' is fine. 'Charlie' all by itself is not (there may be 2 Charles's in the class).
- (6) I taught a seminar-like offering last semester, and found that taking a ten-minute break in the middle of the class helped. I'll do that in this seminar. Technically, if I do that, I'm supposed to run the class until 7:10. I'm not going to insist if you promise not to report me to the Feds if I don't.

Zoom Code of Conduct

1. All participants are expected to be on mute when not speaking.
2. To the degree that it is possible, all participants are expected to have their videos on.
3. Use of chat to all participants is allowed, even encouraged. Please no private chat, other than to the instructor or the designated chat monitor.
4. To participate in the discussion, participants are requested either to use the raise-hand function in Zoom or to raise their hands physically.