ACCESSibility Toolkit

Office of ACCESSibility

Table of Contents

- Navigating Blackboard……..(Slides 3-7)
- Helpful Tips for Working Online…… (Slides 8-15)
- Tutoring Services at Mercy College…… (Slides 16-20)
- Free Microsoft for Mercy Students ……(Slides 20-21)
- Using Your Accommodations online……. (Slides 22-28)
- How to Organize Your Time……..(Slides 29-35)

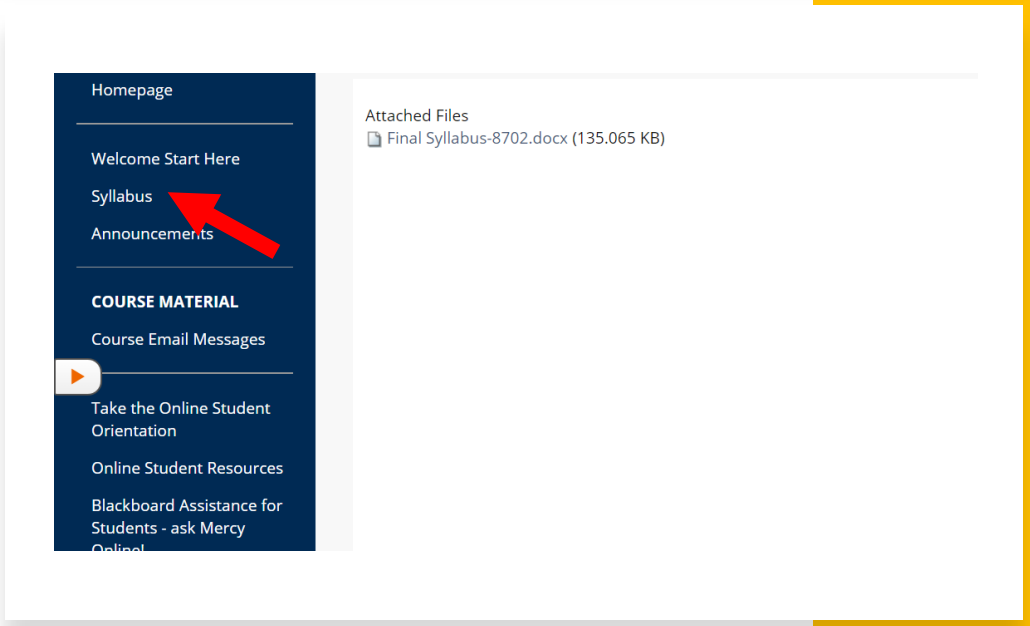
Navigating Blackboard

Link:

https://mercy.blackboard.com/

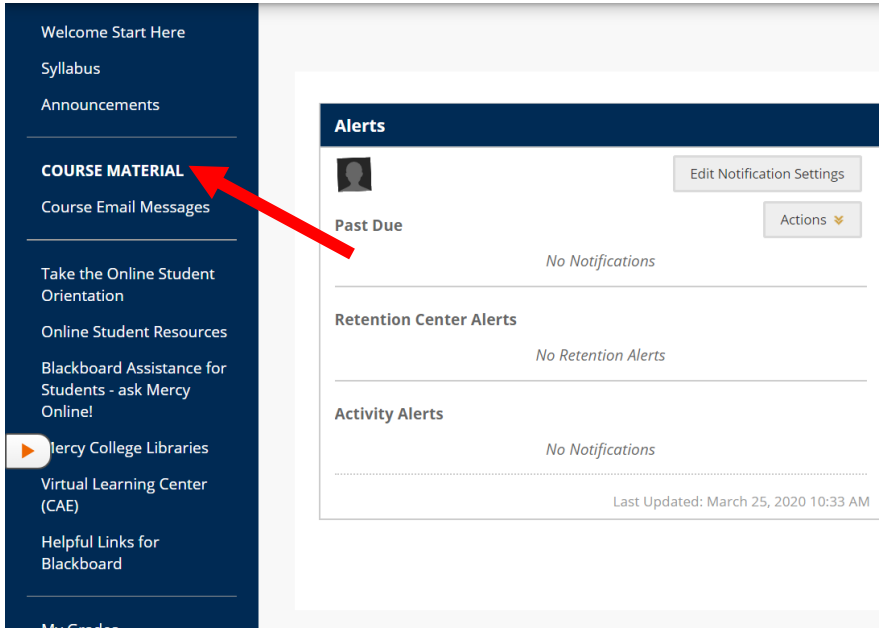
Navigating Blackboard:

