

## LIBERAL STUDIES PLANNING FOR THE H1N1 FLU

We call your attention to the link at the bottom of the homepage of the Georgetown University website (<http://preparedness.georgetown.edu/h1n1.html>) that will bring you to information regarding the H1N1 Influenza Virus. We do not want to repeat all that information or what is coming from the School of Continuing Studies, but we want to add what might be helpful for Graduate Liberal Studies. With predictions that about 40% of the population will be infected, we can be fairly certain that the program will be affected. In general, we are following the same procedures as the rest of the University, encouraging faculty and students to follow all the steps that help avoid the virus and staying home when symptoms appear. However, we thought it would be helpful to craft our own message, recognizing the unique aspects of our program that need to be addressed in the context of this health concern.

We are very conscious of issues that may arise and want both faculty and students to know that the Graduate Liberal Studies office is available to answer questions and to support decisions that need to be made as the semester proceeds.

First of all, we are prepared for the eventuality that some of our office staff may become ill. While we ask for your patience if this slows down the normal administrative work of the office, we do anticipate that one or another of us will be available to monitor and respond to communications and to assist in the functioning of classes. Use our e-mail and our voicemail addresses. The essential work of the office should continue as the staff backs each other up.

Secondly, unlike the main campus, we have classes only once a week and do not have a student body living in dorms where the virus spreads. Thus, some judgments made by the University at large will not be pertinent to our own judgments. We will remain flexible and make further decisions as necessary, but we also recognize that for now some judgments are best left to faculty and students. In that regard, the following observations may be helpful:

- We have a strict attendance policy that will need to be flexible in these circumstances. Students with symptoms are urgently exhorted not to come to class. In view of possible illness, students are advised not to absent themselves from class for other reasons. Then, if they become ill, the flu will account for the one absence normally allowed for a good reason. But if flu complications create a longer absence than the anticipated one from a five-day illness or a student becomes ill after a previous absence, the principle concern is that the student not come to class and allowance be made for these exceptional circumstances.
- Students should contact the faculty member and faculty are asked to watch for communications if students are ill and will be absent from a class. This should be made known before noon of the class day. We will respect the judgment of the faculty member in determining whether to have class or not, depending on the number of absences anticipated, but in general we will assume that if more than half the students are ill, class will be canceled. The faculty determination should

be communicated to the office by noon of the class day and will be left as a message by 5:00 that evening on the usual (Anne Ridder's) LSP phone line 202-687-5706. This procedure is the same one followed for snow days.

- Students can call the LSP phone number before each class to confirm that it will meet. Faculty are asked also to communicate by e-mail with their students, if a class is to be canceled. If there is no message on the phone and no faculty communication, the assumption is that class will be held as usual.
- A faculty member who feels the symptoms of the flu should cancel class, using the same procedures as above. It will be impossible to arrange make-up classes in these circumstances, so the syllabus will have to be adjusted.
- Faculty are asked to develop contingency requirements for their course in the event that absences from the flu prevent meeting a requirement, e.g., a class presentation or an exam.
- Faculty are encouraged to use the computer and particularly the University Blackboard site for teaching, especially if a class cannot be held.
- Both faculty and students are asked to use their Georgetown e-mail addresses and to check them frequently for general e-mail notices and updates related to these issues.