



GALVESTON COLLEGE/ DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance Learning Handbook: A Guide for Students

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[Rev. 10/01/15]

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Introduction

Distance Learning provides high quality, flexible educational programs and support services which are academically, geographically, and financially accessible and that meet your personal, vocational, and professional goals of preparing for a first career, a career change, career advancement or personal enrichment.

Distance Learning enhances and supports the mission of the college by a selection of college courses via the Internet and alternative electronic systems. Distance Learning maximizes educational and training options for all students, enabling you to achieve your academic goals and meet the challenges and opportunities posed by new careers, new technologies, and life transitions.

This student guide is designed to provide you with basic information about the educational opportunities available through Distance Learning at Galveston College. If you are already familiar with the College's Distance Learning program, this guide serves as a resource for working in the online learning environment.

The Galveston College Catalog is a supportive resource with listings for admissions instructions and general information about the College is located at http://www.gc.edu/gc/Course_Catalog.asp.

There are many people at Galveston College who can help you with your Distance Learning course(s). For more information about Distance Learning, please contact the Distant Learning Coordinator by telephone at (409) 944-1324 or email at preyes@gc.edu

Distance Learning at Galveston College

An overview for prospective distance education learners.

Distance Learning at Galveston College provides educational opportunities to those learners who may be unable to attend traditional on-campus classes due to work, family needs, or personal matters. Distance Learning may also been an excellent option for students who like to try new ways of learning or are unable to attend a course on a specific day and time. Although Distance Learning is generally not limited to specific times and places, there may be occasional instances in which a student may be required to participate online at certain times or come to campus.

Frequently Asked Questions about Distance Learning

Here are a few questions that are frequently asked about Distance Learning classes:

- 1. Do I need to know a lot about computers in order to become a distance learner?**

Yes. You should be able to use a word processor, access links on the web, and send and receive email. During your course orientation, you will learn how to use the Learning Management Canvas that enables you to interact with your instructor and other learners. A resource available to you

- 2. What type of computer do I need in order to participate in Distance Learning classes?**

Students need to have access to a computer with 128MB or more of RAM, a 56 Kbps modem or faster connection, and 1 GB or more of hard drive space available.

PC systems should have at a minimum Windows 98 and a Pentium III processor.

Apple Macintosh systems should have at a minimum System 9.0 and a PowerMac processor

Student computers must have access to the internet through an internet service provider (ISP).

The minimum software required includes: a web browser (such as Google Chrome and Firefox), Adobe Acrobat reader (version 6.0 or higher), and a word processor (such as Microsoft Word, Open Word or WordPad).

3. Will I be completely on my own in D

4. Distance learning?

No. You will be able to contact your instructor by email and telephone. Most Distance Learning courses have a discussion area where you will be able (in fact, you will often be required) to communicate with your classmates and instructor. Some courses may even provide opportunities for you to have a live “chat” with other students. In addition, Galveston College has tutoring services available to all learners, including online students. You may call the Student Success Center at (409) 944-1399. Of course, you are also invited to visit the Galveston College campus and participate in activities.

5. Will I be able to work at my own pace?

Although Distance Learning offers students the option of choosing where and when they interact with the online “classroom,” students are still expected to meet assignment deadlines as specified by each instructor.

6. Is Distance Learning less expensive than on-campus classes?

For each Distance Learning class, students pay regular Galveston College tuition and fees as they would for an on-campus course. In addition, most Distance Learning classes require that students purchase one or more textbooks, just as they would for any other class. However, many distance learners do save money in transportation (gas, mileage, etc.) and parking costs.

Tips for Successful Learning

Here are some techniques and tips for achieving success in an online course. Thanks to Alliant International University for posting these tips!