- Sign into Blackboard Daily to ensure the following:
  - Syllabus information
    - Remember to check your syllabus for any course clarification and assignment information.
  - Assignment deadlines
    - Be mindful of assignment deadlines your instructors have in place.
    - *Example: Assignment due by Sunday at 11:59PM*
    - *Example: Assignment due on Sunday, April 12th*



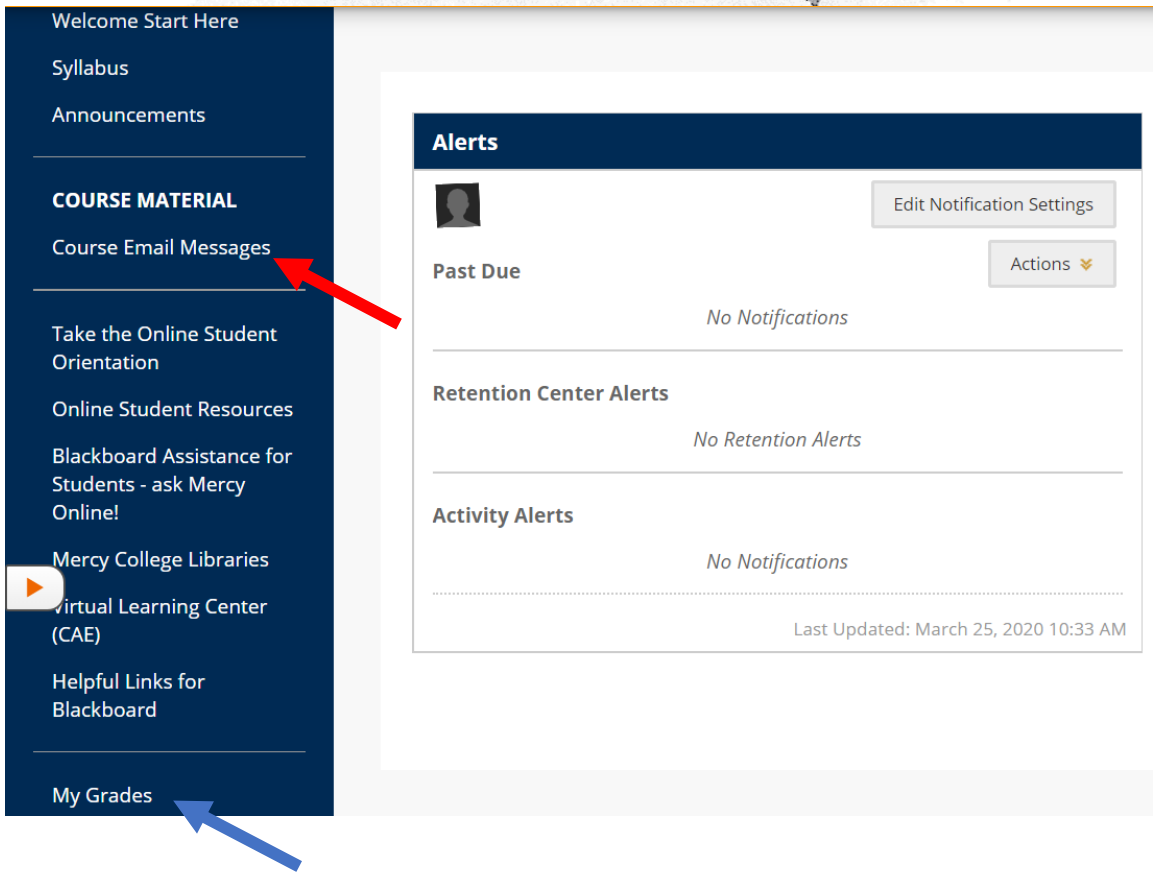
Navigating Blackboard:

- Check Weekly Course Materials:
  - Course materials will be posted under this section.
  - Check this section constantly for readings, PowerPoints, videos, course articles etc.
  - Check this section for weekly assignments and discussion participation



Navigating Blackboard:

- Course Email Messages
  - If you need to email your instructor, please do so under this tab.
  - If you wish to view email messages from your instructor, use this tab.
  - If you wish to email or view messages from your classmates, please do so under this tab.
- Grades
  - Click on this tab to view grades for each class.

