

(Based on advice I received from a great teacher in an online class I took years ago when web-based instruction was in its infancy, I like to “block” the semester into about four sections I call “Seminars.” I create a Seminar folder for each of these units. The first item in the Seminar folder is an Agenda that describes what will happen during that series of weeks in almost day-by-day detail. As you can see below, the Agenda outlines reading assignments, gives specific instructions about posting to the discussion board - including posting deadlines by day and time - alerts students to upcoming assignments and expectations, and tells them how to accomplish tasks that might be unfamiliar.)

AGENDA – Seminar One

The American Community College: Background, Students, Faculty and Governance.

In Seminar One we will become acquainted with each other as a class and will lay the foundation for our exploration of America’s community colleges. Seminar One will also serve to acquaint you with the online techniques and assignment types we will be utilizing throughout the course. Reading the text is extremely important, in that it will provide necessary background for much of our discussion. Each seminar week will have a reading assignment as well as a lecture related to the readings. The lectures are written or recorded as video clips to supplement, elaborate on, and sometimes challenge the chapter, so read the chapter first. For Week One, read the text assignment and Lecture 1-1, respond to the assigned questions on the Discussion Board, and complete the personal biography assignment by the day and time indicated. (See weekly agenda below.) When I need to communicate with you, I will send e-mail to your UMSL address, so check it regularly. I will also post announcements on the class website, so always read what is new as you log in each time.

(If you looked at the syllabus example, also posted on this ELIXR site, you will see that some of this Agenda information is repetitive. It follows my cardinal online class rule of “Repeat, repeat, repeat.” Everywhere a student turns, there should be detailed instructions about what to do and in what order. If you are getting a lot of e-mail or calls about assignments or instructions, you are probably not being explicit enough in your written instructions.)

Print out the **AGENDA** for each seminar as it comes to you and use it as a reference guide and check list for assignments as you complete them. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, go to “Tools” on the main page menu and look there for the tutorial on how to use blackboard called “Student Manual.” I have also placed an instruction file called “How I Use Blackboard” under the **Course Information** menu choice. I will try to keep the features we use to a minimum, to make the technology as simple as possible but you do need to be able to use the basic Blackboard function. Be sure that you are familiar with how to get to

Course Information, Course Documents, The Discussion Board, e-mail and “office hours,” the “Groups” menu, and External Links. I will use the assignment manager tool later in the semester, but will explain how that is used when we get to that point. But [please use the UMSL e-mail rather than your personal e-mail for class purposes](#). Some personal systems such as hotmail are filtered by the university security system and don’t get to me.

(It is very helpful to let students know what features you will be using on the Course Management System you utilize, and to direct them to instructions on how to use these features. As “computer savvy” as many students are, others will still be intimidated by the technology, and if you can walk them through it early, you may be able to prevent time-consuming conversations and drops based on frustration.)

Unit objectives for Seminar One:

Upon successful completion of this seminar, you will be able to:

- **Provide a general overview of the history and development of community colleges in the United States.**
- **Describe the general characteristics of community college students and the unique perspectives they bring to higher education.**
- **Describe the characteristics and diversity of community college faculty, and discuss the key issues involved in instruction in this sector of higher education.**
- **Describe the forms of governance common at both the state and institutional levels for community colleges.**
- **Successfully navigate Blackboard and Mygateway, and know how to create annotated bibliographies.**

ASSIGNMENTS: (Unless otherwise noted, all assignments not part of the Mygateway Discussion Board should be posted to me as e-mail attachments at farnsworthk@umsl.edu. Please use Word or Rich Text format for your written work. If you are used to using Word Perfect, you have an option when you save documents to save them in “rich text” or rtf format. These are universally accessible using either Word or Word Perfect, so please convert.

(I make it a habit to highlight information I want to be certain students notice in a different color – just as these notes are highlighted.)