- Be willing to share your educational experiences as part of the learning process. The online environment is open and friendly, and you will benefit from communicating and sharing your experiences with your fellow students. Because this forum for communication eliminates the visual barriers that hinder some individuals from expressing themselves, it can work well for both introverts and extroverts. In addition, you have time to reflect on the information before responding, which is often easier than having to respond in a traditional, in-person discussion group.
- Be comfortable and proficient at written communication. Because nearly all communication is written in the virtual classroom, you will be writing quickly and often. If you have limited writing abilities or are uncomfortable expressing yourself in writing, work on improving these skills before or as part of your online experience.
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined. Because there is freedom and flexibility in the online environment that doesn't exist to such a great extent in a traditional classroom, you need to be particularly responsible and self-disciplined. The online process requires a commitment. Schedule regular study and log-in times for your online courses.
- Be willing to let your instructor know about problems. Instructors who teach online courses can't see if you are having problems, such as confusion, frustration, boredom, or absence. If you are experiencing difficulties on any level—either with course content or the technology, communicate this to your instructor immediately. If you don't, your instructor will never know what kinds of problems you may be experiencing.
- Be prepared to spend as much time per week as the course requires—usually 12 to 15 hours per week per course. **Online courses are not easier than traditional classroom courses.** You may find that they require more time, commitment, and discipline.
- Be able to meet the requirements. Your online program will have the same requirements as any quality educational program. If you want to succeed in your online program, you must view it as a more convenient way to receive your education, not an easier way.

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COLLEGE**

- Be able to apply critical thinking and decision making skills to the learning process. The online learning process will require you to make decisions based on facts as well as experience. You must be able to use critical thought to assimilate information and make effective decisions.
- Check your e-mail frequently. Your Whitecaps email and email in Canvas.
- Keep in contact with your instructor.
- Allow a reasonable amount of time for instructor response. (24-48 hours)
- Advise the instructor promptly of any changes in your e-mail address and/or telephone numbers.
- Interact with your classmates as much as possible.
- Keep up with weekly assignments. When in doubt, ask questions.
- Be open to this new method of instruction and enjoy learning in Cyberspace!

Getting Started

Getting started in online learning at Galveston College and resources to help you succeed.

Galveston College has all except the lab sciences requirement leading to an Associate of Arts (A.A.) General and Transfer Studies degree completely online. These requirements may be met by successfully completing online course offered directly by Galveston College, in addition to several courses that are available online through Galveston College's partnership with Trinity Valley Community College through the Virtual College of Texas (VCT).

If completing all of your classes online isn't your goal, you can also take advantage of online learning as just a part of the traditional college experience. You may take only one online course, several courses, or almost all of your courses online at GC!

Admission to Galveston College

Before you can take an online course for credit, you must be admitted as a student to Galveston College. Specific information about admissions can be obtained by any one of the following:

1. In person, by going to the Admissions Desk at Galveston College. The Admissions Desk is located in the Moody Building, 4015 Avenue Q in Galveston.
2. You may telephone the Admissions Office at (409) 944-1230.
3. You may view/download a copy of the current Galveston College Catalog at the following URL:
http://www.gc.edu/gc/Course_Catalog.asp.

After you've been admitted as a Galveston College learner, you will proceed to the advising process.

Advising and Orientation

The Counseling Center is responsible for advising, interpretation of TSI test scores, placement, and follow-up services at Galveston College. Academic advisement assists in the selection of majors, examine appropriate choices of courses, degree planning, and transferability of courses.

Current and prospective students may find the advising services helpful as they make plans and decisions that affect their educational goals.

All first-time Distance Learning students are strongly encouraged to complete an orientation seminar about Distance Learning. The orientation is offered online and as a traditional face-to-face seminar at the college. Your Distance Learning advisor will assist you in enrolling in the orientation session.

Registration

Follow the steps below to register for online courses:

1. If your online course appears in the Galveston College "Credit Class Schedule," you register just as if it were an on-campus course. Come to the College on one of the open registration days and report to Station 1 in Moody Hall to obtain a registration checklist and be guided through registration.
2. If you are taking an online course offered through the Virtual College of Texas (VCT), contact Patricia Reyes for registration. You may call her at (409) 944-1324 or visit her in the LRC (R-110).