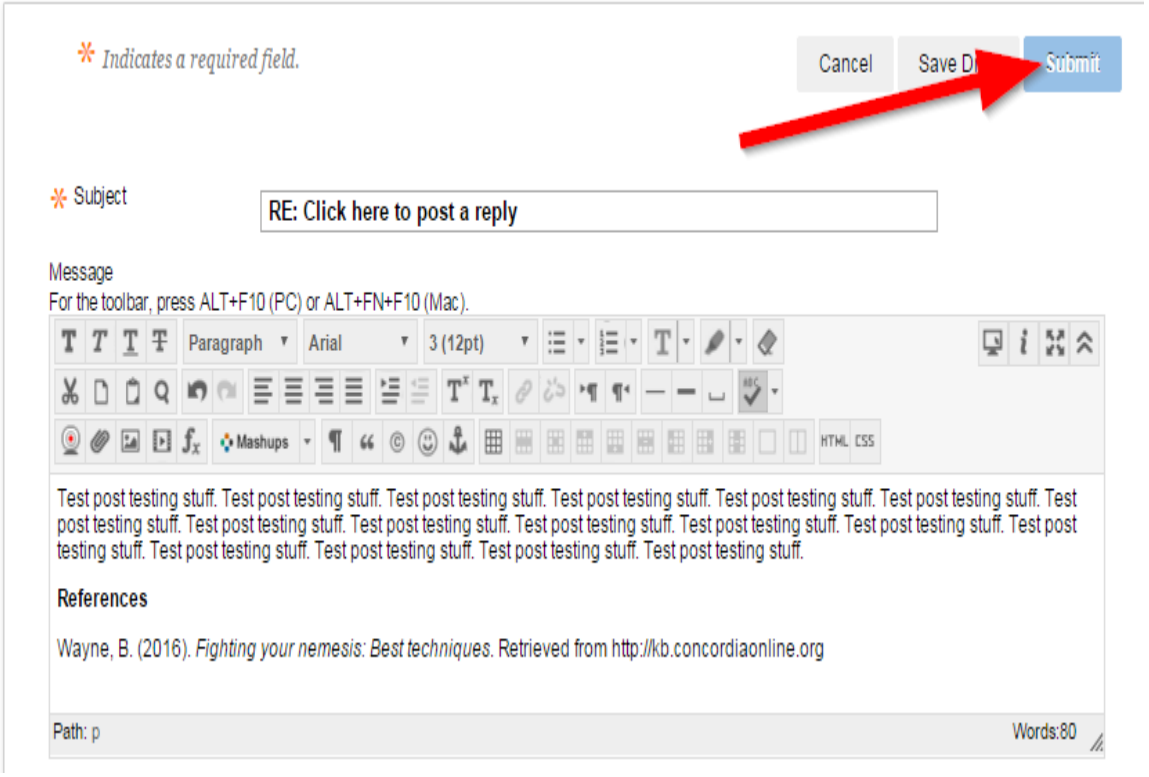


Navigating Blackboard:

- Class discussion and participation:
  - Be mindful of course discussions
  - Students can view course discussions under Course Materials
  - Respond to your instructor and be mindful of deadlines
  - Note: You may need be instructed to respond to two of your peers for class participation credit.

- Resources and Blackboard Tools:
  - Blackboard/Online Learning Support: Technical Support (Mercy College Help Desk):
    - For technical issues, please contact the Mercy College Helpdesk: 1-866-767-9508.
    - The Helpdesk is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

- **Online Student Support Videos for Blackboard can be found at the following links:**
  - https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_SP_14/Student
  - https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/Reference/Blackboard_Learn_Videos/Student_Video

