

how we can best proceed collectively during the pandemic and its aftermath, especially concerning the unique challenges we face in our field.

Of course, no single discussion can speak to every concern or challenge that educators will face in a discipline as diverse as ours. Additional avenues of inquiry will emerge as classes resume; indeed, we close this spotlight with recommendations for additional scholarship on this topic. Emergency e-learning is distinct in many ways from traditional online coursework; in this way, it is new for all of us, as well. However, this assembly of scholars thoughtfully reflects on many of the key challenges that instructors of political science and international relations face moving forward, and their commentary can inform important discussions within departments and across universities. It is our sincerest hope that this spotlight contributes to a wider conversation about how we can best serve students throughout this pandemic and in the years to come. ■

NOTES

1. Survey participants were enrolled in one of four political science courses that I taught in spring 2020: American Minority Politics (two sections), Picking a President, and Political Science Research Methods. There were approximately 140 students across these four sections; 111 students completed the first survey (79.29% response rate) and 103 students completed the second survey (73.6% response rate). Slightly more than half of the sample was female (53%) and slightly less than 86% of students were white. The average respondent was 20.6 years old, and approximately 81% had previously taken at least one online course.
2. The six statements were presented in random order; respondents arranged them such that the issue they were most concerned about was at the top and the issue they were least concerned about was at the bottom. The full text for the six items is as follows: my final grade in the course; my learning of the course material; figuring out remote learning technology; missing my social experience on campus; being able to communicate with my professor; and being able to communicate with my peers.
3. For an extended discussion of literature related to teaching political science online, see Loepp 2020.

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WHEN TEACHING IS IMPOSSIBLE: A PANDEMIC PEDAGOGY OF CARE

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I teach at Morehouse College, an all-male, historically Black institution. Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were established to provide opportunities for access to higher education for African Americans when legal segregation characterized the United States. Currently, there are 101 accredited HBCUs, both public and private. Located predominantly in the southeastern United States, HBCUs enroll 300,000 students, 80% of whom are African American and 70% of whom are from low-income families.¹ Although there is variation among these institutions, to a large extent they nevertheless share many

features. They tend to be burdened by a lack of financial resources, even before the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in 2018, only 1.4% of total major gifts (i.e., more than 1 million dollars) to US colleges and universities went to HBCUs (Price 2020). In such a climate of scarcity, how do we adjust the classroom in response to the disruption caused by the pandemic in the middle of the 2020 spring semester?

The mission of Morehouse College is "to develop men with disciplined minds who will lead lives of leadership and service." The College also "assumes special responsibility for teaching the history and culture of Black people."² Brotherhood, belonging, and community are essential in the making of the "Morehouse Man." Therefore, the disruption that the pandemic caused, and the closure of the campus, presented a challenge to maintain that educational and social community for the students.

This article focuses on my Introduction to IR course. The majority of the 40 students in the class were freshmen and sophomores pursuing a degree in political science or international studies. A few students from other departments across campus also take the course to fulfill their general education requirement. In mid-March 2020, with only one week to prepare, we were forced to switch to remote delivery of all courses for the second half of the semester, and all students were required to evacuate their campus housing. I adopted what has been referred to as "pandemic pedagogy," with a range of e-learning strategies dictated by the emergency situation. A pandemic pedagogy, as defined by Smith and Hornsby (2020, 1), refers to "the approaches we employ in our learning environments to teach and foster learning in the context of a serious health crisis and the spread of a new disease." As the authors explain, this pandemic moment and its meanings and responses to them are infused with power, pedagogy, and politics.

Instruction during the pandemic occurs in moments of profound disruption in the lives of the students—and instructors—and anxiety associated with trying to establish a new normal under extraordinarily abnormal circumstances. Moreover, for an institution like Morehouse, an adaptive pedagogy must be mindful of the technological gap and digital divide that many students experience. For instance, the College had to raise funds to provide computers, tablets, and Internet access for some students.³ Emergency housing also had to be provided for those who could not simply "go home." During the pandemic, some students also notified me that they had family members who were either sick or had died from COVID-19. This calls for a pedagogy of care, not because our students are incapable of facing and surmounting challenges but rather because they are already in a disadvantaged position, which compounds the effects of the pandemic. A pedagogy of care entails a commitment to ensure that students will have the support they need to submit all assignments and complete the course.

The making of a "Morehouse Man" rests on the building and sustaining of a community of brotherhood and learning. When the course moved to an online format, it therefore was essential to maintain such a community of learning and intellectual support, especially for freshmen and sophomores in a course designed to introduce them to the IR subfield. This process was accomplished through a hybrid model of asynchronous lectures with synchronous class discussions, which ensured the continued social presence of students. I prerecorded the video lectures and posted them on the course website the day before class meetings. Therefore, the synchronous class sessions—twice a week—over Zoom would not

be devoted to lectures but rather to discussion and student engagement through collaborative work. Despite the challenges of working remotely, I also maintained group projects and ensured that students would complete them and present their findings to the class.

