

# Online Exams in In-person Classes: An Open Conversation on Accessibility, Flexibility, and Academic Integrity in the Age of AI

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Dr. Catherine (Katey) Kyle,  
Lecturer

UBC Okanagan

Celebrate Learning Week 2024



# Respectful Environment

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Read more about UBC's [respectful environment statement](#)





# I respectfully join you from the unceded land of the Syilx (Okanagan) People

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- Throughout my presentation you will see images featuring Indigenous plants of the Okanagan, including Arrowleaf Balsamroot (aka Okanagan Sunflowers), Saskatoon Berry, Sweet Woodruff, and Dogwood.
- I am grateful to the traditional caretakers of this land who have fostered this landscape since time immemorial
- All photos are from a UBC Okanagan Marketing and Communications Flickr album called “[Place: Spring on Campus](#)” from April 2021 free for our use

# Agenda

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- Today we will intersperse sharing and discussion opportunities with my own tale of online exams
- I will take a chronological approach to explain my pedagogical decisions, which have evolved over time
- After my story, I will integrate some supporting literature and course data to validate my decisions



# Introduction

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- Online exams: (from my view)
  - Are an accessible and flexible assessment modality
  - Contribute to a more positive examination experience for many students, including reduced test anxiety
  - Easy incorporation of approved disability accommodations – reduces load on DRC
  - Academic integrity measures are built in (but limited)
  - Allow for a wide range of question formats allowing for diverse exams
  - Benefit the whole teaching team with greater transparency in grading and time-saving automated features for grading and feedback
  - More equitable; reflect the life and times we are living in



# Narrative: Part 1

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Status quo, then two drivers of change

# 2015-2019

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The period of status quo

- Traditional in-person exams – backpacks at the side, notes away, ID on desk, etc.
- Also, the period of:
  - indecipherable handwriting, invented words
  - poorly filled in scantron sheets
  - limited access to grading technology → there were two scantron machines at UBCO, one for psychology, one for everyone else.



# Finals, 2019

## Turning point #1

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- December 17, 2019, 6pm exam
- 100 students
- Snowstorm, multiple car accidents, highway, bridge shut down
- Stressed out students, some in tears, some emailing me from the road
- I said to my TA, “If I never have to have another in-person final again, I won’t”



# 2020 – Turning Point #2

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- ‘nough said



# Narrative: Part 2

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Baby steps, onward ho, and the next big change

# 2020, cont'd

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- March 2020 I was teaching four classes, three with finals
- Aailed myself of every tool at my fingertips
- Only logical choice I saw was to replicate my in-person exams as closely as possible online
- Mixed question types – Multiple Choice, Short Answer, Long Answer
- Lots of data entry on my part, lots of learning....

# 2020-2021

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- Classes were online, so were exams (decision made!)
- Continued to refine my approach, seek support through CTL workshops and one on one support
- Continued to review the literature, student feedback, and data analytics

# 2021-2022

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- Return to in-person learning for most classes – decision time!
- One online 100 level course (W1), one in-person 200 level (W2)
- The small enrolment (14 students) of my 200 level class was a good testing ground
  - Some success, some challenges
- Summer course presented new challenge – required students to bring their technology
- Fall 2022, one online, one in-person.... And over 65 cases of academic misconduct (leading to the next big change)

# December 2022

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- Something led me to look at the exam log for a student...and that led me to identify over 65 cases (among 275 students)
- Some students had left as many as 145 times!

Started at Fri Nov 01 2019 10:20:42 GMT-0400 (Eastern Daylight

Attempt **1**

## Action Log

- 00:05 ○ Session started
- 00:20 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #1
- 00:20 ○ Answered the following questions: #6 #9
- 00:35 ○ Answered question: #2
- 00:35 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #2
- 00:35 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #3
- 00:44 ○ Answered question: #4
- 00:50 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #4
- 00:50 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #5
- 01:06 ⊗ Stopped viewing the Canvas quiz-taking page...
- 03:50 ✓ Resumed.
- 04:02 ○ Answered question: #17
- 04:05 ○ Viewed (and possibly read) question #16
- 04:10 ○ Answered question: #17

[https://itsupport.umd.edu/itsupport?id=kb\\_article\\_view&sysparm\\_article=KB0015592](https://itsupport.umd.edu/itsupport?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0015592)

