

Navigating the 2020 Election: Quick Guide for Instructors & TAs

This guide is intended to help instructors who are seeking advice about how to run their classes during election week. For example:

- Are there things that I should consider doing on election day?
- What should I do if the election result remains in doubt for some days?
- What should I do if there is national or regional turmoil that could affect my students or members of my teaching team?
- What should I do if my students, or members of my teaching team, exhibit stress and anxiety related to the election?

While the guidance below is provided in the context of the election, it is equally applicable to other current events that impact our students and broader Stanford community.

As a general reminder, instructors should avoid presenting their own political views in formal classroom meetings. If students ask instructors for their opinions or analyses, instructors might share their thoughts on the election, especially if they complement course content and not sharing would be inconsistent with learning objectives.

Finally, as instructors plan to support students, it is important that they should also plan for their own self-care. This might include anticipating personal reactions to events and identifying support resources so that instruction can continue.

Before the Election

- Instructors should plan ahead for balancing teaching and student learning with current events that may impact student learning. For example, on election day some students may have to wait in long lines to vote, and may not be able to come to class. Others may be serving as poll workers, which is an important civic service.
- Create a plan for election week and for successfully completing remaining classes and the academic quarter should there be an interruption. Communicate this plan to students as soon as possible so that they know what to expect.
- Make course materials available to students who may not be able to attend classes.
- Consider alternative timelines for assessments and the process by which students may request extensions or opportunities to make-up work.
- Take a moment in the classroom to acknowledge outside events and how they may affect teaching and learning. If you and your students are comfortable doing so, create spaces for discussion or other types of engagement. Discussion should be respectful, acknowledging differences in perspectives and viewpoints..
- Be mindful that your TAs may also be stressed or anxious about current events, their course responsibilities, and supporting students in the class.

Election Day

- Wear an “I voted” sticker to demonstrate your involvement in the political process or use an “[I voted](#)” Zoom background during class, if you feel comfortable doing so.
- Provide flexibility to permit students to engage in civic engagement and reflection (e.g., cancel class, record lectures for later viewing, adjust assignments) as endorsed by the Faculty Senate in response to a suggestion by the [ASSU](#).

After the Election

- Recognize that regardless of an individual’s personal political leanings, all members of the community may be trying to track, understand, and process election results.
- Take a moment to acknowledge outside events. If you and your students are comfortable doing so, create a space for discussion or reflection.
- Remember that students process events differently; some may find comfort in community and conversation about events, while others may prefer a sense of normalcy in the classroom to focus on academic work.
- Have a plan for students who are unable to attend class or complete work.
- Remind students
 - Nov. 6 deadline to change grading basis and course withdrawal.
 - Nov. 20 deadline to request an Incomplete if they are unable to complete coursework at this time.
- Be prepared to direct students who seem to be struggling to resources ([Red Folder](#))
- Take care of yourself.

RESOURCES

Teaching Resources

- [Teaching Commons](#)
- [ACT to Sustain Learning Through Current Events](#) (one page infographic)
- [ACT to Sustain Learning Through Current Events](#) (long version)
- [LARA Method for Managing Tense Talk](#)
- [Promoting Student Flourishing](#) in the classroom
- University of Florida Handbook for [Facilitating Difficult Conversations in the Classroom](#)

Support Resources for Students, Instructors, and Staff

- [Red Folder](#) a guide to student support resources, including confidential resources
- [Stanford Well-Being Resources](#) for students
- [Office of Accessible Education](#)
- [Bechtel International Center](#)
- [Faculty Staff Help Center](#) a wellness resource for instructors
- [Office of Religious & Spiritual Life](#)

Additional Resources

- [Administrative Guide 1.5.1: Political Campaign and Lobbying Activities](#)