Price, Gregory N. 2020. "1 in 10 HBCUs Were Financially Fragile Before COVID-19 Endangered All Colleges and Universities." *The Conversation*, June 24. Available at <https://theconversation.com/1-in-10-hbcus-were-financially-fragile-before-covid-19-endangered-all-colleges-and-universities-140528>.

Smith, Heather Ann, and David Hornsby. 2020. "Towards a Pandemic Pedagogy: Power and Politics in Learning and Teaching." Available at doi: [10.13140/RG.2.2.29280.64005](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29280.64005).

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Although the syllabus content and reading materials remained unchanged, the class discussions tied our current collective predicament to IR theories and concepts. The final exam, which—under normal conditions—would have consisted of a set of short answers and multiple-choice questions, was changed to a long essay. The exam asked, "What IR theories and concepts can help us make sense of the global spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications on world politics (broadly defined)?"

Students' responses to this question demonstrated a range of serious and personal engagement with IR theories and the pandemic, as well as the ways in which it disproportionately affected racial and ethnic minorities, low-income families, and otherwise vulnerable populations in the United States. Drawing from Marxist and postcolonial theories and a critique of capitalism, many students argued that COVID-19 was one of numerous other medical and social "pandemics" that can be traced to the legacies of unequal distribution of power and opportunities in the United States and around the world.

A pandemic pedagogy of care therefore opens up the possibility of "doing IR as if people mattered."⁴ In this instance, for a student population of young Black men in America, the COVID-19 pandemic along with the police and state violence and Black Lives Matter movement that flared up this summer are all central to how we make sense of and relate to the world of (international) politics. Ultimately, if we accept Inayatullah's (2019, 18) polemic that "Teaching is impossible. Learning is unlikely... [W]e enter the classroom to encounter others. With them, we can meditate on the possibility of our own learning," perhaps then a pandemic pedagogy of care is simply that: encountering our students so we may all meditate on our collective predicament. ■

NOTES

1. United Negro College Fund, "HBCUs Make America Strong: The Positive Impact of Historically Black Colleges and Universities." Available at https://cdn.uncf.org/wp-content/uploads/HBCU_Consumer_Brochure_FINAL_APPROVED.pdf?_ga=2.17028409.1251354321.1593346115-1364471786.1593346115.
2. Morehouse College's Mission, available at www.morehouse.edu/about/mission.html.
3. See Morehouse College's campaign to raise funds to support students experiencing hardship. Available at <https://ignite.morehouse.edu/project/20382>.
4. I am grateful to Jonneke Koomen, from whom I first heard this expression.

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TEACHING IN TIMES OF CRISIS: COVID-19 AND CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY

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COVID-19 brought unexpected challenges to institutions of higher learning. Like most academics, as a full-time faculty member teaching political science at a liberal arts college, I also experienced the dramatic changes that came with the transition to distance delivery and remote instruction. My institution shifted to online instruction in mid-March. Although there are major barriers to online teaching (Keengwe and Kidd 2010), this article outlines positive lessons I drew from the transition: what worked and what did not. The methods I used applied to all of my courses for spring 2020.

I teach relatively small classes between 15 and 25 students. This allows for better engagement and made online teaching via Zoom simpler. I found the use of Zoom and Panopto especially helpful in adapting students to a smoother online delivery (Mohanty and Yaqub 2020). Both Zoom and Panopto allowed me to combine elements of both synchronous and asynchronous teaching.

First, I held my classes during regularly scheduled times to mimic the in-class experience. The delivery was mostly a mix of slides and discussions, sometimes using the chat feature and breakout rooms. Synchronous lectures were recorded on Panopto and uploaded to Moodle for students who were unable to attend live meetings. This helped many students who suggested in their end-of-course assessment that recorded lectures kept them informed about the course material when they were unable to attend the synchronous classes. Students who were working, had difficult home environments, or were experiencing personal hardships and could not regularly attend the live lectures benefited most from the recorded lectures.

Second, given the difficult circumstances in which students found themselves, I relaxed my attendance rules for spring 2020. It was not mandatory for them to be present during synchronous sessions, especially for those who had additional jobs or who could not attend due to time constraints and other reasons.

Third, a significant component of my online pedagogy was the use of a discussion forum. Based on each week's course readings, I posted one focused question and students were given a two-to-three-day window to submit their responses. The same questions, including student responses, were revisited during synchronous lectures. Maintaining an overarching theme/question enabled students to address the learning outcomes for the course. This