

## **Tips from Experience!**

The following is a list of suggestions to maximize your success in this online course. Some of them are specific to studying social sciences while others are specific to being successful in online learning. I've been involved in distance education for nearly 6 years and believe me I have seen a lot of people struggle with this stuff.

Take each of these in consideration as you prepare yourself for the semester.

### **Read Everything!**

Read everything I post on this site. Even if you are just skimming it. I place documents and instructions on this site to help you do better in the class. As complex as the material is, the distance format will make it even more difficult.

### **Ask Questions?**

You have heard there is no such thing as a "stupid" question. This is true. Ask me if you are unsure about anything. However, I would ask that you read the documents I post first. I have anticipated most of the normal questions associated with this course in the syllabus and in these documents here. If you can't find your answer, email me.

### **Read the Discussions**

I have a discussion board section in every class. Sometimes these are a graded portion of the class, but even if they are not I always have a board called "Announcements". If I make changes in the course or have additional information to pass on to everyone I will "announce" it here. I hold you responsible for having read these.

### **Buy and Use a Planner!**

I have a schedule of due dates online but you want to have a copy yourself. I do not extend due dates due to lapses in memory or poor planning. I reserve the right to do so at any time if I choose, but it will be only under extreme circumstances. Do not assume that I will extend anything for you. There is plenty of time to get things done.

### **Work Ahead**

Working ahead allows you the freedom of not having to worry about getting things in on time. When it is feasible you should work as far ahead into the course as you can. In addition, if you submit your work to me and something goes wrong with the computer or your connection you will have time to get in touch with me to work it out. If your computer hard drive fails or your network drops or Windows goes blue and erases your identity 5 minutes before a due date...well, tough luck. And I mean this.

### **Read the Book**

I know I already said to read everything, but I want to pay special attention to this topic. I was in school for 14 years (yes, that is 14 years of COLLEGE!) so I know all about boring textbooks. However, I have to tell you, I read every one of them. I really did. Reading the text will give you the depth of the content that skimming and reading my notes or just looking things up for answers will not. And after all that college and these

years teaching I can tell when a person is not reading the book. They might use the terms but they still sound like back woods. (I'm not being insulting here...I'm from a tiny anthill in northern Maine, so I know!)

**Take the Class Seriously (but not too Seriously)**

I am a strong believer in play, and learning can be play. I try to make it fun and adventurous. But as a social science instructor I have to tell you that what we are learning about is very important stuff. Look around you. Look at the world today and you cannot deny that more and more of us need to spend more time trying to figure out why people or groups behave in certain ways.

**Good luck!**