

# WELCOME

- Welcome to Luzerne County Community College and to our online version of **English 102, Advanced Composition**. Because you have registered for **an entirely Web-based course**, certain concepts and requirements should go without saying . . . but I will “say” them nevertheless.

## **\*REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS\***

### **COURSE:**

- First, please allow me to address and redress at the very start an unfortunate, yet common misconception regarding online courses: **They are NOT “easier” than traditional classroom courses**.
  - As a matter of fact, when they are not the same, *they are oftentimes more difficult*, especially with regard to **students’ TIME MANAGEMENT**.
- As for this class in particular, please be advised that, while we have no set class time, we do indeed have set due dates and due times, so manage your time accordingly.
  - Put another way, this course is **NOT** an “**independent study**” in which you have the option of working off your own schedule—of getting done what you want, when you want.
  - Consequently, you will not pick-and-choose assignments or their due dates, nor will you wait until the end of the semester to complete all the work and then submit everything *en masse*.
  - As the **Course Schedule** clearly demonstrates, this course is **a process** with a **strict timetable** and “steps” to follow.
  - So be prepared to do the same work and the same amount of work as you would if we were meeting three times per week in a traditional, “real world,” “brick-and-mortar” classroom, and be prepared to submit that work in a timely fashion.

### **YOU:**

- Similarly, online courses in general and this course in particular are *not* intended for “weekend warriors” – those who wait until the weekends to “catch up” on work.
  - For this class, you will strictly follow the schedule/calendar and submit assignments by their **Due DATES and Due TIMES** (which are more like “**deadlines**”).
- Additionally, according to the experts in the field, the successful online college student possesses and demonstrates the following required traits and skills:
  - **commitment**
  - **self-direction**
  - **self-motivation**
  - **self-discipline**
  - **computer proficiency**
  - **computer-friendliness**

- that special trait of someone who likes to spend a substantial amount of time on the computer, reading and writing
- a technophile as opposed to a technophobe
- **\*time management\***
  - devoting 10-20 hours per week (per online class)
  - juggling personal, working, and academic lives

## **ME:**

- Further, **another false impression** of online courses is that their instructors are available any time of the day or night, any time of the week. These **unrealistic expectations** have no real-world counterpart—students certainly do not hold their classroom instructors to the same impossible and impractical standards.
  - Quite frankly, I am not open 24/7 like an ATM machine or convenient store.
- Thus, as any other teacher, I have **OFFICE HOURS**: please consult the **Syllabus** for this semester's times.
- While I may occasionally answer **emails** throughout the day as my schedule permits, I will — and must, for the sake of my sanity — adhere to these office hours.
  - ...which is not to say that you cannot email me any time of day;
  - just know that I will likely respond during this specific time frame.
- **Having said that, I do realize that problems have their own schedules that will unlikely match mine; thus, I have some alternatives:**
  - Students may set up telephone or **email appointments** (*I prefer the latter*).
  - I typically send out **class-wide emails** to address any issues or problems.
  - We can even try **chat-room sessions** or conference calls, if logistical.

## **\*COURSE FUNDAMENTALS\***

### **COMPUTERS:**

- As for technical requirements, you should have easy and **reliable** access to a computer that has —
  - **Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Windows Media Player, Adobe Reader**
  - a **dependable** connection to the **Internet**
  - as well as the requisite **Learn plug-ins**.
- You should also have a **fundamental level of proficiency** with such technology.
- Further, since **MURPHY'S LAW** seems to rule the computer world, you should possess a saint's patience and a marine's ability to improvise, overcome, and adapt.
  - Please, please, be **patient**, which I know can be difficult when the stress-level is orange (high).

### **SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:**

- Quite seriously, you must cooperate to establish and sustain **a safe, nonjudgmental learning environment** in which all students confidently and securely participate in the free exchange of ideas. In other words:
  - **be assertive but not aggressive**
  - **respect others' rights to express their opinions as they respect yours**

- **develop some thick skin since not everyone will agree with you**
- **treat others as you wish to be treated (unless you are a masochist)**
- **watch your language**
- **refrain from sexist, ageist, racist, and otherwise harmful and disrespectful comments**
- **and grant others the benefit of the doubt because you understand that the written format often leads to misunderstandings**
- Especially **vital to online classes** is the eradication of the abuse of the *distance* in “distance learning” – you **cannot** use the computer tools (*email, chat, discussion posts*, e.g.) or social media
  - to **intimidate, threaten, bully, stalk, insult, badger, or harass anyone involved in this class**
  - to **undermine the professor’s authority** by starting your own little coup d’état
  - to otherwise splatter the rest of us with your psyche's slurry pond
- Basically, conduct yourself with the **decorum** and **maturity** appropriate in a college-level course.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

- A topic related to etiquette is “**Academic Integrity**” or “**Academic Honesty**.” This is another issue of particular relevance and importance to online courses, and one that I take quite seriously.
- Accordingly, I have drafted an **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY** that you must read and agree to the terms of (via the 1-question **ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY QUIZ**) by **the end of Week #1**.
- This will make clear my expectations regarding the authorship of all coursework and set the tone for our semester.
- If nothing else, think of the quiz as an easy **100** to start the semester.

## **\*GETTING STARTED\***

### **WEEK #1:**

- Subsequent to completing the Academic Honesty assignments, please watch the **Learn** and **Week #1 ORIENTATION VIDEOS**....These will orientate you to the site & get you started on the initial tasks.
- Then, please read (and save) the **SYLLABUS** and **HOUSE RULES** found under *both* the Week #1 and “**Course Documents**” pages – you’ll find that most material is duplicated like this on our site.
- After that, our course (and the fun!) begins in earnest; please follow the **COURSE SCHEDULE** from here.

*Best wishes for an exciting and informative learning experience!*

Sincerely,

**Dr. Housenick**