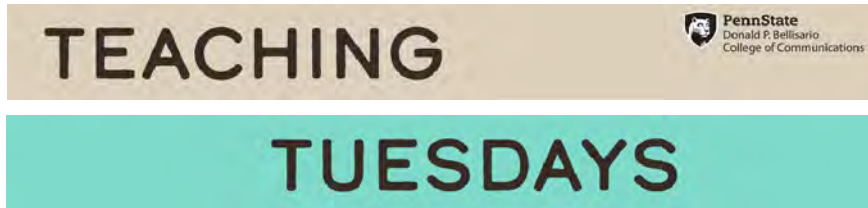


## Bortree, Denise Sevick

---

**From:** Bortree, Denise Sevick  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 8, 2020 4:40 PM  
**To:** L-COMM-FACULTY@LISTS.PSU.EDU  
**Subject:** Teaching Tuesdays - Recording lectures w/o Zoom by Mike Schmierbach



Welcome to Teaching Tuesdays in the last week of classes. It has been a long semester, but we made it. Thanks for all the effort you've made to keep classes moving and help students learn in this unusual time. Just one more week before we officially break and hopefully you'll be able to catch up on sleep or read a good book. In this week's column Mike Schmierbach shares how he creates lectures for his asynchronous course without using Zoom. An appealing idea these days. He offers some great advice and provides links to examples. Enjoy!

### University-wide Faculty Coffee Break

Join the faculty across the university for an end-of-the-semester coffee break Friday, December 18, 12:15-1:30 p.m at Zoom Link: <https://psu.zoom.us/j/98221490005>

### Bellisario Excellence in Teaching Award

Don't forget to nominate a fellow faculty member who inspires students and demonstrates a commitment to outstanding teaching for the [Bellisario Excellence in Teaching Award](#). Deadline is Dec. 18.

### Fall Commencement

Penn State's fall virtual commencement is coming up on Dec. 19 at 2 pm. You can watch the ceremony [here](#). Read about the [Bellisario College marshal](#), Kelsey Bell, who is triple majoring in Advertising/Public Relations, History, and International Politics.

### Getting ready for spring 2021

Yes, I know it feels too early to start thinking about spring, but here are two items you might want to consider before closing up shop this semester.

- **Tech TAs for spring 2021** - Be sure to request your Tech TA for spring 2021 semester by visiting the [Tech Tutors website](#) and clicking the **Request Tech TA** button. If you are using Zoom to teach in the spring, this service can offer valuable support.
- **Materials for students studying from abroad** - Do you have international students in your spring 2021 courses, studying from abroad? Be sure to check out this information on instructional materials for international students. It offers helpful suggestions for ordering materials and timing for international shipping:  
<https://pennstateoffice365.sharepoint.com/:w/s/KeepTeachingSupportDocuments/EckfpfLMlk5KiT0K4Qs--OkB4sslqudfwAfzHKe-29fSuA?e=IAK3bL>

---

## Teaching Tuesdays - Recording and editing lectures without Zoom

By Mike Schmierbach, associate professor of media studies

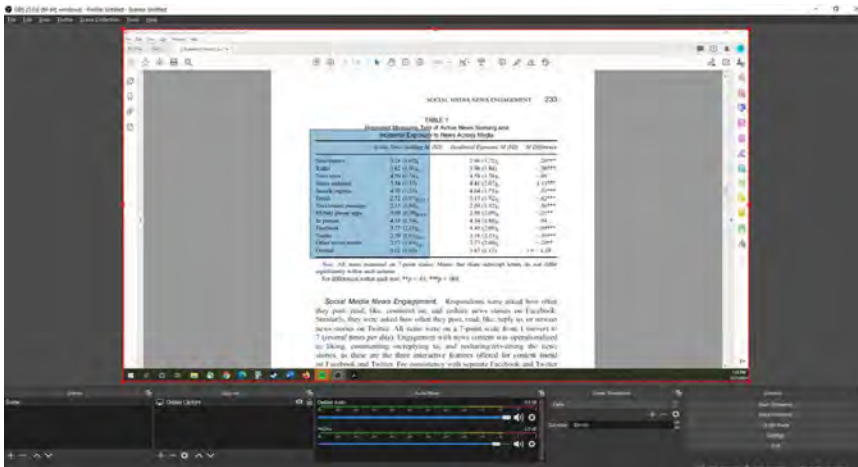
**What I did:** I chose to construct my writing-intensive political communication class (413W) as an asynchronous course. Because of this, it made sense to record and edit the lectures using video software rather than something like Zoom. So I taught myself the basics of Premiere Pro in order to create course presentations on each assigned reading.