# Excuses & Patterns (that I was "ok" with)

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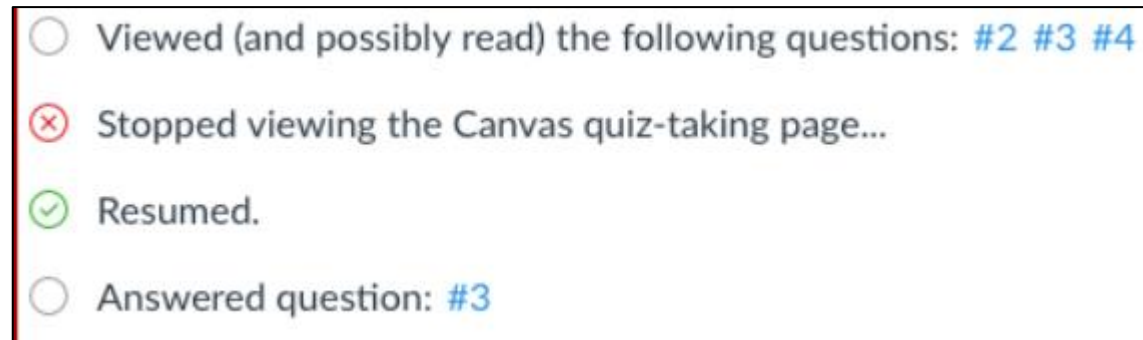
- Stopped/viewed/answered cycle on the log was sporadic and inconsistent
- Excuses:
  - Spotify/music
  - Notifications/emails/Social Media
  - Translation or spelling
  - Other distraction in the room/home



# Excuses & Patterns (that I was NOT "ok" with)

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- Regular pattern of viewed/stopped/resumed/answered but repeated down the page for subsequent questions indicating they read the question, went to research it, came back and answered, repeat.....



- Or, a pattern in the written section of stopped/resumed and then answered whole essay questions in less than a minute.... Clearly, they were working outside the Canvas environment



A close-up photograph of a dense patch of small, green, succulent-like plants. The leaves are rounded and have a glossy texture, with several small, clear water droplets resting on their surfaces. The background is dark and out of focus, making the vibrant green of the plants stand out.

# Narrative: Part 3

Time for a rethink: transition to open book exams

# 2023-Present

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- Consulted with our Academic Integrity Program Manager
- Engaged with students (current and former)
- Revisited Canvas support literature
- Looked to the academic literature on academic integrity and on online exams
- Consensus was that I was on the right track but needed to tweak a few things





# Literature Summary

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- Examined literature broadly on academic misconduct as well as specifically on online exams → important to look at AM in general because AM is driven by wider issues, not by the modality
- Confidence and competency are key factors in avoiding academic misconduct for all assessment types
- Students prefer online exams
- Online exams are one approach to modernizing pedagogy

