

WELCOME TO CISE 522-80!

Fall 2010

Greetings! Before we begin, be sure to print out this letter and keep it handy! Now, let me share some "nuts and bolts" regarding this learning trip in cyberspace. I provide this information in the form of frequently asked questions:

Does my computer need to be able to do anything special?

In addition to the technical recommendations given to you by the WPUNJ IT services, you need to be sure you:

- Have an up-to-date antivirus program running at all times throughout the course;
- Submit all documents using Microsoft Word. Word Perfect, Works and other word processing systems are not accepted. Any questions? Contact WPUNJ IT services at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm>
- Download the Adobe Acrobat Reader (information for this free download is available from the BB homepage);
- Download the Powerpoint Viewer (available on the WPUNJ Blackboard homepage) if you do not have powerpoint on your computer;
- Consider using a high-speed internet access line rather than a telephone connection (I recommend this but it is not required).

What do I do if I have a technical problem?

Contact Blackboard immediately for any/all technical problems you have at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm>

A copy of your completed form is sent to me so that I know you have registered your problem in the proper location (the Blackboard tech support people will respond within 24 hours, often just as quickly on weekends). You must register your problem or I will not give you credit for missed/late work.

You can email Blackboard directly even if you can't log onto the WPUNJ homepage or the Blackboard homepage at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm> You must be sure to tell them what course you are in and what your problem is....a copy of your problem will be forwarded to me.

If you have your own computer problems, you need to find a working computer. Work from your school computer, your public library computer and/or come to the WPUNJ campus and use one of the numerous student computers available to you.

Note: If you have family vacation plans and/or family problems, I will still expect you to "attend" class. In previous semesters students have gone to Mexico, Hawaii, and the Netherlands and still participated online.

[For anything having to do with class that is **NOT** technical, please feel free to contact me at: maluk@wpunj.edu; Please remember that I am a reading teacher—not a technical support person!]

Email Addresses

WPUNJ requires that you use your WPUNJ student email account and so do I! I will hold you accountable for all communications that I need to forward to you at that account. As well, I expect you to email me from that account—if you use a different account I will not be responsible for ensuring that I will read and respond to your messages. When you email me you must be very sure to put this course title and number (CISE 522-80) in the subject box. I am teaching more than 100 students this semester and will not be able (unfortunately!) to remember who is in which class! A final reminder ... be sure to check your account regularly and delete any unnecessary information as it may overload the account.

Will We Ever Meet On Campus?

NO!

All other sessions will be held on-line.

Counting the Weeks:

We will count our weeks beginning on Tuesdays. So, for example, our first week of class will be the week of Tuesday, January 18th (through Monday, January 24th).

What About Our Required Readings?

For this class there is one required book. You may borrow it from any public library and/or purchase them from one of the commercial websites such as Amazon.com or Barnesandnoble.com. If you choose to purchase your book online you need to have it shipped in time to begin reading at the latest February 15.

Choose from one of the two books below ... your choice which book you want to read!

Allen, Janet. (2004). Tools for Teaching Content Literacy. York, ME: Stenhouse.

OR

Tovani, Cris. (2004) Do I Really Have to Teach Reading? Content Comprehension, Grades 6-12. York, ME: Stenhouse.

Additional required readings are posted in the BB class.

Please note that there will be additional required professional readings and Internet websites to read throughout the semester and I will provide you with these.

When Does Class Begin?

On January 18th (or at the latest January 20th) please go into Blackboard and log into class, CISE 522-80, and look for the course buttons marked:

- 1) Course Information** for an on-line copy of this welcome letter, the course syllabus and weekly schedule—print these all out and keep them in a convenient spot for quick reference throughout the semester.
- 2) Assignments** to find guidelines for the written assignments you will need to complete. We will work with the course information in a variety of different ways, including large and small group discussions, private message exchanges, chat room conversations, Internet quests, assigned readings, and interview activities. Print out all of these and refer to them as you work to complete each assignment during the semester.

What Can I Do While I'm Waiting for Class to Begin?

There are two **very important** things that you **MUST** do:

- 1) Go to the Blackboard website (bb.wpunj.edu) and familiarize yourself with all of the information there. Explore all of the student tutorials.

- Get to know the language and terms that are used: Discussion Forums, Communication, Group Pages, etc. The more familiar you are with Blackboard the easier this course will be.....honestly, once you begin working "in class" it won't take long to become familiar with the format.
- 2) Order the "required readings" as explained above. You do not need to wait until **January 18th** to do this.

NOTE: If you feel you need more information regarding computers, please let me know and I will make some recommendations for textbooks you might find helpful. Please note that these would be absolutely recommended but **NOT** required—and prescribed on an individual, as needed basis!

How Often Must I Participate/Log On?

