Distance Learning at Calhoun

Distance Learning at Calhoun is growing to meet student demand. Calhoun faculty and staff have, of course, varying degrees of experience with Distance Learning. Many of you have taught online courses for years while others of you have just begun. Some of you may even have taken an online (DL) course while others of you have never seen what one looks like. Such a variety of experience certainly enriches us all. Perhaps, then, the following definitions will help. Learn more about Calhoun’s online program of study by visiting the Distance Learning page on Calhoun’s main website and/or contacting Suzanne Turner, Calhoun’s Distance Learning Coordinator, at 256-890-44740 or sft@calhoun.edu.

**Synchronous & Asynchronous Learning:** Synchronous learning is any learning that takes place between students and/or teacher at the same time in the same place, such as a traditional course. **Asynchronous Learning** is any learning that takes place between students and/or teacher at different times and at different places. An online course is the best example of sustained asynchronous learning. However, synchronous aspects can sometimes be added.

**Traditional course:** Calhoun defines a traditional course as one in which students and teacher interact 100% of the time in a physical classroom at clearly stated days and times. Traditional courses are also referred to as “on-ground” or “face-to-face’’ courses.

**Distance Learning or “online” course:** Calhoun defines an online course as one in which students and teacher interact 100% of the time online; online courses are designated with a ‘W’ in the schedule. In an online course, all components including assignments and tests are conducted online. NO trips to the campus can be required.

**Hybrid course:** Calhoun defines a hybrid course as one in which 50%-99% of instruction is delivered in a structured alternative delivery format. Hybrid courses are designated with an “HC” in the schedule. Even courses in which all of the teaching occurs online BUT testing or other activities require a trip(s) to campus are considered hybrid.

**Tegrity:** Tegrity is an audio/video component used in many online and hybrid classes, and even some traditional ones. Tegrity allows instructors to record class sessions and/or lectures for playback by students and to make these available to students on Blackboard. Instructions (video tutorials) for using Tegrity can be found on the Bb login page under Faculty Help.

**Course Management System:** A course management system is a computerized system designed to enhance the student’s learning experience and his/her educational career. Among other things, a CMS acts as a repository for class syllabi and handouts, a “drop-box” for electronic submission of student work, a gradebook for record keeping, a forum for class discussion, and a place for an instructor’s written and recorded lectures. A CMS offers these functions for traditional, hybrid, and online classes.
**Blackboard:** Blackboard 9 (Bb) is Calhoun’s course management system. In addition to using Bb for hybrid and fully online courses, Calhoun encourages all instructors to use Bb as a management/support tool for traditional courses. All instructors are provided with Bb “shells” for courses they are teaching. If you are not familiar with how to use Bb, upcoming on-campus training sessions are available. As the semester progresses, additional workshops may be added as needed.

**Blackboard 9 Training Schedule: Fall 2010**
The following training sessions for Blackboard 9 are for instructors who either have not had any training or for those who need/want a refresher session. Each session will cover all components of Blackboard, so attendees will need to attend only one.

Instructors who already have their names in RISC for the fall should already have a Bb course shell available. They should go to the Blackboard site and log in to see. Instructors who do not yet have a course in their name need to call me at least two days in advance to get a “sandbox” shell before their session. Attendees should CONTACT ME AHEAD of time to make sure there are enough seats available for their session of choice: Suzanne Turner, DL Coordinator, 256-890-4740, sft@calhoun.edu.

**Day Sessions:**
- **Thursday** August 19/8:30-11:30 AM  
  Decatur Library MM Room
- **Friday** August 27/8:30-11:30 AM  
  HSV Library MM Room
- **Friday** Sept. 10 / 8:30-11:30 AM  
  Decatur Library MM Room
- **Friday** Sept. 24/ 8:30-11:30 AM  
  Decatur Library MM Room

**Saturday Session:**
- Sept. 18 / 8:30-11:30 AM  
  HSV Library MM Room

**Evening Sessions:**
- **Wednesday** August 25 /5:00-8:00 PM  
  HSV Library MM Room
- **Tuesday** August 31/5:00-8:00 PM  
  HSV Library MM Room

Video tutorials for Blackboard are available on the log-in page of Blackboard under Blackboard Faculty Help. You do not need login to view these. Blackboard resources are also available inside course shells.
Can anyone teach an online course for Calhoun? At present, that decision lies with the division deans. However, Calhoun is currently working on a training and certification program that will be required for all instructors who teach online classes. If you are interested in teaching an online course, contact your lead faculty.

How are Calhoun’s online courses developed? Usually, online courses are developed by fulltime instructors either individually or in teams, though some have been developed by adjuncts. Calhoun has a process for requesting permission to develop an online course. Anyone interested should contact his/her division dean or lead faculty for more information. We are also working on an online training/certification program in course development.

Who do I call for help if I have a problem with Blackboard? For technical problems, call the IT Help Desk at 256-306-2700. It is located in the V.I.T.E.L. Center, Room 116, in Noble Russell. For general information or help other than technical, such as how to use Bb features, online policies, etc., you may contact Suzanne Turner, DL Coordinator: 256-890-4740 / sft@calhoun.edu.

How can I get current updates on Blackboard and distance learning? Check the Distance Learning mailbox in First Class for handouts and memos concerning not only distance classes but Bb information in general. Look for it under the All Departments icon on the First Class desktop. Then look for a “laptop computer” icon. Also check the Faculty mailbox on a regular basis.

What if I want to use Bb as a management tool for a traditional class? What tools should I consider using? Typically, you should consider including the syllabus, course schedule, handouts, and perhaps the calendar. Bb is a good backup plan in case you cannot meet your class due to illness or emergency. Let students know that if you are out they should go to Bb for their assignment in your absence. You can also use Bb for daily quizzes, a repository for links to websites or pictures that supplement your course. The discussion board is also useful even in a traditional class. Writing assignments can be turned in and graded by you online. There are many possibilities.