

Norlin Library Video Creation Station:

Tips for Preparing for Your Recording Session

So you're hoping to supplement your course content with video that will engage students from a distance? Norlin Library's Video Creation Station is a simple way for anybody with limited or zero production experience to record video. No need to worry about lighting or set-up; all you need is a flash drive and the content.

Post-production work will not be provided, so any video editing must be left to your own devices. There are several free, open-sourced video editing options that are available. You will find some of them at the bottom of this page to help you get started, with links to YouTube tutorials that will get you editing in a matter of minutes.

Video Content

Even a little video content can make your course more engaging, which will also help students pay more attention. Your video content might assume the following forms:

- A straight lecture (not recommended – see explanation below);
- An introduction to an online or in-person class;
- Component piece(s) to an online or in-person class, which might contain explanations about concepts or even demonstrations;
- A slide show, such as when you narrate a PowerPoint presentation;
- Summaries of books, dissertations, historical events, etc.

More examples of content produced with One Button Studio can be found on this YouTube list: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7uzJyX91Q4ah-031woCl4eBEQBKCz-LF>

Why We Don't Recommend Recording a Straight Lecture

In a straight lecture video, the instructor is nothing more than a talking head reading off a presentation. Although there's nothing wrong with a talking head video, they do limit your students to merely observers. If the video is too long, if you don't break it up with supporting footage, then the video won't be dynamic enough to engage your students. To be honest, talking head videos are boring, and a bored audience will often seek other stimuli.

We recommend that you use One Button Studio to record the narration components to your class presentations, and then apply your own post-production efforts towards a more dynamic visual experience. Otherwise, you can still do a talking head video, but it needs to be short – 5 to 7 minutes tops.

Before you begin your recording session

- **Brainstorm what the video should be.** We recommend that the video should supplement the material in class, not become a substitute for the lecture. Don't try to recreate the classroom in an online setting. Shift your thinking and come up with something that will engage the students. For instance, provide the students with video lessons to be watched before class so that you can devote more time during contact hours for discussion.
- **Prepare a script.** Know what you want to say and rehearse. You can read your script from a laptop, but don't sound like you're reading. Instead, imagine that you're talking to the students directly just as you would in class. Write the way you talk; your script is not an academic paper (try reading one to a friend and see how quickly they'll tune out). Trim out the jargon, keep the sentences short, and use active verbs. A couple other recommendations:
 - **Use note cards.** Instead of writing your script word-for-word, try using bullet points on note cards and ad-lib.
 - **Reveal information.** Building up to the reveal in your presentation is an awesome way to engage your students. Think of how you would build up to the punchline in a joke.
- **Record a single take.** There will always be some initial awkwardness as you record yourself on camera, but don't feel the need to speak perfectly. Don't start and stop the recording unless you need to make a correction. Otherwise, you'll end up with a video that needs editing. Treat your presentation as if you're actually in a class. Remember, you're not producing a Hollywood movie. Just be natural and true to yourself.
- **Smile and engage with the camera.** Make sure you don't have food between your teeth! Try to be relaxed and happy. It helps to have some public speaking skills and a good deal of energy. Let your personality shine through!
- **Keep the video short.** As we recommended before, don't record your entire lecture, otherwise there's no time for student interactions. The longer the video, the more people will drop off or get distracted. Videos should be between 5 to 7 minutes long. One suggestion is to compartmentalise your lecture into 5- to 7-minute chunks, and then open up for discussion and interactivity.

Compartmentalizing Your Lecture

Select parts of the class lecture that would be more useful for students to re-watch. Keeping these portions short means that if you need to update the videos it's far easier to re-record a short video than a long one.

- Go back to your lecture material and find places that feel like a natural break. Use these breaks to insert pre-recorded material.

- Create tasks for students whilst they watch the video, or even between videos. You can also give students a worksheet in advance with questions that they can then answer from the information in the video. These worksheets can be used for in-class discussions or students can submit them as part of an assignment.
- Apply questions within your video for students to answer. Do quizzes to test students on what they learned from the videos. These early assessments might help you see which concepts that students are having problems with.

Post-Production Editing Resources and Tutorials

The options below are free to download, or they already come with your computer's operating system. The links below will send you to short tutorials that will help you do basic editing in a matter of hours.

- VSDC – a free video editor that allows you to easily cut video. This is also a VSDC Pro version, which comes with more bells and whistles.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyrt7nAanYk>
- iMovie 2020 – comes free on a Mac iOS that is easy to use.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljAWrpmEFoU&t=1167s>
- Shotcut – this is a free, open source video editor for Windows, Mac, and Linux.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9pzmzXj03A&t=54s>
- Openshot – this open-sourced software is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux that doesn't come with a steep learning curve.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VE6awGSr22Q>
- Kdenlive – another open-sourced software that's been on the market for many years. This video editor may not be as intuitive as others, but it's stable and packed with professional-level features. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxxilfDTPK0>