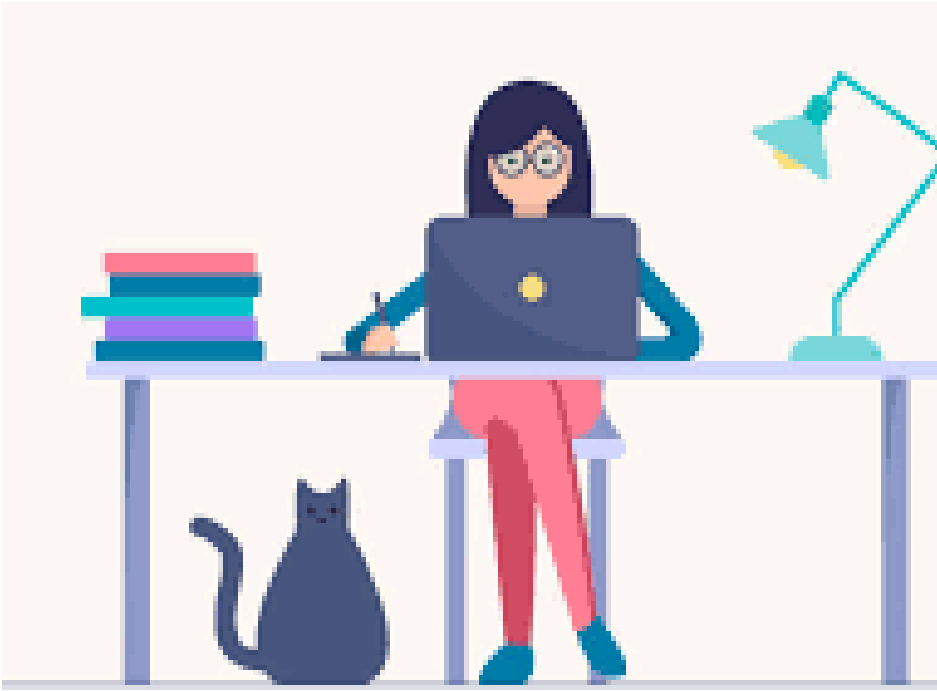


Helpful Tips for Working Online:

- Treat an online course like a “real” course
- Hold yourself accountable
- Practice time management
- Create a regular study space and stay organized
- Eliminate distractions
- Figure Out How You Learn Best
- Actively participate & Build Networking Relationships with Students and Your Faculty

Treat an online course like a “real” course

- When it comes to online classes, you need to have the discipline to:
  - Sit down and say to yourself, “I am going to work on this,” as well as the dedication to actually follow through.
- How can you treat this like an in person class….
  - You must “show up” if you’re going to get real value out of your class.
  - Treat your online classes the same way you would a face-to-face class or, better yet, a job.



- Set goals, and check in with yourself weekly.
  - In a traditional classroom setting, you'll often receive verbal or visual reminders of an assignment's upcoming due date from your professor.
  - Reminder: It is up to you to make sure you've set aside enough time to complete your class work before the deadline.
- If you're having trouble holding yourself responsible, pair up with a fellow classmate, or enlist the help of a spouse or friend to check in as an accountability partner.
  - By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can get the most from your online class.

Hold yourself accountable

Practice time management

- The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest challenges when taking online classes.
- **Thing to Remember when managing your time:**
    - Look at the syllabus and **make note of major assignments**. Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what workload is coming in the weeks ahead.
    - Don't forget to **factor in prior commitments** that may interfere with your regular study schedule.
    - **Create a weekly schedule that you follow**, designating certain hours each week to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums.
    - Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine, and **set reminders for yourself** to complete these tasks.
- When working on your assignments, **try time-blocking**, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.

Create a regular study space and stay organized

- Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine.
- It's important to determine what type of environment will work best for you. Experiment to discover which type of setting boosts your productivity.
- Setting up a regular workspace will also help you to stay organized.
    - Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals.

