

FALL 2020: TAKING CLASSES - WHAT TO EXPECT

We have been hard at work preparing for the commencement of classes in August. What follows is a description of what you can expect in the learning environment for the Fall semester. It is probably worth stating the obvious: Should our understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic or the recommendations of the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health change, we will be ready to adjust. If things change, we will let you know how we will be proceeding, and why.

Hybrid/in-Person and Online Learning Environments

At present, St. Olaf is not offering an option for students to study fully remotely online. We believe that students learn best in community and that they benefit from the resources available on campus, even if some of their courses have an online format this year. As long as we can provide an on-campus learning environment safely in accordance with the guidance of the Minnesota Department of Health, we will do so. The majority of our course offerings (about 80%) will have a blended (or “hybrid”) format that combines in-person and virtual elements. While this format will have more virtual elements than many courses in the past, these are courses designed for the on-campus setting. Most hybrid courses will be organized so that subsets of the class will meet in person regularly, with the entire class or groups of students meeting online on other days.

The remainder of course offerings, about 20%, are identified as fully online, although some of these are being planned with in-person activities as well. The selection of certain courses to offer online is based on whether safety requirements make online teaching of particular subjects the preferred format at this time. These courses have not been selected with the intent to offer a fully online semester option for students.

You can expect your professor to communicate with you about the opening class session shortly before the start of the term.

Keeping Each Other Safe

Our goal is to make it possible to learn with each other and in community at St. Olaf while observing the health and safety guidelines set forth by the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC.

We will have hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies in every classroom. In order to reduce congestion in halls and while exiting and entering rooms, we are lengthening the interval between classes to fifteen minutes. In some cases, hallways and stairways will be unidirectional. And, of course, everyone will be required to wear a mask in buildings (including classrooms) and follow the Community Standards and Pledge. Simply put, if you want to attend class, you'll need to follow the College's safety rules.

Programs with specialized plans to address their distinctive learning environments--such as Education, Dance, Music, Nursing, Social Work, and Theater--will be informing majors about the particular safety measures they will take and how students will be able to progress in their majors during this exceptional period. Programs preparing students for licensure have taken steps to ensure that they continue to meet requirements.

Registration

The updated Class and Lab schedule indicates whether a course will be in-person/hybrid or fully online. Because classroom capacity is reduced to meet physical distancing requirements, it is unlikely that in-person/hybrid courses will be able to exceed stated maximum enrollments.

Incoming students (Class of 2024) can use the live registration system to add open classes or drop classes until the day before classes begin.

Continuing students will be able to use this system in the fall for Interim and Spring registration. At present, for all Fall 2020 schedule changes, continuing students will simply need to email the [Registrar's Office](#) to have a course added or dropped. And as always, if a course is open, we will add it for you. If a course is closed, you will need to get permission from the instructor via email. Once you have obtained permission, then forward that email to the [Registrar's Office](#) and we will add it at that time.

If You Encounter a Problem Linked to Your Return to Campus This Fall

We understand that some students are unable to return to campus because of visa issues or because of significant health risks. If you find yourself in this situation, we want to work with you to develop a plan that may entail online offerings at St. Olaf, transfer credit from institutions at the student's current location, or a leave of absence. Students who fall into one of these two categories should reach out to the Class Deans or the Dean of Students, who will help them develop a plan. Your Class Dean may then refer you to the Registrar, CAAS, or to individual faculty members to discuss how you may

be able to continue progress toward the degree given your particular circumstances. Please do not reach out directly to a faculty member. You need to begin with the Class Deans or the Dean of Students.

The College is committed to ensuring that international students can study on campus. We will continue to watch regulations to make sure that international students have good options for continuing their studies at St. Olaf.

Ericka Peterson, Registrar

Marci Sortor, Provost and Dean of the College