Welcome Letters and Student Orientation

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Welcome Letter

Posting a Welcome Letter for students before the semester begins lets them know what to expect in your class.

www.lavc.edu > online classes > virtual valley > schedule of classes

Welcome and Contact Information

- Give a brief welcome note to students
- Provide your name, how to contact you, and office phone number
- Give instructions on contacting you before course starts

Course Information to be included:

- Course Name and Section Number
- Course starting date and when students will be able to access CANVAS
- If your course is Hybrid, indicate mandatory meeting dates and location
- Student Learning Outcomes

Materials Requirements

- List Course Textbook Title and ISBN
- Give information if it's an OER course or the location to purchase the textbook and any other materials

Hardware requirements

Provide any course-specific hardware and software requirements:

- Regular access to a computer (PC or Mac) with an Internet connection

- An active LAVC or District email account

- Access to a printer

  - Students are able to use a computer in the Computer Commons area – LARC next to the Virtual Help Desk (room 232)

  - Students can download the Canvas Student App (free)

College and Course Policies

- Identify your course add/drop policy
  - Refer to [LAVC Academic Dates and Deadlines policies](#) (dates are linked to each semester)
  - Reference LAVC's academic honesty policy and student conduct
  - Identify your course specific waitlist procedures

Accessing CANVAS

- Give course access instructions with login info

- Share Canvas supported browsers

- Provide Virtual Valley Student Resources

- Provide contact information for Canvas and LAVC Virtual Valley Help Desk Support – 24/7 assistance

Student Readiness & Time Requirement

- Provide information on the necessary computer skills to succeed in the course @Virtual Valley/Things you need to know

- Provide information on the time requirements necessary to succeed in the course

- Provide a statement about Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)

Sample Welcome Letter – 1a

Welcome to Sociology 21, Human Sexuality, Online at LAVC with Dr. Sally Raskoff!

This welcome letter gives you some basics about the course so that you know what you're getting into! Please read it carefully and feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

How to contact me:

- *To find me in the course site:*

    - Send me email through your Canvas Inbox if/when you are enrolled in the class.

    - Meet me in the chat room during my online "office/chat room hours" (to be announced).

- *To find me outside the course site:*

    - My campus phone number is 818-947-2937; it has voice mail and you can call anytime (although I won't be there if you call at 1 am)

    - My campus office is in Behavioral Science 111b

    - My LAVC email is raskofsa@lavc.edu. I prefer to get your email in the course site unless you're having an issue that prevents you from communicating inside the course site.

What you should know about the content of the class

- This is a course about human sexuality thus we will be dealing with a very interesting set of topics. This class does require its students to have some measure of maturity to succeed since we do talk about everything to do with sex. Don't let this scare you, however, since we do so with a respectful and serious approach.

- We will be looking at sexuality from an interdisciplinary perspective, using a biological, psychological, and sociological lens to understand the complexities of sex and the human experience. We'll "meet" Alfred Kinsey and Masters & Johnson; we'll discuss sex and gender and transgender; we'll get the mechanics of sex and the range of practices as well as problems and how to solve them.

Sample Welcome Letter – 1b

What you should know about the structure of the class

- There are no on-campus meetings since this class is entirely on-line.

- The class will be available starting on the first day of the semester (no sooner) through the Canvas website.

- If you haven't yet used Canvas, or would like to know more about it, check out the Student Resources on our Virtual Valley website.

- This class is designed for you to spend a certain amount of time in each module. There are six modules; each has a different set of topics and takes different amounts of time. You need to log at least three times every week, depending on how you organize your own work flow.. (Some of you may log in and stay for six hours; some may pop in for a half hour every day.) The modules, and their related discussions, assignments, and tests, open and close on particular days and times so be aware of the access (and non-access) issues. Each section within a module is important thus don't skip any unless they are clearly marked as "Optional". Make an effort to remember what you learn in each module since the content in the early modules are a foundation for the later modules.

