**Guidelines and Tips for Students in Online Courses**

1. **Voice communication for small group sessions will be by phone.**  In case a student's primary phone is experiencing a poor connection, we strive to have several other options.  Hence, students outside of the US are required to provide **two cell phone numbers** on two different cellular service providers.  In addition, it is strongly recommended for students to provide a **landline phone number**.  Finally, if we cannot reach a student, then the student should be prepared to call him/herself, via Skype or some third party calling service of his/her choice, to the U.S. call-in phone number.

2. **Headsets or headphones improve the sound quality and reduce background noise.**  They are also more comfortable and allow students to have their hands free to type when necessary.  Therefore, we do require all participants to be using a headset.  Some options include the following:

Bluetooth Wireless headsets with microphone





Wired headphones with microphone.



3. **High-speed internet is important for our sessions.**  We will be using internet-based conference software to display/share documents and graphics and to see each other through video cameras.  The internet will also be used to show our high-definition lectures.  **Therefore, a high-speed internet connection is critical for participation.**  In areas outside of the U.S., this can most often be achieved with 3G or 4G modems (e.g., Orange or Safaricom) that are linked to laptops or workstations.

4. **A webcam is required.** Visual communication between course participants is essential to enhance learning. Therefore, all students are required to have a webcam, which can either be built into a laptop/workstation or be free-standing. To improve webcam quality, students should avoid sitting near a window. This causes glare and makes it difficult for people to see you. Use a darker room with no light directly behind you. White backgrounds work well also.

5. **Test your connection and equipment before the sessions begin.** Students should test their equipment and connections with other colleagues in the US prior to the course. Students should also be prepared to participate in a practice online session a week ahead of the section start date. The purpose of this session is to help students resolve any access issues or technical issues ahead of the first class.

6. **Check the course website for answers to administrative questions.** Although course faculty are happy to address questions, the difference in time zones can often make for delays. Hence, students are encouraged to check the course website and syllabus for course logistical details.