Online Education

Make sure to have fun. If you make it enjoyable for you as the professor, the students will receive the content better.

1) AUDIO –
Get a darn good microphone

As counterintuitive as it may sound, the single most important factor in a good video, is the audio quality. People will readily watch a shaky, grainy, amateur video with good sound, but force them to struggle to hear what’s being said and they’ll switch off in seconds.

A good mic is a great investment.

CAD USB U37 Studio microphone
Snowball USB Condenser Microphone
Yeti USB Microphone

Use your favorite online retailer

CAD USB U37 $59 - $79
Yeti USB $129
Snowball USB $69

2) ELIMINATE AMBIENT NOISE –

Close the window

You want to find a quiet spot to do your recording. Close all the windows, and ask your neighbor to turn the music down or suspend the lawn mowing whilst you record. You’d be surprised how much environmental noise gets picked up.

Try explaining to everyone in the house what you are trying to do and have them stick to the other areas in your home that would not be picked up by your mics.

DoCS Media Services, serving the Rutgers community for all their media needs

Best practices for web lectures.

Modified and sourced from
https://www.greatspeech.co/video-presentations/

02 AMBIENT NOISE
Find a quiet spot
Better recording!

08 PREPARATION
Know what to say
Organize thoughts
Use an outline

12 BE YOURSELF
Have Confidence
Keep your energy up
Best practices for web lectures. continued

Modified and sourced from
https://www.greatspeech.co/video-presentations/

3) DON’T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT THE CAMERA

Despite the fact that people often get consumed by the type of camera they’re using, this is probably the least of your problems. Nowadays webcams are GOOD ENOUGH that you are likely to get decent footage.

So, unless you need to shoot at Hollywood blockbuster levels, just use your webcam or find a camera that isn’t too old and consider that box ticked off.

4) LIGHTING – not overhead!

Do think about lighting.

Next to good audio, it’s another one of those big technicalities that can have a big impact on the quality of your video.

Don’t put any lights or windows behind you. They’ll mess with the light levels on your video. Don’t stand under your room spotlights – especially if the top of your head gets really shiny like mine!

Go for bright, soft lighting coming from behind the camera to light up your beautiful face.

5) BACKGROUND

Although white walls are boring, make sure you don’t have anything too distracting behind you. Have something innocuous but discernible in the background. Don’t be afraid to show your natural environment e.g. bookcases, plants, paintings – as long as they are not too distracting.

6) FRAMING & CAMERA POSTION

Yes, you should be seen. Make sure that your whole face is in frame for proper framing – centering is fine and another handy concept is the rule of thirds.

Be careful of the angle though. The lens should either be directly level or pointing ever so slightly downwards towards your face.

7) USE A STRONG STRUCTURE

However, compelling the content of your speech, it will fall flat if it is not set within a strong structure that carries your audience towards a strong climactic conclusion.

10) SIMPLE WORDS

Video is no place for tongue twisters so use short simple words.

HOW YOU SAY IT

In the iconic scene of one of my favorite films, Broadcast News, journalist Aaron finally gets the chance he has been angling for his entire career, to present as a news anchor. What follows is movie gold, as he nervously swats his way through the news segment to learn that there is a vast difference between writing and presenting.

11) WHAT YOU WEAR

No need to worry too much about what you wear as long as you avoid some basic mistakes. Don’t wear stripes or overly bold patterns (they look odd on camera). Don’t wear clunky jewelry. Do try to match colors (they look odd on camera). Don’t wear patterns (they look odd on camera). What feels odd in person, looks good on camera.

12) BE YOURSELF – only more

The camera is a microscope. It reveals authenticity and exposes fakeness. So be yourself, and no one else. But, be even more of yourself than you are in real life (if that makes sense). Dial it up a few notches, so your true personality fills the screen.

Keep your energy levels up.

13) GOOD POSTURE – Sit up straight

What feels odd in person, looks good on camera.

Think about the way people pose for red carpet shots (like the ladies of the wonder-fully uplifting Hidden Figures movie). No one stands like that in real life, but on camera it looks great.

Sit or stand straight, even if it’s uncomfort-able. Don’t hunch over, don’t use odd angles.

I have sloping shoulders so when record-ing on camera I actually lift my shoulders up ever so slightly. It feels odd, even fake, but it works.

We are psychologically wired to be more accepting and attracted to symmetry. So aim for clear, straight lines where you can.

14) USE YOUR HANDS – but not too much

Movement is fine, but too much is distracting.

Don’t be afraid to use hand gestures (studies show that complex thinkers use more hand gestures). Just don’t overdo it. The camera is a microscope. It amplifies everything.

