

Strategies for Successfully Navigating Online Courses

✓ Practice Good Time Management

Use a planner/calendar to keep up with due dates. Consider using the Fall 2020 Semester at Glance to keep up with tests, assignments and projects that are worth a large portion of your grade. Share it with those you live with so friends and family can support you, especially when they know you have really busy weeks.

Online courses require self-discipline and dedication. Block out time in your schedule just as you would for a traditional course to work on assignments, discussions and synchronous meetings. Consider utilizing the 24/7 time awareness schedule.

Work on your fully asynchronous classes during specific days/times to help keep yourself on track. For example, if you only have one class on Tuesday/Thursday, pick a specific time for Tuesday/Thursday to work on your online math class. Remember that you need time to “take” the class and study time to retain the material.

✓ Determine how individual courses will proceed by visiting each Canvas page daily.

✓ Hold yourself accountable to weekly goals and due dates.

Create a study group or consider meeting with a classmate regularly to help each other stay accountable to course requirements and due dates or meet with an academic counselor in the LEC to help you stay accountable. www.smu.edu/AcademicCounseling

✓ Create a regular study space and eliminate distractions

Try to establish a do not disturb routine and communication system if you are living with other people so that they don't distract you. You can tune out sounds with music or ambient noise machines, or you may want to turn your computer on airplane mode to avoid going on the Internet, if possible. You could also download a website blocker such as Cold Turkey or Freedom to limit the amount of websites you can access. Keep your course materials organized in your study space by using folders or specific desk drawers.

✓ Actively participating in online lectures and discussions will help you better understand the course materials and engage with your fellow classmates.

When in doubt, don't assume – ask questions.

Contact your professor using e-mail or send a message on Canvas.

Ask questions and post your insights in online discussions. Make meaningful comments on your classmates' posts.

✓ Take notes, especially during synchronous classes. After class, listen to the class recording to fill in any gaps in your notes.

✓ Check your SMU email account daily. If you don't, you'll miss important announcements, information about your courses, and communication from SMU faculty and staff. Overwhelmed by the

number of emails you're getting? Go into the Subscription Portal page located at mylists.smu.edu and start unsubscribing.

✓ **Don't get caught in the sleep-dep trap!** Sleep deprivation increases anxiety-levels, dulls your memory, and slows your ability to learn. Schedule time to get enough sleep, and you'll be more successful for sure.

✓ **Wear appropriate attire.** Dress as if you are attending a traditional face to face course.

✓ **Keep your video on** the whole class to maintain focus.

✓ Make sure that your laptop, desktop, tablet or any other device is **fully charged**, and be sure that you have a **stable WiFi connection**.

✓ **Have materials ready.** Set aside time to have class materials, including your notebook, textbook, pens, highlighters, and more ready.

✓ **Keep in communication with your professors regularly.** Communicate issues in advance to professor. Be proactive and practice self-advocacy.

✓ **Mute microphone when not talking.** Using mute is not a time to be doing something else with the video off.

✓ **Adhere to the SMU Honor Code.** Do your own work. Correctly site your work. Don't let family members edit papers- use the writing center.

✓ **Use as much academic support as possible.** Utilize virtual library services, virtual tutoring, the writing center, and learning strategy workshops.

✓ **Stay in contact with your academic advisor.** Don't wait until spring registration. Schedule an appointment in Sept/Oct to discuss courses and majors of interest.

✓ Look at how **technology strategies** can help you in online learning. For example, two monitors might make it easier to keep notes open while reviewing slides or posting to a discussion board.

✓ For those finding anxiety creeping into the intrusive zone, **consider meeting with a mental health counselor** for some short-term counseling to work on anxiety management. Relaxation techniques and cognitive-behavioral strategies can make a big difference in managing our reactions to stressful or unpredictable events.

✓ If you have a diagnosed condition that you anticipate will complicate your experience while taking any online/remote courses, **consider talking with one of the staff members at the disability office.** <https://www.smu.edu/DASS>

✓ **Know yourself and adjust accordingly.**

Individual learners react to different learning environments in unique ways, no matter the setting. Think about yourself as a learner and student. How comfortable are you with online interaction?

How well do you manage distractions when using a computer? Where and when do you learn best – and what times and places are surefire study disasters for you? Think about your unique needs and make any useful adjustments. Consider specifically what will be missing from your experience right now without in-person meetings, and see what you can do to build in those missing pieces in other ways, or substitute other types of interaction for them.

✓ Here are some **helpful videos about online learning**:

Watch this video for 3 preparation and planning tips to effectively study for your online course:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-deFSyeXSM>

Watch this short CrashCourse video on planning and organization for your classes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AKAuRby7n8>

Watch this comprehensive video to learn how to make the most of online courses:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eF-Z1hJ67-Y>

Partially adapted from Rutgers University: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/444> and Northeastern University: <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/>