Distance Education
learn.cbshouston.edu

Spring 2014 Student Guide

“Removing the Barriers of Location and Time”

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Welcome

Dear Distance Education Student,

The School of Distance Education (DE) commends you for choosing online learning at the College of Biblical Studies. As a distance learner, you will find your DE courses academically equivalent to the on-ground courses.

Carefully read the material presented in this handbook. It is designed to provide you with information specific to enhance your distance education learning experience. This guide will examine:

• how to be a successful Distance Education student
• how to manage your class in Blackboard
• where to find your course syllabus
• information about exams
• how to be successful in your course

The School of Distance Education at the College of Biblical Studies recognizes that distance learners, like all students, need access to a host of services. Distance Education provides many of them from student services to technical support to administrative assistance to online tutoring. You will find them all upon entering your online classroom.

Thank you for enrolling in your Distance Education class, and we look forward to serving you! Our ultimate goal is student success.

Sincerely,

John E. Knight

John E. Knight
Senior Vice President
Mission Statement

The School of Distance Education at the College of Biblical Studies seeks to support and assess the development and delivery of distance education courses for the purpose of providing quality Distance Education programming that reflects continuous review and improvement. Courses are delivered via technology, maximizing accessibility by removing the barriers of location and time. Distance Education courses and services of the highest quality must be delivered in a timely, student-oriented, and cost-efficient manner.

WHAT IS DISTANCE EDUCATION (DE)

In distance education classes, the instructor and students are apart from one another for all of the allotted class time. Distance education classes require that students log in on a regular basis to complete course requirements and receive feedback from the instructor. All distance education courses require regular student engagement with the course. Distance Education courses require students to interact through the Learning Management System (LMS) otherwise known as Blackboard.

The Successful Distance Education Learner

What makes a person successful at distance learning varies from person to person. The following is based on advice from instructors and students who have had positive distance learning experiences.

Keys to Success

One of the best ways to be a successful distance learner is to develop and execute good study habits. Some are:

- Check your e-mail account at least one to two times per day.
- Time management – Review your assignments so that you are aware of what is needed and can assess how much time it will take to complete them.
- Use all resources available to you.
- Work in a quiet, uninterrupted area as much as possible.
- Dedicate at least three hours per class hour each week for class work.
- Communicate with your instructor and peers.
- Reach out when you need help.
- Have a strong sense of self-awareness.
Getting Started

Introduction

Please review the syllabus and weekly instruction pages found under the “Course Documents” link before beginning the course. They have been designed to answer as many questions as possible clarifying the many details of the course.

Responsibilities

As a distance learner, you are, in some ways, more independent than your classroom counterparts. You are not bound by time and space for most activities. With this freedom, also come responsibilities, especially regarding time management. This is not a totally “at your own pace” course because there are specific deadlines given for activities. It is tempting to procrastinate in completing the readings and assignments, but avoid that pitfall. You will be busy – possibly stretched – in keeping up with the pace, and the situation will compound rapidly if you do not manage your time well. If you do manage your time well, you will find yourself easily keeping up and enjoying the insights and knowledge you will gain.

Standards

All College of Biblical Studies online students are expected to meet a minimum computing standard:

- Current model computer (laptop or desktop less than 2 year old)
- Home Internet connection
- Windows 7 or Mac OSX
- Microsoft Office 2010 (Word, Excel, and PowerPoint) or newer
- Current version of an internet browser required (Chrome, Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Safari)
- Personal e-mail

Dropping Courses

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses are expected to follow the established drop procedure as published in the Academic Catalog.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Refund Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1st day of class</td>
<td>100% refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the 1st day of class</td>
<td>70% refund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the 1st day of class</td>
<td>0% refund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expectations

The College of Biblical Studies encourages frank and insightful dialogue in all of its online courses. Diversity has many manifestations including diversity of thought, opinion, and values. We encourage all learners to be respectful of that diversity and to refrain from inappropriate commentary. You are expected to follow these guidelines:

• Constructive criticism is welcome, however if you disagree with someone, respond to the subject, not the person.
• Refrain from transmitting or distributing content that is harmful, abusive, racially or ethnically offensive, vulgar, or otherwise.
• Remember that there are no anonymous postings.
• Leave critical comments on writing mechanics to the instructor. Focus your comments on content.
• There are several levels of formality in online etiquette.