For WEEK 1

- 1) **Post Biography:** Prepare a three or four paragraph biography on yourself and post it to the discussion board in the “Biography” Forum. To find the “Discussion Board,” look at the menu on the left side of the main class page as you log in. You might add to your biography a paragraph or two about why you are in this class and what you would like to do with the

knowledge you gain. Pay particular attention to any special skills or knowledge you wish to gain from the class, to help the rest of us know how to best help you achieve your goals. I will leave this forum accessible for quick reference as you work with others in the class. **Due: by the end of the day Friday , Jan. 14.**

I would appreciate it if you would post a picture with your bio. It doesn't need to be formal! I just find that it helps for us to be able to "picture" who we are working with! Include your partner, pet or children if you wish!

(I like to begin every online course with a brief, posted biography and photo. The more we are able to create a sense of being a "community of learners," the more interested students will be in remaining involved, and supporting each other.)

2) Textbook Readings: Read C & B, Background, chapter 1 (pgs. 1 – 36)
Due: by 5:00 pm Thursday, Jan. 19

3) Read Lecture 1-1 and answer questions. Read Lecture 1-1 and answer questions listed at the end of the lecture on the Discussion Board in Forum 1-1 – Background. Remember that in order to receive full credit for a lecture posting, you must reference the reading assignment and must demonstrate some analytical thinking in your response.

Question responses are due by 5:00 pm Thursday to receive full credit!

(As often as possible, I reinforce the need to reference the reading or other resource material in the discussion board postings, if the students want full credit for the response. This does more than anything I have discovered to improve and sustain quality of discussion.)

4) Respond to the answers of at least two of your classmates.

Using the "Discussion Board," respond in a paragraph or two to a minimum of two of the Primary Lecture answers of your classmates. In your responses, begin by selecting "reply" under their answer. You may also reply to as many of your classmates' critiques of other answers as you wish. These responses need to be more than "I agree," or "Good thoughts," but good, thoughtful answers of a 100 words or more.

Due: Sunday the 22nd by 5:00 pm.

5) Search the web/library & send annotated bibliography. Search the library or web for two of the best articles you can find pertaining to the history, background and development of community colleges. For this session, use the article in this Seminar folder on Community Colleges in Missouri as one of your choices. Annotate the articles and send the annotations to me and to your classmates as an e-mail attachment and save them for yourself in a folder that will become your own file record of articles about community college education. (For a sample of an annotated bibliographic entry, see the "annotated example"

in the Seminar 1 folder. This is an example of a “minimal” annotation. Be sure to summarize in your annotations with sufficient detail that you can later look at the annotation and evaluate the value of the reference to other work you are doing.

Due: Sunday the 22nd by 5:00 p.m.

(This assignment is an example of one of the advantages of online instruction – the ability to easily send students out to find and share resources. If you do this weekly and require them to prepare and share annotated references, they can build a sizable annotated database of their own on each course subject during the semester.)

6) Scan the Text for paper topic: Look over the chapter headings in the text and begin to think about a topic for a paper on an issue related to community college education in the United States. I will ask for your topic in about three weeks. If you are a doctoral student, you might think about how a topic might relate to your dissertation, so that you can be working on literature reviews, data gathering and other helpful work while completing this assignment. The paper topic must, however, relate to community colleges. I am calling this paper a “Familiarization Paper” and its intent is to get you into the literature about a specific area of community college education to review what has been written about it. You may draw conclusions in your paper, but the primary intent is to complete a 7-10 page review of the literature about your topic. You may use either APA or Chicago style when formatting the paper. **Due: The Friday of the last week of classes.**

(Since the Agendas only cover three or four weeks at a time - and I usually have only one Seminar folder and Agenda open at a time - I use the Agenda to keep students looking ahead, alerting them to up-coming assignments so that when a new Agenda opens, an assignment doesn't take them by surprise.)

7) Look at the Group List contained in the State Profiles Folder in “Course Documents.” Find your group and the state assigned to your group. The group list will tell you what this assignment involves. You may divide up the work on this assignment any way you like. You will benefit a great deal from reading chapter 12 as soon as possible, and the lecture in Seminar 4 for Chapter 12. They deal with community college research and will have useful resource suggestions for your state profiles. I have created “Group” sites for you that you can access through the **Communication** selection on the course menu, then by choosing **Group Pages**. On these group pages you will have access to group e-mail, discussion boards, a virtual meeting room, and chat ability if you want to use it. **Due: By the Friday of Week 11. You will present during weeks 12, 13, 14 and 15 to the rest of the class.**

(I like group work in online classes, and try to get groups together early. I put myself into each group, so that I can monitor group activity and determine if some are not “carrying their weight,” a luxury you generally don't have in the

standard classroom setting.)