Speak at a speed comfortable for you, there’s no need to rush.

Make sure to have fun. If you make it enjoyable for you as the professor, the students will receive the content better.

6) ADD FEELING TO YOUR SPEECH

Make sure to speak in a way that it is noticeable that you have completed a statement, a phrase, a thought or a sentence – avoid run-ons.

7) PREPARATION – Don’t start speaking until you know exactly what it is you want to say:

• use an outline
• organize your thoughts before recording

8) KEEP IT SHORT

If people are watching you on video, chances are they have many other distractions competing for their time and attention – that YouTube clip of the baby biting his brother’s finger, Facebook notifications popping up every 30 seconds; that email from their boss that has to be answered.

Keep it short. Keep it engaging. If it’s going online, remember that anything longer than 5 minutes will experience a sharp drop off in audience viewing.

9) WHAT YOU SAY

If you make a small mistake or mispronounce a word, stop for a second and restart that sentence – there’s no reason to re-do the whole video.

3) Make sure to say/enunciate a question as a question

It’s okay to be expressive with your hands, shoulders or head

It’s okay to stop – take a breather, drink some water

4) 11) WHAT YOU WEAR

No need to worry too much about what you wear as long as you avoid some basic mistakes. Don’t wear stripes or overly bold patterns (they look odd on camera).

12) BE YOURSELF – only more

The camera is a microscope. It reveals authenticity and exposes fakeness. So be yourself, and no one else. But, be even more of yourself than you are in real life (if that makes sense). Dial it up a few notches, so your true personality fills the screen.

Keep your energy levels up.

13) GOOD POSTURE – Sit up straight

What feels odd in person, looks good on camera.

Think about the way people pose for red carpet shots (like the ladies of the wonder-fully uplifting Hidden Figures movie). No one stands like that in real life, but on camera it looks great.

Sit or stand straight, even if it’s uncom-fortable. Don’t hunch over, don’t use odd angles.

I have sloping shoulders so when record-ing on camera I actually lift my shoulders up ever so slightly. It feels odd, even fake, but it works.

We are psychologically wired to be more accepting and attracted to symmetry. So aim for clear, straight lines where you can.

14) USE YOUR HANDS – but not too much

Movement is fine, but too much is distracting.

Don’t be afraid to use hand gestures (studies show that complex thinkers use more hand gestures). Just don’t overdo it. The camera is a microscope. It amplifies everything.

Speak at a speed comfortable for you, there’s no need to rush.

Make sure to have fun. If you make it enjoyable for you as the professor, the students will receive the content better.
Webcams!
Modified and sourced from https://www.tomshardware.com/best-picks/best-webcams

Webcams are typically small cameras that sit on a desk, attach to a user’s monitor, or are built into the hardware. Webcams can be used during a video chat session involving two or more people, with conversations that include live audio and video.

And the Winner Is...
https://www.tomshardware.com/best-picks/best-webcams

When is the right time to look for a webcam? Well if you are not happy with the video coming from your laptop or current webcam, it’s time! We are going to share what’s available, but as this writing many are out of stock because of current Covid-19 situation.

1. Razer Kiyo $99.00 Bestbuy
   Most premium still available and affordable.
   Resolution: 1920 x 1080 HD
   Best feature: Built in lighting

2. Logitech C920 / C920S / C930e
   $129.00 for the C930e and $79.00 at Dell and HP direct for C920/s
   Best Webcam overall (finding one?)
   Resolution: 1920 by 1080 HD
   Best feature: Image Quality

3. Microsoft Lifecam
   $75.99 at Dell / $89.95 BHphoto
   Great for 720 resolution
   Resolution: 720 for Conference
   Best feature: Autofocus

4. Logitech C922 Pro Stream
   $99.99 Dell and Bestbuy
   Basic and Portable
   Resolution: 1920 x 1080 HD
   Best feature: low-light/background removal!

5. Logitech C525 HD Webcam
   $59.99 Used (ebay)
   Basic and Portable
   Resolution: 720
   Best feature: Compact

6. Logitech Brio Webcam
   $199.99 BHphoto/HP/Bestbuy
   The only 4K
   Resolution: 2160
   Best feature: 4K Ultra HD

7. Logitech C270 HD Webcam
   $25.99 Dell
   Cheap!
   Resolution: 720
   Best feature: Price and it’s in stock

Please no ‘up the nostrils’ shots (always check camera angle)

Contact the Justin Smith at the New Media Center to assist in setup, editing and media related questions
jb.smith@rutgers.edu