

# Re-thinking Finals for Emergency Remote Instruction



What we imagine as a “final exam” has likely changed as a result of our pivot from in-person to emergency remote (online) instruction. A traditional final exam (time-limited, no use of notes or book, etc.) is time-honored, efficient, and can be an effective way to assess student learning in alignment with the goals and objectives of the course. After COVID-19 and with the significant and unexpected changes that have occurred to how students are engaging in our courses, a more flexible method of assessment may be warranted – one that allows students to demonstrate what they have learned in other ways.

We suggest that alternative forms of final assessment should be due to the instructor at 11:59pm on the designated exam day identified in the Baylor University final exam schedule.

## Alternatives to a Traditional Exam

Some of the following alternatives to the traditional format of online testing may provide an appropriate method for assessing your course objectives:

1. **Open-book exam.** Open-book exams can reduce student test anxiety and eliminate the concern that students may cheat by looking at their textbook during the exam. Since students will have access to facts, definitions, etc., in their textbooks (typically demonstrated through lower-order skills like identifying and labeling) the best open-book exams assess higher-order skills, such as application, analysis, evaluation, or creation.
2. **Summary.** Consider replacing the final exam with a final summary. Asking students to write a one- or two-page summary of the course’s big ideas compels them to revisit key concepts that were presented throughout the semester.
3. **Course Map.** A course map is a visual representation of a course, providing an overall visual of the content and highlights relationships among key ideas. Students consider the hierarchy of concepts, as well as important connections, when they create a map of the content.
4. **Multimedia Assignment.** Students can create an infographic, narrated slideshow, video presentation, or photo album that highlights their learning in the course.
5. **Pop Culture Analysis.** Ask students to identify a clip from a movie or television show and describe how it relates to the key ideas of the course.
6. **Passion Project.** Encourage students to select a topic from the course that especially interested them and learn more about it. Allow them to share what they learned in a choice of ways: blog, podcast, video, Wikipedia page, fact sheet, etc.
7. **Create a Game.** Ask students to create a game that could be used with next semester’s class to help future students learn the content.