

Course Communication Guide - Spring 2021

Establishing a communication policy and procedure will help you and your students stay on track throughout the semester. The goal of course communications is to provide students with enough information and encouragement to keep them on track, while also not overwhelming them with too much information.

Here are a few tips for effective communication:

- Use the Announcements tool in Isidore to send weekly course updates that can include reminders of upcoming due dates, summarized group feedback from an assignment, and/or invitations for assistance such as weekly office hours.
- Look a week or two ahead to ensure everything you want to communicate is included in that weekly email.
- Convey a tone of compassion and understanding. Let students know you are invested in their success. This might mean ending your communications with an “open door” by letting them know how to reach you if they have concerns.

To help you establish an effective communication schedule, we have provided example emails that you can send throughout the semester. You are more than welcome to use these example emails, but please make sure to modify them so they fit your class.

1. [Welcome Email](#) - Send two weeks before class begins
2. [First Day of Class Email](#) - Send a day or two before class begins
3. [Course Communication Policy](#) - Emphasize in welcome email and first day of class
4. [Transitioning to Blended Learning](#) - Send a week before Blended Learning begins
5. [No Show Student](#) - Send several days after the class begins
6. [Weekly Check-in](#) - Send every week or every other week
7. [Mid-Semester Check-in](#) - Send mid-semester
8. [Individual Encouragement](#) - Whenever called for

1. Welcome Message

Send a “Welcome Message” to your class via the Announcements tool in Isidore two weeks before the term starts.

- Please note that your Isidore site must be **published** in order for the Announcement to be sent to students’ emails. If your site is not ready to be published yet, feel free to send this message via email.
- If you have multiple rosters within your course site, you can choose to [post Announcements specific to each group](#).
- Some students may add to your class late. Keep track of who is on your rosters so you can individually send them this communication as they add to your class. Alternatively, you can post this message for the whole class again.

Announcement Title: Welcome to PHY 101

Body:

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the PHY 101 01 class! The purpose of this email is to introduce myself and to let you know what to expect this semester.

[Quick instructor introduction. Convey your enthusiasm for the class as well as interesting information about yourself.]

Our course will begin **ONLINE** on **Tuesday, January 19th**.

Our course content and Zoom Meetings rooms will be available on Isidore starting on **January 14th**. At that time, please log in with your UD credentials at <https://isidore.udayton.edu>. If you have never used Isidore before, please see [this 3 minute video introduction](#). Please contact the UD IT Service Center at (937) 229-3888 if you do not know your username or password or have any problems accessing the site.

I’ve attached a preliminary syllabus and schedule to this email for you to review. It may change slightly before the first day of class, but it will give you an idea of what’s in store for this semester. In the syllabus, I’ve included the name of the textbook we’ll be using, and a list of assignments we’ll be working through. I’ve included the ISBN number of the textbook in the syllabus. Please make sure you have a copy of the book by the first day of the term so that you don’t fall behind. You can order it online at your retailer of choice or pick it up in the bookstore before you leave campus. [Include any other pre-work students need to accomplish before class begins]

Please feel free to reply to this email with any questions you have. I usually check my email a number of times each day during the week and on the weekends when I can. I’ll do my best to always respond promptly.

I look forward to learning with you this semester!

Professor Ryan Allen

2. First Day of Class Message

Send a “First Day of Class” message to your class via the Announcements tool in Isidore several days before the semester begins.

- Please note that your Isidore site must be **published** in order for the Announcement to be sent to students’ emails. If your site is not ready to be published yet, feel free to send this message via email.

Announcement Title: PHY 101 Begins January 19th!

Body:

Good morning!

Our PHY 101 class begins **ONLINE** at 10 AM on Tuesday, January 19th!

Isidore is UD’s learning management system. If you haven’t done so already, please log in to Isidore at isidore.udayton.edu with your UD credentials and watch [this short video introduction to Isidore](#). To access our Zoom meetings:

1. Log in to Isidore
2. Navigate to our course site
3. Click on the Zoom Meetings tool
4. Click on the Join button next to our class session
5. Zoom will open

Before class, please review the participation and communication expectations [listed in the syllabus](#) (attached to this email).

Our first class session will be mainly focused on reviewing how this class will work.

Please feel free to email me with any questions about the course, and I will see you on Tuesday!

-Professor Allen

3. Course Communication Policy

It's not necessary to copy your course communication policy into an email, but we recommend emphasizing it in one of your initial messages, and then again reiterating it during the first day of class.

Below is an example of a course communication policy you might include in your syllabus.

Communication Expectations & Procedures

Please post all questions about the course on the Commons tool on the homepage of our Isidore site. Other students should feel free to jump in and try to answer other students' questions. Feel free to even ask for help on homeworks and quizzes!

If you see something broken in the Isidore site, feel free to post that to the Commons tool as well. I will be checking this page at least once a day, except for Fridays and Saturdays.

If you have a more specific question that is related to your feedback or your situation, please just shoot me an email (rallen1@udayton.edu). I will be checking my email at least once a day except on Fridays and Saturdays.

If I, for any reason, cannot hold to these expectations myself - I will do my best to let you know. My life has also been affected by these recent events, so I hope you can be flexible with me as I am being with you.

4. Transitioning to Blended Learning

Send a “Transitioning to Blended Learning” message to your class via the Announcements tool in Isidore a week before the transition.

