

Tips for Transitioning to Online Classes

Preparation

A few minutes of preparation could save you a lot of time later. In order to prepare for an online class:

- **Print out your syllabus and assignments.** This may seem counterintuitive. Why are we printing things out if they are accessible online? Shouldn't we be saving paper? Yes, please save paper! Print double sided and only print out what you need. Your syllabus and descriptions of major assignment are materials you worth printing for the following reasons:
 - *You can access all the information from a printed syllabus immediately.* It takes time to log into Black Board, click seven links and then wait for the document to download if you just need your professor's email. (You could also save these documents to your computer where they may be more easily accessible.)
 - *You can highlight important information and make notes for yourself directly on a hard copy of your syllabus or assignment.*
 - *You can cross off completed assignments and easily keep track of what you have finished and what you still need to do.*
- **Log into Black Board and familiarize yourself with each class.** Open every folder and every link. This may seem silly, but every professor organizes his or her online space differently and materials may not be where you expect them to be. Do some investigating if necessary and ask your professor where you can find materials before the day they are due.

Communication

Communication is always important but communicating tone is harder through email than face to face.

- **Be clear, specific, and direct.** Also, Proofread! Proofreading will save you and your professor time. If you are scheduling an online meeting, always include the date, not just the day of the week. Include the course code and assignment in the subject line of your email so the professor has a context for your question.

- **Don't take offense.** It's important that you communicate formally and expect others to communicate formally with you. Don't worry too much about language that might feel too abrupt or unkind to you. Again, it can take extra time to express attitude in writing and your professor may not feel comfortable using emojis.
- **Reread the syllabus and ask questions.** Professors try very hard to anticipate student questions and make the answers to these questions clear in the syllabus. Make sure you reread the syllabus several times looking for the answer to your question before reaching out to the professor. However, even though the professor might think the answer is clear, it could be confusing to you, so don't be afraid to ask questions.
- **Organize emails.** Create a folder or tag for each course. Unless you are writing about an entire new subject, keep the same email thread going instead of creating a new one.
- **Call your professor.** Some professors will provide a cell number. Try giving them a call as it may be easier and faster to articulate your question over the phone. Call within reasonable times of the day and respect the professor's boundaries.

Time Management

Managing your time is always important, but even more so with remote learning.

- **Schedule a consistent time each day** to check your email, BB, and work on homework for the class. Set yourself up for success by choosing a time when you are usually feeling productive and be realistic about the goals you set for yourself to complete during this time.
- **Expect technology glitches** and submit assignments early.
- **Set up a workspace.** It's important to have a place that you designate for work. Make sure that it is quiet and easy to concentrate in this place. It is helpful to be near to a plug and a window.

WSU Resources

Check out [IT's website](#) for valuable information about how to navigate Blackboard.

Other resources for students can be found at [Learning in Times of Disruption](#).