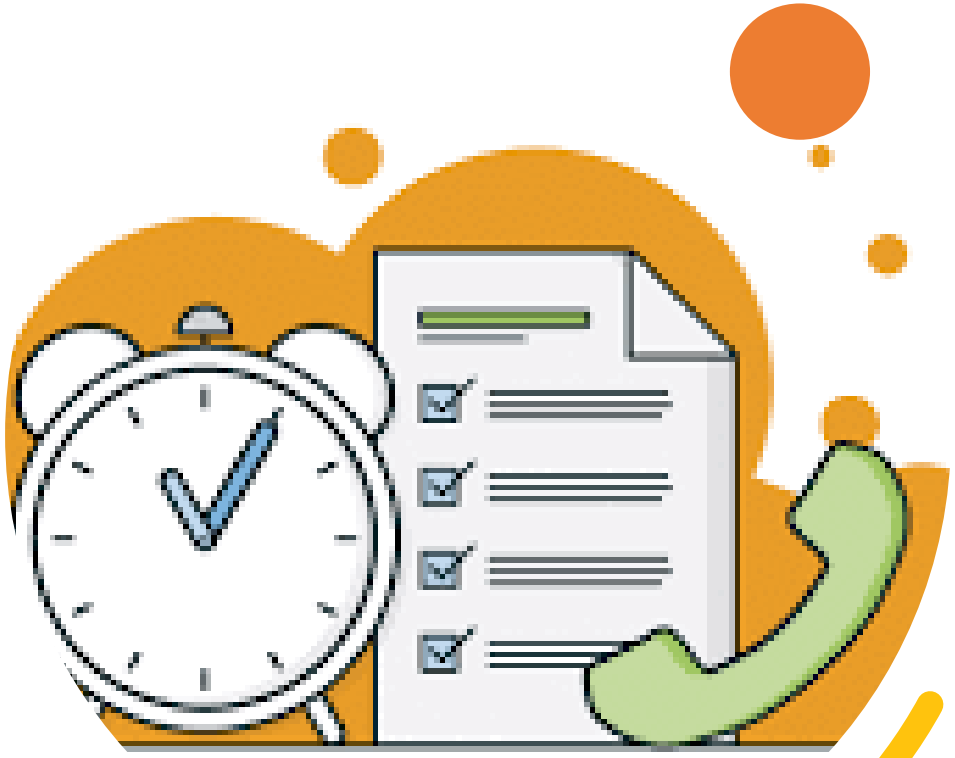
Eliminate distractions

- Ultimately, you will need to find a strategy that works best for you.
- Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up. And if you're still having trouble resisting the temptation to check your email or surf the web:
    - Using applications like Cold Turkey and Freedom can help eliminate distractions by blocking the apps or websites that tend to compete for your attention

Figure Out How You Learn Best

- Once you've established where you'll learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work.
  - Morning person: Make time to study first thing.
  - More of a night owl: Set aside an hour or two after dinner to cozy up to your computer.
  - *If the kids require your morning and evening attention, try to carve out a study session mid-day or late at night.*

- Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information helps you best grasp new concepts, and employs relevant study strategies. Please see examples below:
  - Visual learner: Do you prefer print out readings, notes or PowerPoint lectures to review.
  - Listening and Recording: Make sure to build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio- and video-based course content.



Actively participate & Build Networking Relationships with Students and Your Faculty

- Participate in the course's discussion forum to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates. This might involve the following:
  - Responding to a classmate's discussion post or posting a question about a project the class is working on.
  - Read what other students and your professor are saying about the topic at hand.
  - Involving the forum in asking questions and providing clarification.
- If you do feel yourself falling behind, speak up! Don't wait until an assignment is almost due to ask questions or report issues.
  - Email your professor and be proactive in asking for help.
  - Network with your classmates to see their perspective on the assignment.

Tutoring Services at Mercy

https://www.mercy.edu/academics/academic-tutoring

How to make an appointment with the Tutoring Center:

- Simply log in to Mercy Connect and go to EAB Campus.
- Click "Get Tutoring" from your Student Home screen
- Using drop-downs, select the Term for which you are enrolled, then choose a Service Category, Location, Tutor and an available appointment slot
- Confirm your appointment details
- Click Submit.

You will receive an email or text message confirming your appointment.