Student Services and Support

In addition to your Distance Learning advisor, students enrolled in Distance Learning are eligible and encouraged to take advantage of Galveston College's wide range of student services, including:

Financial Aid Office (http://www.gc.edu/gc/Financial_Aid.asp)

The Financial Aid program at Galveston College attempts to provide financial assistance to those students who, without such aid, would not be able to pursue a higher education. The primary responsibility for financing an education rests with the student and his family, and Galveston College is aware that assistance beyond the family's resources

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sometimes becomes necessary. In cases wherein financial need for eligible students is documented, Galveston College will assist, as far as possible, using all available local, state, and federal funds.

Bookstore (<http://www.gcbookstore.com/>)

The bookstore at Galveston College can help you locate and obtain all required textbooks and materials for your online classes. Call the bookstore at (409) 944-1259 or email them at gcbookstore@texasbook.com.

Career and Counseling Center
(http://www.gc.edu/gc/Career_and_Counseling_Center.asp)

The Center is responsible for the appropriate counseling, placement, career guidance, and follow-up services at Galveston College. Individuals may find the counseling services helpful as they make plans and decisions in various phases of their development. Assistance is provided by the counseling staff in the following areas:

Counseling Services

Seminars and workshops are presented or hosted by the Counseling Office throughout the academic year on a variety of topics related to student success. Confidential personal counseling is also provided on a short-term basis to assist students with academic as well as personal issues. The Counseling Center also maintains a list of community resources available to students who may need assistance with services not provided by the college.

Career Services

Career assistance is available for all students at Galveston College. The Career Information Center, located in the Counseling Center, provides various resources to help with career decision-making (i.e., college catalogs, occupational information, resume writing, etc.). The following career assistance is provided by the Counseling Center:

1. Career counseling to explore possible vocational directions, occupational information, and self-appraisals of interests, personality and abilities.
2. Workshops and seminars conducted or hosted by counselors focusing on choosing a career, job search techniques, and resume writing.

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Special Services

A variety of services and programs are available to assist students with disabilities and those who are academically and/or economically disadvantaged. Students with special needs are requested to notify the Counselor for Special Services about assistance and/or special accommodations. *Students with disabilities, impairments, or other health conditions are required to provide documentation from medical physician (s) and/or referral agency, i.e., Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Texas Commission for the Blind, etc.*

Job Placement

The main purpose of Galveston College's Placement Services is to develop job opportunities for Galveston College students and alumni. Employment opportunities are posted on the Placement Board located in the Counseling Office and provide referral information to qualified candidates who have applied to receive placement assistance from the College.

Learning Resource Center

Library <http://www.gc.edu/gc/Library.asp>

The new Learning Resource Center (LRC) opened in late 2004 with new services added for students. In addition to over 30,000 books and a wealth of online resources, there is a cyber cafe that is available for students to purchase beverages and use computers.

Computer Lab

The primary purpose of the Library computer laboratory is to support the learning environment at Galveston College. Computer Lab hours of operation may be found on the library website (see above).

Testing Center <http://www.gc.edu/gc/Testing.asp>

The Galveston College Testing and Assessment Center offers test proctoring services for the following:

- TSI Assessment
- SI Retest Per Section
- Remote TSI Assessment
- CLEP
- CORRESPONDENCE
- DISTANCE LEARNING
- GED*

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- GED Re-Test
- NURSING PRE-ASSESSMENT (HESI)
- Radiology PRE-ASSESSMENT (HESI)
- VCT PROCTORED EXAMS
- ABILITY TO BENEFIT
- Tests from other colleges by request

The Testing Center plans to offer a variety of certification and licensure tests, also, and additional services will be added in the next year. Only Correspondence and GED tests require an appointment or pre-registration. All others are on a walk-in basis.

Student Success Center\Tutoring

http://www.gc.edu/gc/Student_Success_Center.asp

Tutors will work with you. If you need help with an assignment for math, biology, English, or many other subjects, stop by the library and let us lend a hand. Tutoring is provided to all GC students and is offered on a walk-in basis.