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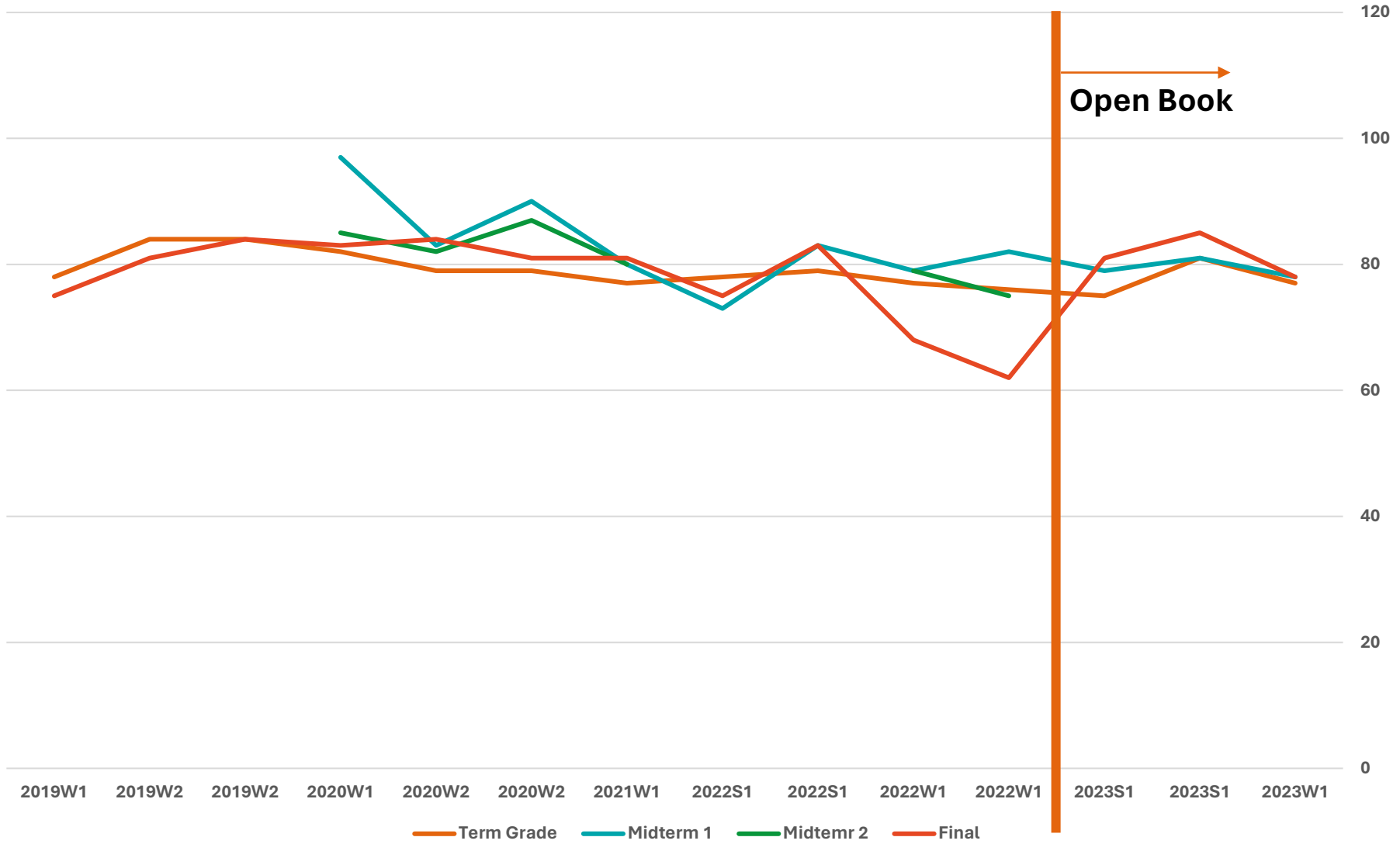
“We share the belief that a ‘catch-and-punish’ approach alone will not work....helping students acquire the confidence and skills to do well has the potential of lowering academic dishonesty by fostering self-efficacy and levels of interest by encouraging them to understand the intrinsic value of education and learning.”

(Jurdi et al., 2011, pp.27-28)





# GEOG 128/129



# Academic Integrity Measures I use

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- Low stakes exams (10%)
- Lots of practice with the modality (10 quizzes, 3 exams)
- Provide study guide
- Clear instructions
- Question banks
- Shuffle answers
- Variety of question types
  - Multiple choice
  - Matching
  - Fill in the blanks
  - Paragraph and long answer

# Academic Integrity Measures I do/did not use, and why

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- Lockdown browser
- Zoom invigilation

Bandwidth concerns, in both senses of the term

- Students sharing poor wifi
- Students lacking ability to operate
- Students lacking software and hardware

A distrust for interoperability/universal operability

Equality issue

# 2023-present

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## Open-book exam stipulations:

- Exams are categorically open-book but time-limited
  - I made the exams slightly longer to deter students from not preparing
- Students are advised to provide a citation if quoting

# Extract from Syllabus

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## → Quizzes & Exams

1. All quizzes and exams (called quizzes in Canvas) are open book. Don't let that fool you. You do not have time to endlessly consult other sources.
2. You may consult the textbook, lecture slides, or internet resources. However, **you may not copy and paste from resources. You are required to provide citations for information taken from other sources.** I will accept “(the lecture slides)” or “(the textbook)” if you are paraphrasing or speaking in broad terms. If you are quoting, you must provide a proper in-text citation (author, year, p.##).
3. Artificial Intelligence
  - a) Zero tolerance for generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT).
  - b) Translation, spelling, and grammatical software integrated in your browser is permitted. Essentially, the words and ideas must be your own, but if Google Chrome tells you how to spell a word or that you have used the wrong tense, that's ok.
4. No additional software or hardware is required, no in-person attendance is required.
5. I cannot guarantee I will provide technical support after 8pm. I will respond to any emails the next day.



# Closing thoughts

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- Traditional in-person exams (especially finals) privilege students with maximum flexibility who are more likely to:
  - Have stronger socio-economic supports (ie not required to work or if they do, they can 'risk' requesting leniency during exam time)
  - Are of European descent (ie not at risk of being called home for family responsibilities other than a death)
  - Are domestic, especially local (ie as the cost of plane tickets increase towards the end of the exam period, students needing to travel are more impacted and often more stressed)

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