

Course Material Accessibility Guidelines

Classics IDEAL pedagogy team in consultation with OAE & SODA

This guide is intended for instructors in Classics and the humanities more generally for use when drafting their syllabi, assessments, assignments, and other course materials. In developing this guide, our aim is to support instructors at all levels in efforts to increase accessibility in their classrooms. This should be used as a starting point in drafting course materials: instructors should work with OAE, SODA, and other relevant offices to support individual students' accessibility needs and find additional information about accessible pedagogical practices.

I. Making Accessibility Visible

It is important for students to know that you value accessibility and that your classroom is designed to ensure equitable access for all students.

- Post an accessibility statement prominently on your syllabus. You can find a current statement from the Office of Accessible Education here: <https://oae.stanford.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-teaching-staff/syllabus-statement>
- Verbally reinforce this statement when going over the syllabus on the first day of class to show students that accessibility is a primary value for your course
- When phrasing your preference for the availability of electronics, make sure you specify that you are willing to provide accommodations if necessary.

II. General Formatting for Accessibility

When drafting course documents, keep these basic accessibility guidelines in mind:

- Provide the syllabus and other important documents in multiple formats, including a digital option (e.g. Word document, PDF). Providing a format that can be edited, such as a Word document, allows students to adjust things like font type and size when needed. Providing a printed copy also ensures that students can access course information without reliance on screens and electronic devices if this is best for them. In the case of printed syllabi, bringing copies to the first several classes also ensures that students who need to miss class will receive the information they need in the format they need it.
- When possible, build or copy the syllabus directly into your Learning Management System (LMS), such as Canvas, rather than just uploading a document. This will optimize the format and make it easier for students to find and access the syllabus.
- Provide the ISBN numbers for all assigned texts, as well as any legally accessible online versions or information on how to access materials online using institutional login information.
- Write out full URLs instead of using hyperlinks alone so that students can access them from other formats of the document (i.e. printed or converted).
- If you are providing students access to course materials through scans (of books or other documents), enable OCR reading when possible (this is often doable by asking a PDF reader application to scan the document prior to posting it on a course website).

III. Images, Fonts, and Colors

- Avoid overly elaborate fonts, crowded text, small fonts or too-small font sizes, or other formatting choices that will impede ease of reading.
- Provide alternative text descriptions for any images you include. When writing alternative text descriptions, keep in mind what information you want students to get from the image and make sure it is clearly outlined in the text.

IV. Accessible Assignments

- When possible, provide multiple ways that students can turn in assignments to ensure that students can submit work in the way that works best for them.
- Consider student equipment needs for assignments and presentations. For example, an assignment for a video project to be shared with the class should include links and/or instructions for the use of subtitling software.
- If you are planning to utilize interlinear editing for feedback (e.g. through Canvas, Google Drive, or Microsoft Word), consider creating a separate comment or feedback area where you explain the changes made to the document, as track changes can crowd documents, reduce font size, or introduce colors that make reading your comments more difficult.

V. Accessible Classroom Practices & Policies

- If you plan to hold class over zoom, build in 5-10 minute breaks every 45-50 minutes to allow students to turn off their cameras, stretch, and rest their eyes.
- Stanford's Office of Accessible Education has a notetaker program that allows a student in your class to take clear, legible notes and send them to OAE, who will provide them to students who have requested them. More information can be found here: <https://oae.stanford.edu/students/accommodations-services/academic-accomodations/notetaker-services>

VI. Additional Tips and Resources

- Consult the Office of Accessible Education (<https://oae.stanford.edu/>) for additional accessibility information.
- Find digital accessibility resources through the Stanford Office of Digital Accessibility (<https://uit.stanford.edu/accessibility/getstarted>). SODA's site has links to accessibility checkers and trainings for a number of useful software platforms.
- When using multiple alphabets (e.g. Ancient Greek) in a document, be aware that the non-Latin characters may present challenges for screen readers. There is not currently a widely available screen reading technology available for ancient languages specifically, but for Greek some students have had success using the Biblos addon for the NVDA screen reader. Note that most such options are geared toward biblical study, so pronunciation may differ.
- Familiarize yourself with the use of technologies like Scribe (which is now built into Canvas) to convert documents to more accessible formats. Find more on the OAE site here: <https://oae.stanford.edu/accessibility-resources/scribe/convert-file>