Student Activities http://www.gc.edu/gc/Student_Clubs_Orgs.asp

Galveston College promotes a wide range of student organizations that offer students the opportunity to develop leadership skills, become more involved in campus life, and make new friends. We have quite a few different organizations to meet the needs and interests of all of our students, but if you have an idea for a new organization, we are always open to starting new groups! Current student clubs and organizations include:

- Student Activities Council (Student Government)
- African American Club
- Hispanic Student Organization
- Math Club
- Phi Theta Kappa
- Student Nurses Association

Important Galveston College Phone Numbers

There are many offices and individuals able to assist you in your studies at Galveston College. Check out the Galveston College web page (<http://www.gc.edu>) or feel free to contact the following offices for additional information:

- Admissions (409) 944-1230
- Athletic Department (409) 944-1202
- Bookstore (409) 944-1260
- Counseling (409) 944-1220
- Distance Learning (409) 944-1324
- IT Help Desk (409) 944-1352
- Learning Resource Center (409) 944-1240
- Security (409) 966-7364
- Student Activities Advisor (409) 944-1224
- Testing Center (409) 944-1290
- Tutoring Center (409) 944-1399
- Virtual College of Texas (409) 944-1324

About Your Computer

All the technical information you need to know about before beginning your online learning.

The basic computer requirements for Distance Learning were introduced in Chapter 1 (see page 2). The basic tools that you will need includes: a computer connected to the internet, a word processing program (such as Microsoft Word), an e-mail account, and an internet browser (such as Google Chrome). It is also recommended that students have a printer connected to their computer. Depending upon the courses that you take, additional hardware and software may be required. Be sure to contact your instructor for questions about specific courses requirements.

This chapter contains specific recommendations for hardware and software to be used in Distance Learning at Galveston College. If you are unsure about whether you have the correct configuration, please contact the IT Helpdesk at (409) 944-1352 or helpdesk@gc.edu.

Hardware Technical Specifications

To ensure effectively delivery of online courses at Galveston College, the following minimum hardware requirements have been established:

Canvas and its hosting infrastructure are designed for maximum compatibility and minimal requirements.

Screen Size

Canvas is best viewed at a minimum of 1024x600, which is the average size of a notebook computer. If you want to view Canvas on a device with a smaller screen, we recommend using the Canvas [mobile app](#).

Operating Systems

- Windows XP SP3 and newer
- Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
- Linux – chrome OS

Mobile Operating System Native App Support

- iOS 7 and newer
- Android 2.3 and newer

Computer Speed and Processor

- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

Internet Speed

- Along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been carefully crafted to accommodate low bandwidth environments.
- Minimum of 512kbps

General Software Recommendations

To ensure effectively delivery of online courses at Galveston College, the following software recommendations have been established:

- See hardware requirements (above) for operating system specifications.
- Current web browser (Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, or Netscape Navigator)
- Current version of Macromedia flash player (can be downloaded for free at <http://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>)
- Current version of RealOne Player (free download at <http://www.real.com/>) and/or Windows Media Player (free download at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/>)
- Instructors generally recommend that students use Microsoft Word for papers and assignments. These programs offer the greatest common denominator in terms of sending documents across different platforms.

- Students are also encouraged to have a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader. It may be downloaded for free at <http://www.adobe.com/support/downloads/product.jsp?platform=windows&product=10>

Before Your Start

Because Galveston College uses CANVAS for our online courses, there are several steps that students should take if they experience chronic problems:

1. CANVAS will not function properly while “pop-up blockers” are on. When you enter CANVAS, temporarily de-activate any pop-up blockers that are running in your browser.
2. If you use an older version of AOL (v. 3.0 or earlier), use a non-AOL browser such as Google Chrome. It works best with CANVAS.
3. If you use web-based email accounts, such as Yahoo and Hotmail, clean out those accounts now and regularly throughout the course. Too much SPAM is delivered to those accounts daily and when they reach maximum capacity, those accounts bounce back future emails to the sender. It is the student's responsibility to keep their accounts clean in order to receive correspondence from the instructor. The instructor is not obligated to resend emails that get bounced back to them with an error message.

ISPs – Your Connection to the Internet

Before you can take an online course, you must have access to a computer with an internet connection. Computers are connected to the internet through Internet Service Providers (ISPs). ISPs vary in the cost and quality of their service. Galveston College does not endorse or recommend the use of any specific Internet Service Provider(s)

Supported Browsers

A browser is a software program that sends a request for information to another computer, usually a web server. The browser interprets the information it receives, and then displays it in a way the viewer can understand.