MERCY COLLEGE | CENTER FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

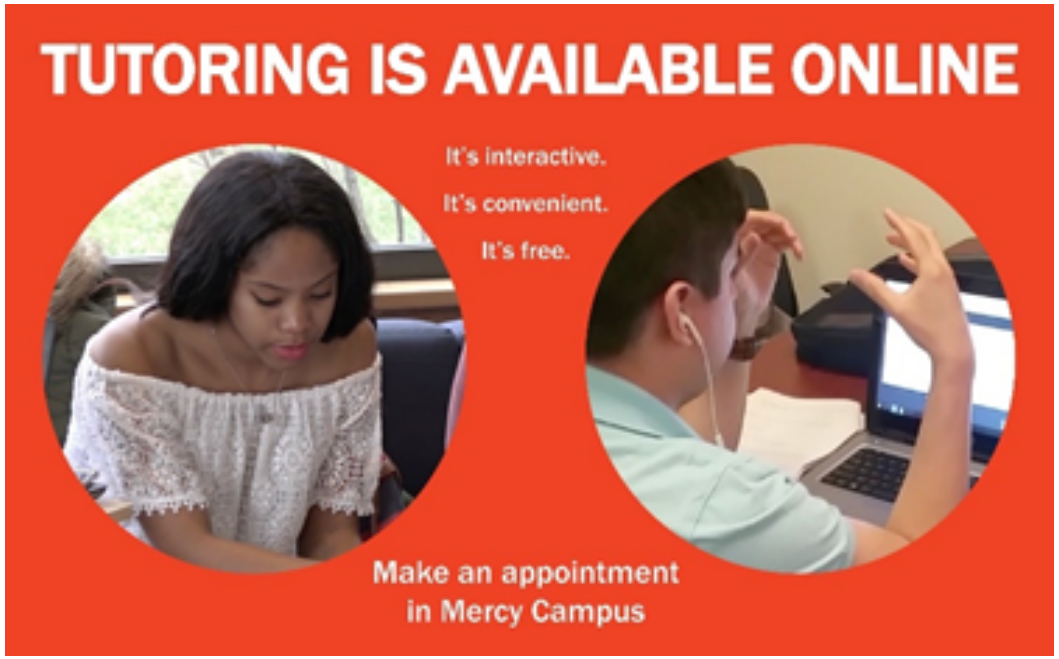
Call 914-674-7402 or email Tutoring@mercy.edu for information

Writing Support Services:

- Need any assistance in the following areas:
  - Written Assignments
  - Theses and capstone projects
  - Reading Comprehension
  - Grammar
  - Presentation Practice
  - Communication Skills
  - Critical Thinking Skills
  - Speech Tutoring
  - Online Tutoring

Online Tutoring Services:

- Visit Mercy Connect/EAB Navigate to set up an appointment for a video/voice conference with a tutor or writing specialist.
  - Once you have booked an appointment in EAB Navigate, you will be contacted by a tutor within 24 hours with further instructions about your session.



Free Microsoft for Mercy College Students:

- Students can download for free, and install on their own computer, most of Microsoft's most popular software:
- Windows 7, 8, and 10, and the newest Mac and Windows versions of the Microsoft Office Suite: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, OneNote.

Free Microsoft for Mercy College Students:

To download Microsoft Office, please do the following:

- STEP 1 - Login to your Mercy College Account by visiting https://www.office.com. Click on "Sign in" and sign in using your Mercy College email address (example jdoe@mercy.edu)
- STEP 2 - From the Office home page, select **Install Office**

Click here to see step by step instructions on how to download Microsoft Office on your computer:

- https://support.office.com/en-us/article/download-and-install-or-reinstall-office-365-or-office-2019-on-a-pc-or-mac-4414eaaf-0478-48be-9c42-23adc4716658

For technical issues, please contact the Mercy College Helpdesk: 1-866-767-9508.
The Helpdesk is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Using Your Accommodations Online:

Types of Accommodations Online:

- Extended time on Testing:
- Tips for a Distraction Reduced Environment
- Reader: Natural Reader
- Magnifier/Large Print:
- Breaks:
- Note taking
- Assistive Technology
- Alternative format Text
- Flexibility with Assignment
- Flexibility with Attendance

Types of Accommodations Online:

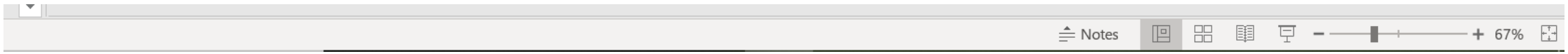
- Extended time on Testing:
  - Please contact our office if you are having any issues with receiving time and a half on timed exams online.
  - Encourage instructors to reach out to our office if they need assistance adjusting the time on blackboard.
- Tips for a Distraction Reduced Environment
  - Find a quiet space in the comfort of your own home
  - Turn off smartphones and social media notifications
  - Remove yourself from others around you to minimize the noise
  - Put in ear plugs or headphones
  - Take a short 5-10 minute break if needed

Types of Accommodations Online:

- **Reader**: Students have a few options if they are still in need of text to speech accommodations. Here are some free software's you can use:
  - Natural Reader: *Most popular*
  - Balabolka.
  - Panopreter Basic.
  - WordTalk.
  - Zabaware
- Please keep in mind, reading transcripts need to be in a PDF or Word document.