For WEEK 2

1) Textbook Readings: Read C & B, Chapter 2, Students (pgs. 37 – 72)
Due: Wednesday afternoon, Jan. 25, of Week 2 by 5:00 pm.

2) Read Lecture 1-2 and answer questions. Read Lecture 1-2 and answer questions using the discussion board. Remember to reference the reading in your responses if you want full credit.

Question responses are due by 5:00 pm Wednesday, Jan 25, to receive full credit!

3) Respond to the answers of at least two of your classmates.

Using the “Discussion Board,” respond in a paragraph or two to a minimum of two of the Lecture answers of your classmates. These responses need to be more than “I agree,” or “Good thoughts,” but good, thoughtful answers. Respond to the critique of others.

Due: Sunday of Week 2 by 5:00 pm

4) Search the web/library & send annotated bibliography. Search the library or web for the best articles you can locate pertaining to Students in the community colleges. Send the annotations to me and to your classmates as an e-mail attachment and save them for yourself in a folder that will become your own record of articles about community college education.

For help finding articles, go to the Course Information area in this online Classroom, and read “Using Online Library Resources.”

Due: Sunday by 5:00 p.m.

(Note that this assignment directs students to a file I have placed in the Course Information area that explains how to access and use online library resources. Another advantage of online instruction is that you can send students quickly to “instructional materials” that tell them how to improve their research and analysis skills.)

5) Work on State Assignments: Work with your group on the state profile assignment.

6) Be thinking about paper topic.

For WEEK 3

4) Textbook Readings: Read C & B, Chapter 3, Faculty (pgs. 73 – 102)
Due: Wednesday afternoon, Feb. 1, of Week 3 by 5:00 pm.

5) Read Lecture 1-3 and answer questions. Read Lecture 1-3 and answer

questions using the discussion board.

Question responses are due by 5:00 pm Wednesday to receive full credit!

6) Respond to the answers of at least two of your classmates.

Using the "Discussion Board," respond in a paragraph or two to a minimum of two of the Lecture answers of your classmates.

Due: Sunday of Week 3 by 5:00 pm

4) Search the web/library & send annotated bibliography. Search the library or web for two articles pertaining to Faculty or instructional issues in the community colleges. Send the annotations to me and to your classmates as an e-mail attachment and save them for yourself in a folder that will become your own record of articles about community college education.

Due: Sunday by 5:00 p.m.

5) Work on State Assignments: Work with your group on the state profile assignment.

6) Paper Topics due to me as an e-mail message. Sunday, Feb. 5 by 5:00 p.m. February 6.

(As weeks progress, the instructions can become more cursory. If I see a student slacking in the quality of Discussion Board responses, however, I send a quick reminder note.)

For WEEK 4

1) Textbook Readings: Read C & B, chapter 4 Governance (pgs. 103 – 140)

Due: Wednesday afternoon, Feb 8 of Week 5 by 5:00 pm.

2) Read Lecture 1-4 and answer questions. Read Lecture 1-4 and answer questions using the discussion board.

Question responses are due by 5:00 pm Wednesday to receive full credit!

3) Respond to the answers of at least two of your classmates.

Using the "Discussion Board," respond in a paragraph or two to a minimum of two of the Lecture answers of your classmates.

Due: Sunday, Feb 12, of Week 4 by 5:00 pm

4) Search the web/library & send annotated bibliography. Search the library or web for two articles – one pertaining to Governance and Administration in the community colleges, and one related to your selected paper topic. Send the annotations to me and to your classmates as an e-mail attachment and save them for yourself in a folder that will become your own record of articles about community college education.

Due: Sunday by 5:00 p.m.

5) Work on State Assignments: Work with your group on the state profile assignment.

The Seminar 2 folder is now open. Please check it for the new Agenda.

*** END***

(The use of the Agenda is one of the course features I receive the most positive feedback about in course evaluations. As the student comments in the video clips on this site indicate, students appreciate having structure, clear instructions, and a good sense on a week-by-week basis of what is expected and when it is due.)