

Student Orientation to Online Courses

For most of you, this is your first online class. Below is a checklist to help you, as online students, become aware of your responsibilities in the online environment.

Before the First Day

- Purchase all required materials (books, CDs, audiotapes etc.) for the course from the bookstore or online.
- Make sure you have received important information including your user name and password for your course as well as dates of any face-to-face class meetings.
- Double check to ensure that your hardware (computer, television, DVD/VCR, etc.) and your software meet the requirements of your course.
- Keep an eye out for materials that might be arriving in the mail, such as: orientation letter, videos, CDs.
- Contact the institution's support staff or your instructor if you have any problems or questions prior to beginning the course.

The First Day

- Send your instructor an email to say hello and to let him know that you have logged onto the course, procured your materials, and are ready to begin.
- Check your email frequently to see if the instructor has written to you.
- Read the course syllabus to determine if there are instructions on class expectations and behaviors.
- Visit the course site to see if the instructor has posted any welcoming thoughts, information, or introductory assignments.
- Explore the course site to become familiar with the course layout and organization.
- Send an email to other class participants to say hello and let them know that you are a student in the course.
- Dig right into your course content and begin your class. Don't wait! Some instructors will give you explicit instructions on how to begin, while others will rely on you to take the initiative.

After the First Day

- Check your email daily for messages from your instructor or your classmates.
- Check the course "Announcement" area for changes to the course that the instructor might make.
- Respond in a timely fashion to all discussion forums or group assignments.
- Set aside time each day to work on your course, preferably in a quiet study-conducive environment.
- Ask questions immediately (contribute to the FAQ "question board" if there is one, contact another student, or contact your professor) if you don't understand something. Don't put it off for days. You don't want to fall behind.
- If your computer has a problem, contact tech support. In the meantime, make other arrangements (use a campus lab computer, a friend's computer, or a public access computer) so that you don't fall behind in class.
- Maintain a calendar and work schedule throughout the semester marking all important dates (midterms, finals, quiz dates, papers or projects due etc.). Also, mark out time to read the course material, study, and participate in class. It is sometimes hard to remember that in an online course you still need to "attend" and "participate in" class as well as complete homework assignments.

If you do not have certain software needed for this course, below are links so you can download this software for free:

Adobe Acrobat Reader

<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

In order to view condensed .pdf files, Adobe's Acrobat Reader is needed.

RPCC introduction to using Moodle at the RPCC Moodle Help page:

<http://www.rpcc.edu/moodleHelp.cfm>

Macromedia/Adobe Authorware Player

<http://www.adobe.com/shockwave/download/alternates>

Macromedia Authorware Player is used to view Authorware files.

Macromedia/Adobe Flash Player

<http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>

Macromedia/Adobe Flash Player is used to view Flash animation and entertainment on the Web. Flash is used in some online courses for interactive quizzes, animation, and activities.

Macromedia/Adobe Shockwave Player

<http://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>

Macromedia/Adobe Shockwave Player is used to enjoy Shockwave multimedia games, learning applications, and product demonstrations on the Web. Shockwave utilizes 3D technology and is used in some online courses for interactive quizzes, animation, and activities.

PowerPoint Viewer

<http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/en/details.aspx?FamilyID=048dc840-14e1-467d-8dca-19d2a8fd7485&displaylang=en>

PowerPoint Viewer is used to view PowerPoint (.ppt) files.

Quicktime Player

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

Apple's QuickTime is complete technology for handling QuickTime video, sound, animation, graphics, text, and music.

RealOne Player

http://www.real.com/R/RC.030303r1cp_choice_6.bodymain.txt..R/forms.real.com/real/realone/realone.html?dc=41331330&beta_bypass=true&bbits=true&type=adfreq6&src=032603warhome_2,030303r1cp_choice_6

RealOne allows the user to hear/view RealOne audio/video. Once downloaded and installed, it will automatically play any sound or video that appears.

Windows Media Player

<http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/downloads/windows-media-player>

Windows Media Player is used to view Windows Media files.