Some internet service providers, such as America Online (AOL) or CompuServe, provide their users with ‘customized’ versions of a browser. Because of the way that these browsers use JavaScript, they are not compatible with some of our online courses. If you are an AOL member, you can still access GC courses, but often not while using AOL’s browser. Instead,

download, install, and use one of the following recommended **full-featured** web browsers:

- **Internet Explorer** 10, 11, and Edge (IE 10 will no longer be supported on November 21)
- **Chrome** 44 and 45
- **Safari** 8 and 9
- **Firefox** 40 and 41 ([Extended Releases](#) are not supported)
- **Flash** 17 and 18 (used for recording or viewing audio/video and uploading files)
- **Respondus Lockdown Browser** (supporting the latest [system requirements](#))

Flash is required in several places in Canvas: media recording/streaming and viewing as well as uploading files to a course or an assignment. Other than these features, Flash is not required to use most areas of Canvas. Please note that some browsers, such as Firefox, may no longer support Flash.

The **Java plug-in** is required for screen sharing in Conferences. Please note that some browsers do not support Java. Otherwise, there are no other browser plug-ins used by Canvas. Make sure that, whichever browser you choose, it is Java and JavaScript enabled. This usually requires checking a box or choosing this feature in an options box under the “Tools” or “Properties” menu.

Some supported browsers may still produce a banner stating *Your browser does not meet the minimum requirements for Canvas*. If you have upgraded your browser but you are still seeing the warning banner, try logging out of Canvas and deleting your browser cookies. Learn how to clear your cache on a [Mac](#) or a [PC](#).

Email Accounts

Although you may already have an email account through your internet service provider, you may want to get an additional account specifically for your use at Galveston College. All students are eligible for and encouraged to sign up for a FREE whitecaps.gc.edu email account. **This is the method that Galveston College Faculty, Staff, and Administrators will use to contact you regarding registration, financial aid, and other school-related matters.** To activate your Whitecaps email account, go to the [Whitecaps Portal](#), where you will find your individual email address, default password and instructions for setting up your email account.

Getting Around

Getting ready, getting into, and getting around your Distance Learning classes.

Once you have completed the admission process at Galveston College and have registered for your courses, you can begin getting used to your online learning environment. If you are already comfortable “surfing” the web, the transition to online learning should go very smoothly. If you are still getting used to using computers and the web, be patient with yourself. Read instructions very carefully and call the helpdesk or your instructor with your questions. Let’s look at some of the basics of online learning at Galveston College:

Logging In To CANVAS

Using your web browser, go to the Galveston College home page (<http://www.gc.edu>)

You should see a screen that looks something like the following:

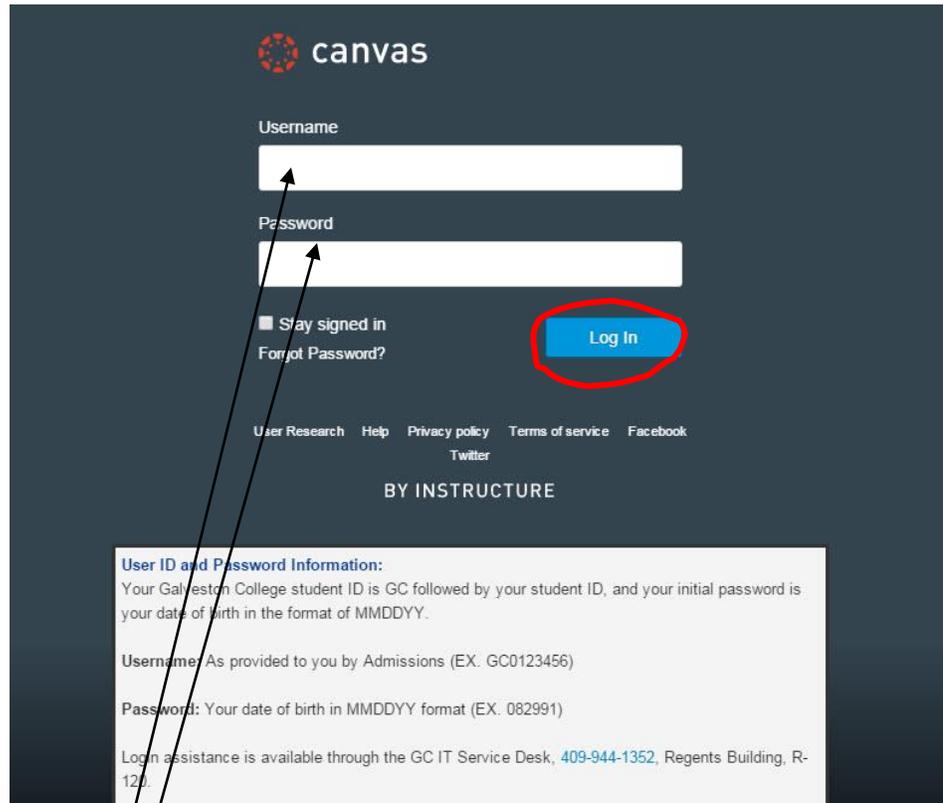
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At the top of the home page, slightly to the right, is the link for “CANVAS” (circled below):