Email is normally in the mid-range of formality. Complete sentences, correct spelling, punctuation and refraining from ALL CAPS (considered shouting) are important. The goal is to communicate clearly and effectively. Please see the assignment submission page linked from the weekly instruction page for more details.

Contact Information

Instructor - To contact your instructor, use the e-mail tool in your course menu on the left-hand side of the course.

Technical Support - If you need technical support please visit the CBS Learn Helpdesk at: http://learnhelpdesk.cbshouston.edu

The CBS Learn Helpdesk also has informative support articles and links to online training.

File Names & Naming conventions

You will be required to turn in assignments electronically. You should follow proper naming conventions naming your files when you save them before uploading. The standard naming convention for file submission electronically is: (First Name_Last Name_Assignment Name_Week#)

For example:
John_Smith_Teaching_Styles_Week2.doc
Assignments that are not named appropriately may not be graded and may be considered late.

Discussion Board Posting Instructions

In online courses at the College of Biblical Studies, the discussion board functions as the main dialogue center for the course. The majority of your course work will be posting to the discussion board. You cannot be successful in your course without devoting a considerable amount of your time to the discussion board participation. We recommend checking the discussion board at least every day for new posts so that you may respond and interact in a timely manner.
Please review the course syllabus for detailed instructor expectations. Many weekly assignments require you to post responses to the discussion board and to your classmates' posts. High-quality, thoughtful, appropriate responses to the discussion prompts are expected. For there to be a lively class discussion, you will need to respond to others' posts in the discussion board forum(s) as well.

**Follow these instructions when posting and replying:**

- **FIRST,** you should always write your response in Microsoft Word or another word processing program. Check for spelling, grammar, and flow. Save the file to your computer.
- Find the **Discussion Board** link in your Course Menu. Look for the appropriate topic under the **Forum** column. This will typically be the name of the discussion board assignment you are working on (i.e., Week 1 - Take a Stand). Click on the link.
- Click the link titled "Click here to post your reply." This is called the "starter post."
- Click **Reply.**
- Enter your **full name as a subject** in the "Subject” line above the message box.
- Make sure the Visual Editor is turned on (see the purple arrow in the image below). If the arrows are pointed down, simply click on it to turn it back on.
- **Copy** the text from your saved MS Word document and paste it into the message box.
- If you need to attach a file such as an image or a PDF, click on the **Browse my Computer** button in the **Attachments** section below the message box.
- If you need to attach more than one file, use the **Attach File** icon in the Visual Editor bar above the message window. It is in the third row of icons and looks like a paper clip in the bottom left corner (if you can't find it, see the red arrow in the image below).
- If you would like an image to be included in your message rather than attached to it, use the **Attach Image** icon next to Attach File. It looks like an old-fashioned photograph (see the green arrow in the image below).
- If you would like to preview how your message will appear before it is posted, the **Preview** button is in the second row of icons in the Visual Editor bar. It looks like a computer monitor (see the blue arrow in the image below).

![Visual Editor Interface]

**Please Note:**

- Don't forget to change the Subject line to **your full name.** You should do this whenever posting a new reply on the discussion board (see below for instructions on how to reply to your classmates).
- If you need more help with using the discussion board, please view this video tutorial by clicking **HERE.**
Style Guides

Turabian style is required for all assignments for the classroom and online courses at the College of Biblical Studies.

Grade Center

You can see your grades and determine your percentage in the online course at all times. To calculate your actual percent, simply divide your current total score out of the points possible to date.

Rubrics

A rubric is a tool used to communicate assignment expectations clearly. Students are provided with grading criteria that will be used by instructors to provide feedback and to assess the completed assignment. This tool ensures grading consistency regardless of the instructor and student and allows students to know exactly how to earn all the points required for the assignment. By reviewing this information before you start your assignment you will begin work with the same expectations that your instructor has when he/she grades your work.

Due dates

Assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. Central Standard Time on the day of the week listed.