Dear CMPS225 Distance Learning Student:

As your instructor for the Distance Learning (DL) Section of CMPS225, Software Applications, Programming I would like to welcome you to our course, and trust that you will find CMPS225 DL to be a unique, challenging and rewarding educational experience.

Our course is being offered this semester as a distance learning course. We will be benefiting in our course from the communication and information exchange capabilities provided to us over the Internet and the World Wide Web, and you will be participating in what is referred to as an "Asynchronous Learning Network."

If this is your first "Virtual Classroom" course, then I must tell you that the delivery of this course will be different from any other course you have taken. We can refer to the traditional courses you have taken as "face to face" courses, i.e., you meet on a weekly basis and come face to face with your instructor and fellow students. In our course, you will not meet face to face with me, nor will you see your fellow students in a classroom. But you WILL study and learn the identical material which is normally covered in (my) "traditional" face to face sections, and you will use the identical textbook and supporting course materials, and complete comparable assignments and take comparable examinations.

A benefit of taking this course DL is that you as a student get to set your own pace. However, there are the drawbacks of 'putting work off' to the point that you can no longer catch up and complete the course in the allotted amount of time. To help everyone stay on course, I have assignments that will be due periodically. You can, of course, turn these in ahead of time so you can free up time elsewhere.

You will have textbooks and other resource materials, assignments and examinations comparable to what is normally given in the traditional face to face sections. And, through the use of BlackBoard, you will be communicating both with me and your fellow students in ways not possible in the traditional classroom setting.

A university course represents a partnership in learning between you and your instructor. Each bears certain responsibilities. Your responsibilities and obligations in this course will differ from those of traditional courses. Perhaps the major obligation on your part will be to discipline yourself to the mode of the course delivery, and always to maintain currency. Basically, this means you will have to do the following:
Log onto, and participate in, the on line conferences which are specified for our course, and do so several times a week.

Retrieve the assignments which will be specified in an on line conference, and submit them by the designated due date.

Take the exams and final examination on the specified dates to be announced.

The "link" between you, the student, and I, the instructor, will be the on line communication capabilities of our "asynchronous learning network." We will be using a system called BlackBoard for CMPS225 DL. It is fairly easy to learn and use, but of course, you will need a little bit of practice to get accustomed to it. Read carefully the material made available to you, and practice! There is on line help available. And, don't be afraid to use the system, and yet don't be intimidated by features you may not need to know.

I will tell you, 'right off the bat', that the key to success will be your own self discipline and motivation. You MUST allocate sufficient time several days a week for our course, and log on BlackBoard several times a week for important information. The assigned materials in the textbook MUST read thoroughly. There might also be some downloadable material and on line material which you will be responsible for. You must not fall behind. The better your discipline and motivation, and the more actively you participate in the designated conferences, the more you will derive from the course.

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

1) Home work 32%
2) Quiz 32%
3) Final Examination 36%

The exams will be given over Internet. So, there will be no need for a proctor or coming to the campus.

All assignments and projects will have DUE DATES, and you MUST meet these.

If you need to contact me, you may reach me at kyang@selu.edu. Whenever you email me, please put 225-<message> in the Subject Line of your email. Please note that you do NOT include the angle brackets. These are called meta-symbols, which mean they are “outside of the message”. You will see them used frequently in Computer Science.

The first thing I would like you to do is to send me an email at kyang@selu.edu indicating that you have read this letter.

The second thing I would like you to do is log onto the Black Board System blackboard.selu.edu and introduce yourself. This is extremely important as you will be working and discussing your work with your fellow students. Those students who do not participate seem to make about one letter grade lower than those who do. Helping others helps you more than it does them. This is not a course in, “I've got a secret.”

Your account is your W number, and your password is the one which you use at registration.

Best wishes for success in CMPS225 DL!

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