- On-line classes have the same content as on-campus classes thus the time and effort required to succeed in both is identical. If you've heard that on-line classes are easy, you probably heard this from a person who is motivated, disciplined, and likes sitting at a computer to explore, read, and write.

- You need to have (and read) the textbook: Robert Crooks and Karla Baur. (2008) Our Sexuality, 10th edition. Wadsworth. ISBN-10:0495103268; ISBN-13:9780495103264. (8th or 9th edition are also fine.) [Purchase Options: LAVC Bookstore (on campus or online), Publisher website, Publisher related ebook/echapters/audio]

Sample Welcome Letter – 1c

What you need to do right now:

- Make sure that you have easy and reliable internet access.

- Check to make sure that your skills and computer system will work with the class site. The Virtual Valley page on Things you need to know is useful here.

- Have a back-up plan in case your computer decides to break. (Always back up your files—often and in multiple locations!) Identify other computers you could use in case of problems, e.g., the computer labs on campus. Technical difficulties will not be an acceptable excuse for late or missed work.

- Have a working email address that you check regularly and make sure to enter that email address in your Canvas profile.

What you need to do once the class opens:

- Make sure you use the "Start Here" button on the home page and then start Module 1. Post your introduction as soon as possible. If your introduction isn't posted by the end of the first week, I may assume you are not continuing in the class and drop you from the roster (thus you will lose access to the site).

- Log on several times a week.

- Read all of the content materials (the "Modules" online and the textbook), participate actively in the discussions, and complete the assignments and tests.

- Ask questions whenever you have them: in the Chat Room, in the Discussions, in email, on the phone, in my office.

- Learn some new interesting, fun and useful things...

I look forward to meeting you online during the first week of classes!

Post Your Accessible Welcome Letter

➡ Please send it to Dale Beck: beckdr@lavc.edu

➡ Dale will post it @[Virtual Valley/Schedule of Online Classes](#) – each semester lists all online classes offerings

Welcome Letters - Discussion

- What do you do with your welcome letter?

- Suggestions or comments regarding welcome letters?

Orientation to Canvas and How You Use It In Your Class

Even if students have already taken a class through Canvas, they can use an orientation to how you use it.

How to get into and move around in Canvas

- Students new to online education may have particular issues such as
  - Knowing where to go to access the class
  - Logging in
  - Navigating through the site
- Students need an orientation page or module, before they get into the material

How to get into and move around in Canvas

- Resources
  - Virtual Valley website
  - Canvas student guides

How to customize Canvas

▶ Students (and Professors) can customize their **Accounts** by modifying:

   ▶ **Profile** - photo

   ▶ **Setting** - email

   ▶ **Notifications** – what information will be send to what email or devices

How to use Canvas in this course

➥ Each professor sets up the course and many are quite different from others. Thus, it's important to guide students how to use YOUR class.

  ➥ Where to go when logging in and how to know where to go each time

  ➥ What options there are for finding information

Front Page

- Is it clear from the front home page what a person is to do?
- Are there links or instructions as to how to proceed each time they log in?

How to know where you were and what to do next?

- How can students tell where they are in the material? Are there time notations or other reminders on the pages?

- From the modules button (left side menu), one can open all modules and then close them when the work is done.

- Check the Syllabus and/or Grades to see what work is done and upcoming assignments.

How to know what's been happening while you were away

- ▶ Check Announcements
- ▶ Check Assignments for comments
- ▶ Subscribe to the Discussions so that Canvas notifies you when people post

How do you know students are ready to navigate through your course?

- In your orientation module or page, have an activity for them to do so that you know they know how to use Canvas
  - An brief assignment
  - A brief quiz
  - Send you a message through the Inbox

Class Orientation Discussion

➤ Please share what you do with your orientation! Is it a video? A page? A module? An in-class demonstration?

➤ Please share what suggestions or comments you have regarding class orientations.

Discussion

- Examples?
- Ideas?
- Suggestions?