Please note that a significant part of your grade is based on your attendance and participation. Unlike a traditional class where you are physically present and you can use your body to indicate involvement and interest by raising your hand, calling out/or speaking to a neighbor, your presence on-line can only be "felt" when you log-on and send a message. So, please be sure to log-on and contribute to class discussions at least **THREE TIMES per week, including one log-on between Tuesdays and Fridays and a second between Saturdays and Mondays.** I will evaluate your participation by the quantity and quality of your contributions to questions and/or comments your classmates and I offer as well as your own postings of questions and reflections. Your comments and questions should be engaging, academic, thoughtful, and designed to support and encourage our learning. The purpose in logging on frequently throughout the week is so that we can maintain an on-going conversation as well as participation level that meets the needs of all the students.

It has been my experience and the experience of my previous students that logging on several times a week for short periods enables us all to become engaged in the course—rather than following the face-to-face classroom model of meeting once per week. In addition, we found that logging on less frequently becomes extremely difficult because there is a build-up of conversation entries and it becomes impossible to "catch up."

One note of caution: In previous semesters some students interpreted my words above to mean that the more posts they made the higher their grade would be. Two-three thoughtful comments and/or replies to other posts during a week will receive a higher grade than 5-10-15 posts per week. This is a three credit course and not a 24-hour per day IM-ing experience! Also,

posts made after the due date for a discussion forum will not be given credit. There is no way to "make up" missed work by posting after the calendar date on a discussion forum. If you follow these simple directions, you and your classmates and I will have an enjoyable experience.

One more word about participation and contributions ... I do not consider a posting like, "I agree" or "What do you think?", or any personal comments (such as: "Do you know 'so-and-so'?", "Did I meet you in last year's class?", "I think I worked with your husband at ... ", etc.) as thoughtful, academic, and learning-supportive comments.

You also need to know that as the teacher responsible for this course, I automatically receive information regarding the number of times and minutes each one of you spend on-line. These statistics are available to me throughout the semester and I check them periodically and as the need arises.

What Must I Do When I Can't Log Onto Blackboard and/or I Experience Other Technical Difficulties?

Please note that I am **NOT** a technology specialist. I am a reading teacher. I **CAN NOT HELP** with computer problems, including logging onto blackboard, losing e-mail messages, deciphering errors. **BUT**, there are marvelous, helpful, efficient, technology specialists who **CAN** help you.

There is information located on the Blackboard webpage <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm> and a form to e-mail for help if you have trouble. Any technical problems will be responded to within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends (often within 24 hours even on weekends). If you experience technical difficulties you must do the following:

- 1) Complete and submit the BB Support Center form on the Blackboard page at <https://liberty.wpunj.edu/bb/support-center/default.cfm> (The tech people forward a copy to me as well so we ALL know you are having a problem);
- 2) If you do not receive a reply within the designated time, contact the technical support again;
- 3) If you cannot complete an assignment because of technical problems, I expect to be able to find your complaint logged in with technical support services.

Please **DO** contact me during the semester regarding questions, issues, and concerns regarding the academic content of our work together this

semester. Email is the best way to reach me quickly: **Kathleen Malu at maluk@wpunj.edu** We can also skype. If this is something you wish to do, send me an email with your skype name and I will reply with mine and place you into my contacts list. We will agree on a mutually convenient time for a skyping session.

“Help, Teacher! I’ve never taken a course in cyberspace before!”

Don’t Worry! And, guess what? I have never taken one either! I began teaching online in 1998 so I have lots of experience (and patience!) working with individuals who are new to online work!

So..... Relax! If you are new to cyberlearning ... The more time you spend becoming familiar with Blackboard, the easier it will be. My students tell me that I am an open, patient, adventuresome teacher, willing to take risks on this cyberspace adventure! So, I hope you’ll “catch my spirit!”

Based on my many years of teaching with technology, I have learned that the biggest problem students have is reaching out for help. In cyberspace, I can’t see “puzzled” faces—so you need to let me know whenever you have problems so that we can solve them together! I can not help you succeed if you do not tell me what I can do to help! Please ... ask me for help! I will be delighted to support you and help you become successful! By asking for help, you give me valuable feedback and an opportunity to learn from and with you—something I find most exciting! Also, don’t wait until the last minute to tell me you are having difficulty....you should let me know within a week of your problem

Remember this: I believe we are here to help each other learn and make this cyberspace way of learning meaningful and helpful. I welcome you to this pioneering adventure of exploration and discovery. I encourage you to take risks, be creative, flexible, and patient! If you keep the metaphor of astronauts, spaceships and exploration in mind throughout the course—it will help you get through your fears (if you have any) and problems.....

Good luck and see you soon in cyberspace!

And now we’re

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