Announcement Title: PHY 101 Transition to Blended Learning

Body:

Good morning,

Our class will transition to blended learning next week on **Monday, February 1st**.

Our course will be divided into 3 groups. On each day of class, one of these groups will meet with me face-to-face in class while the other groups will participate in class via Zoom. When meeting face-to-face, please make sure to maintain social distancing with your peers and to wear your mask. **[If you have more information about the way the course will work, including details of the groupings, feel free to add that information here. If your course will be fully online or fully asynchronous, make sure to explain that and modify the text above.]**

I look forward to seeing a half of you in-person, and the others of you online via Zoom. Below is the list of students who should come to class in-person on each day of the week:

Monday

- CJ Cregg
- Arya Stark
- Jeon Jungkook
- Katniss Everdeen

Wednesday

- Hermione Granger
- Jaime Lannister
- David Bowman
- Jung Hoseok

Friday

- Everyone meets on Zoom (no in-person meeting)


So, to be clear, you come to class in-person on the day of the week listed above. When you are not coming to class in-person, you must log in to the Zoom meeting set up for our class in our Isidore course site.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Professor Allen

5. No-Show Student

After the first week of classes, if a student has not shown up for the in-person or Zoom classes, you can check to see if they are accessing your Isidore course site by looking at their last visit in the Roster tool.

Picture	Name	Role	Groups	Email	Total Visits	Last Visit
	Chewbacca ▶	Student	20 FA FT PHY 101 02	wookie9@udayton.edu	0	None yet

If the student hasn't communicated with you and isn't accessing Isidore, we recommend sending the student an individualized email using your UD Gmail account to check-in with them. You may also want to [raise a flag](#) within the Student Success Network.

Subject: PHY 101 Check-In

Body:

Hello, [student name],

I haven't seen you in our PHY 101 class this week, and it looks like you have not yet logged in to our PHY 101 Isidore class site. I hope everything is alright, and I wanted to remind you that there are two items due by Thursday, August 27th at 11:55 PM.

It's really important to stay on top of the coursework in this class, so please don't hesitate to reach out if there's anything I can help you with.

Best,

Professor Allen

6. Weekly Check-In

Use the Announcements tool in Isidore to send weekly (or every other week) course updates that can include:

- Encouragement to keep up good work
- Clarifications of assignment expectations
- Answering commonly occurring questions
- Reminders of upcoming deadlines (assignments, projects, exams, etc.)
- Group feedback (e.g. “Great job on the discussion forum this past week. Chewbacca wrote a really eloquent response about the economy. If you haven’t read it, go check it out! Next discussion, try to think about the implications of your opinions or thoughts. Take your thinking to the next level and extend it out to further applications.”)
- Invitation to virtual office hours

Look a week or two ahead to ensure everything you want to communicate is included in that weekly email.

The goal of these weekly messages is to sum up everything you need to include for the week in this one spot so you don’t need to send multiple messages throughout the week. Too many emails quickly becomes overwhelming.

Announcement title: Week 3 Check-In

Body:

Hello students,

Two weeks of this semester have flown by, and you all are doing great work. I really appreciate how engaged you have been in the class meetings and in the online Commons area.

Content for Week 3 is now open. Feel free to get started as you have time. This week has a bit more content than the previous weeks, so it’s to your advantage to get started earlier.

You turned in the first step of your research project last week, and I’ve been enjoying reading your exploration of the existing research. I plan to post grades and feedback for this assignment today or tomorrow, so please check Isidore for that feedback before working on the next segment of your project (due in 2 weeks).

Remember that our first exam is coming up on Friday of next week. This exam will cover material from Chapters 1-5 as well as lecture material from the videos. I will send out a study guide next week, and we will have a review session in class where I will go over how the exam will work.

As always, if you have any questions or need anything at all please feel free to email me. If there's something I can do to improve your learning or class experience I would love to hear it.

Best,

Professor Allen

7. Mid-Semester Check-In

Use the Announcements & [Check-In](#) tools in Isidore to ask students to complete a check-in. The Check-In tool in Isidore lets you ask your students questions about how the course is going so far. You can use the Check-In tool at any time, but mid-semester is an especially good time to add it to your site. Once you add the tool, post an Announcement in your site to let students know they can complete it.

Announcement title: Mid-Semester Check-In

Body:

Hello students,

Halfway through! I'm so impressed with all the work you have been doing, and I've really enjoyed learning with you in this class.

At this point, I'd love to 'check-in' to see how class is going. I have added the 'Check-In' tool to our Isidore site. You will see it on the left hand tool menu within Isidore.

Please answer the questions in this tool honestly. I want to make sure I'm helping you learn in the best way possible, so any feedback you can provide is appreciated.

Please let me know if you have any questions, and thanks for your time!

-Professor Allen

8. Individual Encouragement

Students who are at home might feel a bit more isolated from their campus peers. You might want to pay particular attention to those students and send them individualized encouragement via email as you have time.

Subject: Keep up the great work!

Body:

Hi, [student name]

I noticed that you contributed a LOT to your group's collaborative Google Doc, and I just wanted to let you know that I appreciate all the hard work you put into that project. It did not go unnoticed! You not only organized great resources for the doc, but I thought your question to your peers about how the collection should be summarized was a good one - I hope it spurred some activity on their part.

Keep up the fantastic work, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you need anything at all!

-Professor Allen