- **Magnifier/Large Print:**
  - By using the computer, students can zoom in automatically by using they keypad, or mouse.
  - By using the computer, students can increase font size and zoom the page in.

Zoom in screen



Types of Accommodations Online:

- Breaks: It is still important to take breaks in order to ensure student success. Here are some ways you can take a break at home while working online:
  - Deep breaths
  - Quick snack
  - Drink a glass of water
  - Mindfulness techniques
  - Listening to music
  - Play with your kids for a quick minute during down time

Types of Accommodations Online:

- Note taking:
  - If you have Note taking Assistance, you are still able to use Note Taking Express.
  - Reach out to the Office of ACCESSibility if you are having trouble downloading or retrieving your notes.
  - Students are still able to record from their phone, laptop or computer.
  - If you are unable to use Note taking express, please reach out to the Office of ACCESSibility.
- Assistive Technology:
  - If you are in need of any recording devices, please reach out to our office immediately.
  - We offer: Basic recorders and Smart Pen devices.
  - Hearing devices on a case by case basis.
  - Feel free to use your phones or computers to record lectures.
- Alternative format Text
  - Reach out to the Office of ACCESSibility for alternate format textbooks. We will provide you with your textbooks in a PDF format
  - The New York Public library is offering free books on there website.
  - If you need assistance with finding alternative formats to your textbooks, please reach out to our office.

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Types of Accommodations Online:

- **Flexibility with assignment deadlines- 2 additional days for independent assignments.**
    - **Excludes group work and discussion posts.**
    - If a student requires more than 2 days extension, they must notify you, the professor, and ACCESSibility in writing prior to the due date. **Additional extensions may be considered but are not guaranteed.**
- **Flexibility with attendance- 2 absences allowed in addition to allowances on course syllabus.**
    - This excludes lab courses.
    - The student must notify professor and ACCESSibility in writing if they have used all their allowed absences.
    - Additional absences may be considered but are not guaranteed.

How to Organize Your Time

- Plan ahead
- Don’t multitask
- Set Up your own Study Space
- Block Out Distractions
- Reward Yourself
- Remember to still Get a Good Night Sleep

How to Organize Your Time

- Plan Ahead:
  - Use a calendar to plan your daily and weekly assignments, highlighting the following:
    - Assignments due, including drafts and final submissions.
    - Activities related to your program, such as study group meetings.
    - Virtual office hours with professors and advisors.

- How to Make a Calendar Using Excel Sheets:
  - Open **Excel**, select File > New. In the search field, type **calendar** and select the magnifying glass to initiate the search.
  - Select the **calendar** style that suites your needs. This example uses the Any year **calendar**. ...
  - Each **calendar** template has unique features.

How to Organize Your Time

- Don’t Multitask:
  - Avoid multitasking which decreases productivity. Arrange your tasks in order of importance, and pay attention to the details.
  - Create a To Do List
  - Practice mindfulness techniques- concentrate on what needs to get done in the present.

How to Organize Your Time

- Set up Your Own Study Space
  - Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine.
  - Set up your Virtual Office
- Examples of a study space:
  - Bedroom
  - Office or Family Den
  - Living room/dining room
  - Backyard porch

How to Organize Your Time

- Block Out Distractions: Things that easily distract people:
  - Surfing the web
  - Social media platforms
  - Text messages and calls

- How to stay focused at home: *Pomodoro Method*
  - Set a timer for 25 minutes, and complete work uninterrupted for the scheduled period.
  - Take a five-minute break to grab coffee, check emails, or do something else.
  - Once you've completed four sessions, treat yourself to a longer, 15-minute break.

How to Organize Your Time

- Reward Your Self:
  - It’s important to reward yourself after a job well done in order to avoid burnout.
  - You can reward yourself by celebrating your accomplishments and treating yourself to something you truly enjoy.
  - *Make sure your time away from your studies is dedicated to fully enjoying yourself. If you’re mixing work with leisure, then you may burn out—making it difficult to get back into your routine.*

How to Organize Your Time

- Get a Good Nights Sleep:
  - Sleep is essential in order to rest your body, and keep your mind fresh for the next day.
  - Try to get seven to eight hours of rest a night.
  - *Pulling all-nighters is less productive than studying consistently. Include sleep in your schedule.*