Click once on the word “CANVAS” and you will soon see a screen that looks like this:



The eLearning login screen requires you to complete three steps:

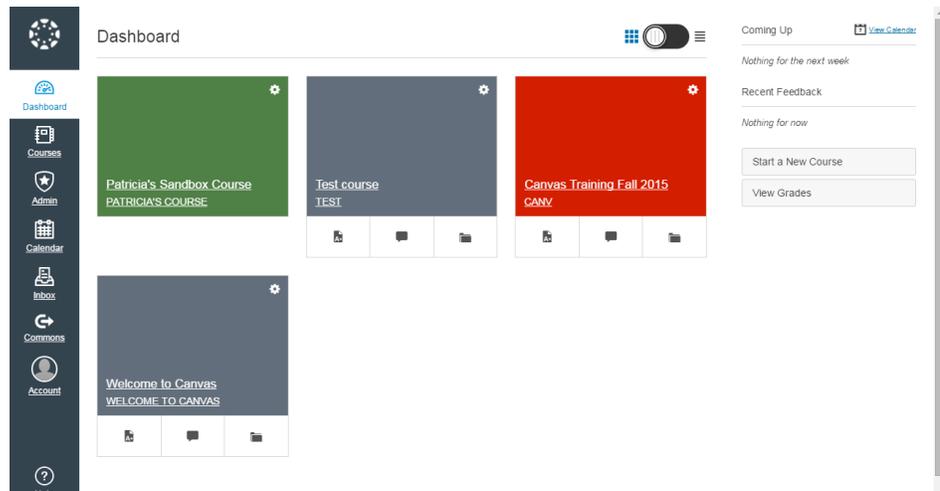
1. Type your Student ID in the box provided. Ex. Gc0123456
2. Type your Password in the next box. This is your 6 digit birthday. Ex 022988
3. Click once on the Log in button (circled above).

Congratulations! You've successfully entered CANVAS and are now ready to select your course.

Selecting a Course in CANVAS

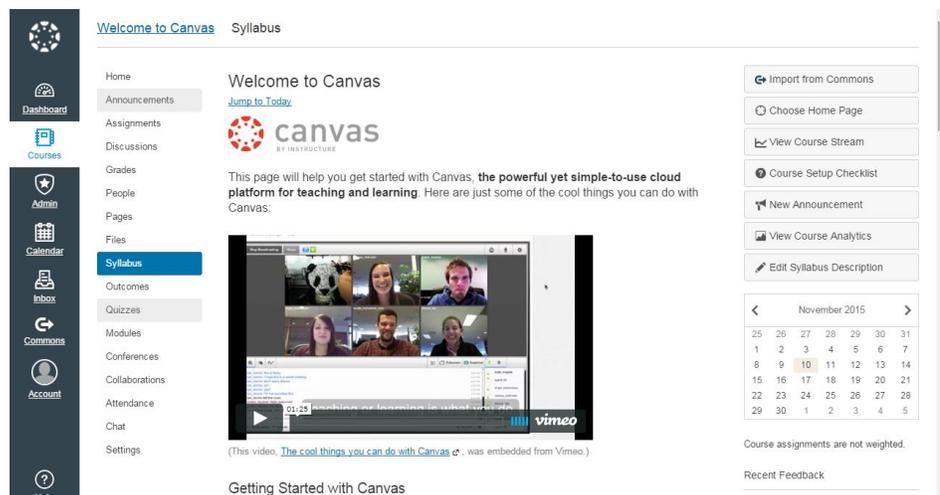
Once you've logged in to CANVAS, you should see a list of available courses, similar to this:

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Depending on how many online classes you've enrolled in, the list may have only one course...or it may have several, like the example. In any case, you will only see those courses in which you've enrolled (each one is color coded for ease of view) and have been given access to be the system administrator. If a course in which you are enrolled doesn't appear in the list, contact the course instructor or a member of the Distance Education staff for assistance.

To enter a specific online "classroom," simply click once on the title of the course. The online classroom should then appear. Although classrooms vary according to instructor and content, they generally look something like this:



At this point, courses will vary by instructor in terms of layout, options, and content. Follow your instructor's direction in the course room to navigate through the syllabus, assignments, tests, discussions, and other features.

Having Problems?

If you experience problems getting to a course, contact Distance Learning Coordinator at (409) 944-1324. If you are having problems within a specific course, contact your instructor. Don't worry about whether you are calling the right person; the staff at Galveston College will put you in touch with the person who is best able to help you. As the next chapter will explain, there are several forms of help and resources available to you as an online learner. Feel free to take advantage of them!

Research and Academic Support

Online library services, tutoring, and writing support are available to help you with your online studies.

As an online learner, you are entitled to the same level of academic support as students attending traditional classes at Galveston College. Two of the most important resources available at the college are the Library and the Student Success Center (N-119). This chapter contains information to help you make the most of these resources and achieve your academic goals.

Galveston College Library Online

The David Glen Hunt Memorial Library offers a wealth of information for Galveston College students, faculty, and staff. The library's webpage at <http://www.gc.edu/gc/Library.asp> is a great starting point for finding information.

To search for books available directly through the Galveston College Library, click on the “Book Catalog” button, located on the left side of the library's web page.

Also located on the library's web page is a button entitled “Electronic Databases” (http://www.gc.edu/gc/TexShare_Databases.asp). Clicking on this label will direct you to a list of online references including:

- Academic Search Premier
- Business Source Premier
- Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health
- Health Source: Nursing/Academic
- Humanities Abstracts (Trial Copy)
- InfoTrac Newspaper

- Literature Resource Center
- MagillOnLiterature
- SIRS Researcher
- And many others!

(These are icons in the middle of the page)

In addition, students can access the Galveston College eContent Collection (<http://www.netlibrary.com>). This online resource includes digital books, online journals, and online databases covering a wide range of subjects.

For instructions on how to use the library's online resources in order to locate a book, find an article in the online database, or use the electronic books collection (NetLibrary), visit the Library Instruction web page (http://www.gc.edu/gc/Library_Instruction.asp).

Tutoring Services

Tutors are available to work with all Galveston College learners. If you need help with an assignment for math, biology, English, or many other subjects, let us lend a hand.

You may also call the Tutoring Center (409-944-1399) or e-mail your help questions (gctutoring@gc.edu). For more information about the Tutoring Center, visit the tutoring website at http://www.gc.edu/gc/Student_Success_Center.asp

Writing Support

Online classes often require learners to interact almost exclusively through their writing. As a result, it is important to develop and use effective written communication in your online classes. The Tutoring Center, described above, is one excellent resource for helping you with written work. In addition, there are a number of excellent resources available on the web from other institutions:

- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL), a comprehensive source of handouts and tutorials for more effective writing. <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/sitemap/>
- Paragraph Punch, an interactive guide to writing complete paragraphs. <http://www.paragraphpunch.com>
- The Writing Center at The University of Wisconsin – Madison, also provides a good selection of handouts and guides for better writing. <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/index.html>

Other Academic Support

The web can provide numerous resources to support your online learning. Among the most effective of these learning resources are the following (arranged by subject):