**Why I did it:** The class is not normally lecture-driven. Much of our in-class time when meeting in person was spent on individual- and small-group activities as well as quizzes and subsequent review. With students scattered across time zones and facing varied access to technology, enforcing attendance didn't make sense, but breakout rooms and discussion for those who could attend live would leave everyone else behind. Reviewing quizzes doesn't work if everyone hasn't taken them at the same time. I used to allow reading summaries to replace low quiz scores, but with online, open-book quizzes, this didn't seem necessary as long as students could hear the review first. In spring, when we switched halfway through, students appreciated a clear recorded presentation addressing the main ideas connected with each reading as a reference when taking quizzes and writing papers.

In addition, I was unsatisfied with recording in Zoom or Kaltura. Video clips worked poorly, and mistakes are inevitable when trying to talk for 30 minutes or more. Why use those technologies if you aren't sharing live? Plus, I've always enjoyed learning new technology, and this was an opportunity to add a skillset that seemed likely to be useful in future semesters and research.

**The technical details:** Students read 25 research articles in 413W over the course of the semester, most of which also introduce a broader theory or topic related to political communication. The class is divided into five units, so that works out to five articles per unit. Therefore, I made five videos – one for each article – that were posted at the start of each unit. That helped me think about how to divide up topics that might have been relevant to multiple articles and refer to what would be covered in other videos for the unit. Students are free to view the videos at any time.

Videos were recorded using OBS Studio (<https://obsproject.com>). I don't know if this is officially approved by Penn State, so consult your local IT expert before installing it on a work computer, but it works great! You can capture a full screen, focus on a single program or window, or even manually crop to a given area. You can overlay video from a cam or separately record a slideshow, and then record a talking head over that and splice them together later if you want to appear alongside your "lecture." Unlike Zoom, it can capture video from screen as it appears to you, without stuttering and loss of quality. And if you're interested in live streaming for class or anything else, most of its features are actually built around that, rather than capture, giving you a host of options to switch between audio and video sources on the fly and even insert live transitions.



Editing was done in Premiere Pro, which we all have access to through Adobe Cloud. This was definitely the part with a learning curve, and I know that my colleagues who teach production and editing would have plenty to say about all the bad habits I probably picked up. But a few hours of tutorial videos were enough to get me started, and after a couple actual videos for class I felt pretty comfortable with enough basics to be able to stitch together video, overlay graphics and text, set keyframes to allow panning and zooming over still images or non-moving video, edit out various mistakes, overlay one video atop part of another, normalize sound, use basic transitions, and export everything. Premiere comes

with specific export settings for YouTube, and that's where the videos are hosted. They are too big for Canvas. Here are a couple examples if you are interested:

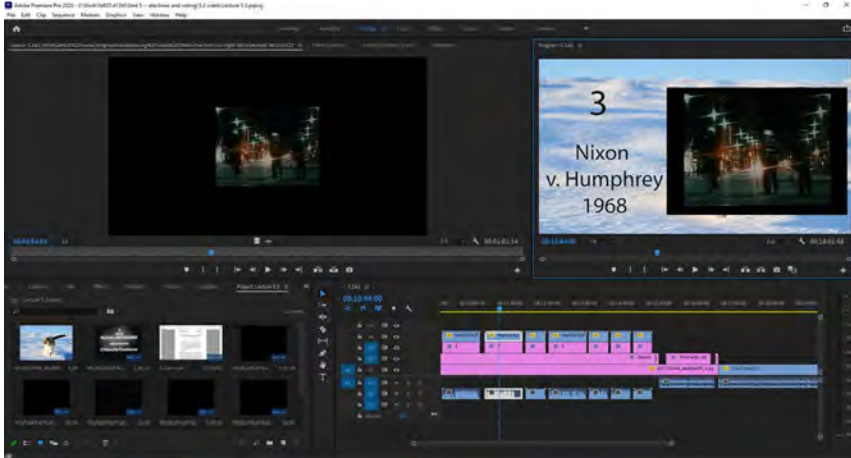
<https://youtu.be/RgYiVEMKjFo> (Global civic participation, featuring a guest appearance from a familiar face)

<https://youtu.be/OnSRtKaiVJ8> (Political advertising, with notable examples from history)

As you will see, it is not fancy. I keep the videos set to unlisted, so those with the link (or clicking it from Canvas) have access, but no one else will find them. And I disable comments, because there are already too many different places to keep track of students' questions. You could certainly think about using the comments as a form of engagement.

