Practices for Learning Online

Being a good student in online courses and programs requires more than technology skills. In F2F courses, regular class meeting times in classrooms serve to pace your work and remind you about deadlines and other important upcoming things. In online classes you need to pace yourself and plan your participation to a greater extent. Here’s some expectations you should set for yourself:

- As soon as possible, familiarize yourself with the basic technologies required for coursework at Canisius: MyCanisius, email, and D2L.
- Log in to each course to participate, complete assignments, and generally follow along at least four to seven times a week.
- Carefully read course syllabi, guidelines, and assignment instructions as soon as you can.
- Keep a personal work calendar, and enter all relevant course dates and deadlines there as soon as they are made available to you.
- Familiarize yourself with any additional technology required for a particular course, such as Microsoft Excel, or video recording applications. Give yourself plenty of time to learn these before having to use them for assignments or activities.
- Complete assignments on time. Do not assume deadline extensions are available. Only ask for deadline extensions in cases of real need or emergency. (If you haven’t asked for an extension before, and you do good work, a professor is more likely to grant it.)
- Attend synchronous class meetings whether on campus (as in a hybrid course) or a web meeting. If you must miss one, correspond with the professor to determine what that will mean for your grade and ability to complete the course.

Here it’s worth mentioning and addressing some misconceptions students occasionally have about online coursework. Some of the below probably apply to online, hybrid, and blended courses elsewhere, but specifically these points address courses at Canisius College. Consider the responses below as advice for completing online courses at Canisius.

Myth: Online courses require less time and effort than face-to-face courses in classrooms on campus.

Truth: At Canisius, online, hybrid, and blended courses are typically as rigorous as face-to-face courses and, if you aren’t prepared with some of the specific aspects of the online environment (see our readiness survey on the previous page) can be more challenging. Your course may require you to learn or strengthen certain ways to communicate, such as writing or composing simple videos. This is to your benefit; you are receiving the same high-quality education online as you would receive on campus. You are also honing skills especially for internet communication, which are important in many fields today.

Myth: Since I’m online, I am anonymous and won’t be able or don’t need to interact with others.

Truth: Most courses feature a discussion board where you can read (or listen to) other student’s input, and reply to them. In fact, participation may be a requirement of the course, similar to a participation requirement in face-to-face class discussions.

Myth: Online courses are self-paced. I can participate when I want, at any time throughout the semester.

Truth: Online courses typically have deadlines for various activities, and sometimes dates and times when you need to attend a live discussion via the web. Additionally, course content may not be entirely available at the beginning of the semester. Rather, it may become available week-by-week, or in discreet units. You should plan to devote regular time and effort to your online classes, and login several times each week.

Myth: If I want to put off deadlines, I can simply claim my computer has a problem.

Truth:
When you take an online course, you are responsible for knowing how to use your computer (or mobile device) and internet tools such as email and browsers. (This is analogous to a face-to-face class, where you are responsible for getting yourself to the campus classroom on-time.) Additionally, you may be required to learn about web-conferencing or simple video creation. Plus, you must ensure that your device and internet connect are adequate and reliable. Technology failure or ignorance is not an excuse in online courses - nor in face-to-face courses!

**Next Step: Interaction Online**