Study Skills

- Organizing a Study Session (University of Wales Bangor)
http://studyskills.bangor.ac.uk/study%20guides/organising_time.php.en

Netiquette

- The Core Rules of Netiquette (excerpted from the book, “Netiquette,” by Virginia Shea)
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Math

- S.O.S. Mathematics
<http://www.sosmath.com>
- Algebra Help
<http://www.algebra-help.info/>
- Purplemath
<http://www.purplemath.com/>
- West Texas A & M University Virtual Math Lab
<http://www.wtamu.edu/academic/anns/mps/math/mathlab/index.htm>

Biology

- The Biology Project (The University of Arizona)
<http://www.biology.arizona.edu>

Other

- SparkNotes, contains outlines and basic information about a wide variety of subjects
<http://www.sparknotes.com/>

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

The faculty and staff are committed to helping ALL learners reach their academic potential. If you need assistance with anything discussed in this handbook or with something that we might have left out, please contact Patricia Reyes with your question:

Galveston College
Distance Learning Department
4015 Avenue Q, R-110
Galveston, Texas 77550
(409) 944-1324
Email: preyes@gc.edu

We look forward to seeing you in our online classes!

Administrative Interpretation and Change: The administration of Galveston College reserves the right to act as final interpreter of all handbook content. Furthermore, the College reserves the right to change any related requirements, policies, procedures, and regulations as necessitated by College or legislative action. Galveston College does not guarantee that courses listed in these documents will be offered in any given term or year, on a specific campus. Registration for a particular course, section of a course, or, in some cases, a program may be limited by the College. Galveston College reserves the right to cancel any course or section of a course, to change the

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instructor of a course, or to delete or change a program in keeping with prudent instructional and financial management.

VCT at Galveston College

An overview for prospective and current VCT learners.

The Virtual College of Texas (VCT) is a collaborative of all Texas public two-year colleges. It was created by the Texas Association of Community Colleges to facilitate sharing of Distance Learning courses among member colleges. CEO's of VCT member colleges developed the host-provider model upon which VCT operations rest and defined the principles of VCT's organization and management. A three-year pilot project was launched in the fall semester of 1998. Concluding a successful pilot, VCT was established as an ongoing service beginning with the 2001 fall semester. As of summer 2012, there has been a major increase in enrollments in courses listed in the VCT online schedule by VCT member colleges.

Member institutions of the Virtual College of Texas, (such as Galveston College) share Distance Learning courses under the terms of a statewide VCT Memorandum of Understanding, which is based upon an operational model referred to as the Host-Provider Model.

Galveston College, in its role as a host college:

- Enrolls students locally to take courses from other (provider) colleges
- Provides VCT-enrolled students with the same slate of student services it provides its other students
- Administers tests as directed by provider colleges' instructors
- Awards course credit
- Includes the courses on its own transcripts

The provider (remote) college:

- Provides instructors who define course content and instructional methodologies; directs all class activities, including assignments and tests, and awards final grades
- Sets the academic calendar for courses it offers through VCT
- The host college pays the provider a per-student instructional fee, following guidelines stated in the VCT Memorandum of Understanding. This fee is paid by the host college, not by students.

VCT Benefits to Students

- Students throughout Texas have access to a statewide, online Distance Learning course schedule. This means that it is less likely for a student not to have access to a critical course at a critical point because it isn't offered in the semester it's needed or it's full.
- Students are supported with quality, locally-delivered student services.
- They pay in-district tuition if they are in-district students, irrespective of which colleges provide courses taken through VCT.
- Courses from multiple colleges throughout Texas are maintained on a single transcript at the host college.

Colleges decide for themselves whether or not they participate in VCT and, if they do, how and to what extent. Galveston College currently serves as a host of VCT courses.

Students who experience problems with a VCT course should contact the instructor of that course directly. Galveston College personnel are only able to provide limited technical assistance for VCT problems.

For more information about the Virtual College of Texas, visit their website at <http://www.vct.org>. For information about VCT courses at Galveston College, please contact the Distance Learning Coordinator by telephone at (409) 944-1324 or email at preyes@gc.edu.