To help ensure students are engaged with the material and learning, I took several steps.

In each video, a discussion prompt was included. When taking the (open-note, fill-in-the-blanks) quiz on the reading, students are asked to give their answer to the discussion prompt, which they should have prepared in advance. I don't put the prompt in the quiz, so ideally they will have watched the lecture, thought about their answer, and then taken the quiz. Although the quizzes aren't due until the end of the unit, there are weekly activities that push them to find examples of media related to the readings and share them with their peers in a discussion forum. This helps give them a possible timeline for completing readings, as 1-2 are linked to each activity.



**What I learned:** First, what worked? Premiere Pro is reasonably accessible, and I really feel that with the basic skills I've picked up I can actually do a lot with video that previously seemed complex. Not only can I see using recorded materials posted online in future classes, but I'm also excited to edit and clean up video segments for use in live classes – no more trying to remember where to start and stop a clip or hoping YouTube hasn't taken something down. Being able to record in segments or restart talking about a specific example without having to either keep the error or start over on the lecture is great (though if you're tempted to make things too perfect it could be a real time consumer). Also, you don't have to create slides. If you're a big PowerPoint person with existing lectures, you can certainly record them, but I did a lot by just showing websites and article images, talking over them, occasionally using pan and zoom effects to create some motion or crop out extraneous material, and drawing over the articles either while talking or in Premiere.

**What could have worked better?** YouTube is owned by an evil company, and I don't love having to store videos there rather than on Canvas, so I wish our file storage capacity were greater. I've heard some students overseas have issues working around blocks on YouTube content, though in some cases those barriers don't let them access Canvas easily either so this is an issue that goes beyond posting videos.

Fair use is a murky area, and what is and isn't automatically blocked by YouTube can be surprising. I had no problems using Daily Show clips, for example, but Saturday Night Live automatically blocked the whole video. (Thankfully, this is where having edited the video myself made it easy to excise the material in question and repost.) If you are walking the copyright line, or knowingly crossing it, this is probably not the hosting solution for you. I hate being on camera and find it awkward to talk at one cam when my content is on a different screen, so I'm not in these videos, but I think they

would work better if you actually saw the speaker more — overall, there are a lot of additional production elements similar to what plenty of YouTubers use that could make the material more engaging. The good thing is that since I have the raw materials I can further edit, update and add to them, including recording myself talking at a board or desk instead of staring into a webcam, and easily splice that in for next semester.

**What do you need to know if you do this?** Aside from everything I noted above, remember that video files are very big. You will need to set aside some serious storage if you're recording dozens of videos, especially if they are the length of a complete class. And you will need to activate unlimited storage in YouTube, which requires some additional steps. Plus, all those big files take time to upload and process — you'll need to allocate at least a couple hours from finishing your edit to get through all the exporting and uploading, though obviously you can do other work while that happens.

In addition, especially early in the learning process, it definitely takes longer to record and then edit a video. The final result might be cleaner, and the time invested will pay off if you want to reuse part of the material for a future class, but this isn't going to save you time compared with just hosting a live Zoom session and posting the recording. Finally, while there are a lot of aspects of asynchronous course design I really like, I definitely miss connecting with the students in the class. Next semester, I'm definitely going to try some of the suggestions others have made about ways to schedule sessions where students can actually interact live with one another and the instructor, and try to do some of that early to forge a connection that pure video cannot.

---

Hope you enjoyed this issue. Keep an eye out for Teaching Tuesdays every Tuesday this semester. Want to read an earlier issue? You can find it in the Faculty/Staff Resources: <https://www.bellisario.psu.edu/faculty-staff-resources/teaching-tuesdays>

TEACHING TUESDAYS – Issue #14

Denise Sevick Bortree, Ph.D.  
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs  
Director, Arthur W. Page Center for Integrity in Public Communication  
Professor, Communications  
Bellisario College of Communications  
Penn State University  
[www.thepagecenter.org](http://www.thepagecenter.org)