# Slack for Classroom Communication

YACT
(Yet Another Communication Tool)

"Workspaces" allows you to focus on one course at a time

Mass notifications

Better than one-to-one support; everyone gets the benefit of answers

Back channel - private communication with groups

Slack - CSC 170

**CSC 170** ⌄
● Robert M Kostin

≡Q Jump to...

◎ All Threads

Channels ⊕
# announcements
# chatter
# help
🔒 ta-only

Direct Messages ⊕
💙 slackbot

Apps ⊕
● Google Drive

+ Add Apps

**#announcements**
☆ | 👥 104 | 💲 0 | Course-wide announcements and academic-based

Q Search

Tuesday, September 11th

**Robert M Kostin** 7:16 AM
@everyone I have to cancel in-person office hours today, Tuesday, September 11, due to an off-campus meeting this morning. As always I'll be monitoring Slack closely.

Wednesday, September 12th

**Robert M Kostin** 8:22 AM
@everyone Sorry but yet again, I have to cancel in-person office hours today. Use the #help channel in Slack if y̶o̶u̶ ̶  ̶  ̶  ̶me a DM if you need anything else.

Als̶  ̶  ̶ ̶  ̶  ̶  ̶  ̶  ̶ ̶1:05 AM today. If you have questions about Lab 4 before I get there, look for

Friday, September 21st

@everyone Although I said lecture attendance (or lack thereof) would *not* count against your grade, I've decided to implement a **bonus** if you maintain an 90% or better attendance rate *at the end of the semester*. (Don't be put off by whatever your rate is at this point. Remember: each lecture counts less we progress through the

̶  ̶ ̶ ̶0% or better, your THREE lowest lab assignment grades will be dropped f̶r̶o̶m̶ ̶c̶a̶l̶c̶u̶l̶a̶t̶i̶o̶n̶.̶

Excused absences include: an away game; a religious holiday; sickness (with confirmation from UHS); and maybe some other approved absences as defined by the University.

Message #announcements

# Slack is a Communications Tool

- Any platform app: iOS, Android, MacOS, Windows, and Web

- Smartphone apps: good use of notifications; it's the mode students use most often

- One class, one semester = one Slack "Workspace"

- Free (plus billable extended features)

# Benefits

## For Students

- Slack: industry standard in technical companies, currently

- Notifications: e.g. project is due; class is canceled

- Private groups: for team assignments, fast create, use, and then delete

## For Instructors

- Ability to focus on one topic/course without distraction of everything at once

- Ability to process hundreds of messages instead of a few dozen emails

- Common questions answered by TAs, possibly answered by other students

- Easy mass-communication at a moment's notice

# Startup

- In the syllabus: link to the sign-up page
  - e.g. http://docs.csc170.org/syllabus.html → join.slack.com/t/csc170/signup
- Advice
  - Load the app(s)
  - Control noise - turn-off some notifications for some channels
  - Setup private channels for teams
- Why use it?
  - Questions via email = one week delay
    Questions via Slack = almost real-time response
  - *Class cancellations* → via Slack #announcements channel only

# Shortfalls

- Re-directing from email or DM → [#help](#) channel

- UI - not perfect
  - Messages get lost (need to remember to "star")
  - Sort order: chronological or reverse-chronological?
  - Channels can get *noisy*
    - When responding to a post, need to remember to "start a thread" (not do the obvious thing)
    - Do NOT type and press enter! (ding, ding, ding, ding...)
      *"Hi professor Kostin" <enter>*
      *"I'm having a problem with my project" <enter>*
      *" Can you help" <enter>*
      *"me?" <enter>*
      *...*
      *USE SHIFT-ENTER TO START A NEW LINE!!!*

- Don't be spammy - response time will vary