

Sierra College Distance Learning Student Handbook



<http://lrc.sierracollege.edu/dl>

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

Distance Learning Courses at Sierra College are credit courses that allow you the opportunity to complete much of your college studies from your own home. The courses are academically equivalent to on-campus courses due to the interactive component of the program. All of the courses are transferable to the UC and CSU systems.

There are two types of Distance Learning classes that we offer: Televised and Online. Our televised courses are live and are available to you through your local cable company, and in designated areas through Low Power Television, from Roseville up through the I-80 corridor in Placer County. (Note: We do not transmit to Sacramento County or to any Satellite providers). The online courses only require that you have access to a computer, (PC 456 or equivalent), an internet connection via 56k modem or better, Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher, and that you have an email account.

Online Course information.....page 3
Televised Course information.....page 9

Sierra College Distance Learning Website:

<http://lrc.sierracollege.edu/dl>

ONLINE COURSE INFORMATION

Our online courses can be completed from your home, office, or any other site which you have access to the Internet. The online courses run the for the same semester length as on-campus courses and will be utilizing the Blackboard course management system, which is the software system that allows you to communicate with your instructor and your classmates. You will log into the Blackboard system at <http://blackboard.sierracollege.edu> and course materials will be posted to your class pages throughout the semester by your instructor. Most instructors will require that you log on at least 3 times per week to review new assignments and announcements.

*Please note that it may take up to two business days, **after you've registered** with Sierra College, for your Blackboard account to be active.*

There is a required orientation that first-time online students to Sierra College must complete. This orientation is a valuable tool that will enable to you to understand how to use the Blackboard system, as well as answer any questions you may have. You can choose to take the orientation either online from our website, <http://lrc.sierracollege.edu/dl>, or attend a live orientation session on campus. Dates and times for the live orientation classes are posted on our website, and will also be broadcast over our corresponding cable channel. (See printed schedule or visit our website for dates/times.) During the orientation, you will learn your user ID and password and will receive instructions on how to access and navigate your online course. If you've already gone through a Blackboard orientation session from Sierra College in the past, you are not required to again, although you may want to every couple semesters or so as it will include updates from time to time. Your username & password will remain the same each semester – your username is your 9 digit student ID number, and the password is “student” until you change it.

COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS:

It is required that your computer system meet the following minimum requirements: PC 486 or higher, internet connection via 56k modem or faster, & browser Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher. If you use Netscape you may run into some difficulties with Blackboard. For any additional software required, please refer to specific course descriptions.

NEW SIERRA COLLEGE BOOKSTORE ONLINE FEATURE:

You can get your course books online! Just visit our website & click on the Bookstore link, where you can enter your course information to find out what books you will need for your online classes!

ADD CODES/FULL CLASSES:

Due to the increasing demand for our popular online classes, many fill up rather quickly. If you are trying to add an online class and find that it is full, please **contact the instructor** to inquire if they will add more students. If so, they will give you a 4 digit add code that you can use to register for the class. Their contact information is listed on our website.

If you have any questions, please contact our department at (916) 781-0406, or through email at sdavenport@sierracollege.edu or cbirdsong@sierracollege.edu.

**For our Online Class listing and instructor contact information, please refer to our website,
<http://lrc.sierracollege.edu/dl>**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ONLINE CLASSES

Q. I've registered for an online class. Now what should I do / when can I log on?

A. If this is your first online class, you will need to go through the online class orientation to learn about the Blackboard website. You can take the orientation online from our website at your convenience, or attend a live orientation - please refer to our orientation schedule for dates and times. During the orientation, you will learn your username, (login ID) to enable you access to your course information. If you have gone through the orientation in a previous semester, then you do not need to do it again, although it might be good to check for any updated information. You will use your 9 digit student ID number as your login each semester, as well as the same password you've used before. If you cannot remember your password, please contact us to have it reset.

If you are having problems logging in, please note that you won't have access to your class until the first day of the semester. Also, please make sure that you are going to the correct website:

<http://blackboard.sierracollege.edu> , and not www, and double check that you are using the proper login format. Lastly, keep in mind that it can take up to two business days for the Blackboard system to create your student account once you've registered in the Sierra system. If you still cannot log on by the second business day after you've registered and the semester has already begun, then please contact the Distance Learning Department.

Q. What kind of computer hardware requirements are there for taking an online class through Sierra College?

A. All Sierra College Online courses are web-based. Therefore, only a computer with an internet connection and web browser is required.

Q. How do I learn how to access my account and use the Blackboard® software?

A. An orientation is required of all first-time online students in order to explain procedures and answer any questions. You can take the orientation online from our website, or go to a live session at the Rocklin campus which will be broadcast over our cable channel A. To find out when the next orientation session will be offered, please refer to the class schedule or check our website.

Q. Is there any specific time when I have to be online to participate in the online course?

A. Sierra College online courses are asynchronous, which means there is no fixed time when students must be online. Instructors will post assignments and deadlines, and students can log in and complete their work as their own schedule permits. Most instructors will request that you log on at least 3 times per week, although each class can vary somewhat and your instructor will specify their requirements in your course materials.

Q. How do I obtain the syllabus or homework assignments?

A. All class materials will be located on the Blackboard website under your class. If you have more than one online class, then you will need to select each of your class links individually to go in & obtain the assignments or other documents related to that class.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS IN TAKING ONLINE COURSES

EQUIP YOURSELF WITH THE REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

1. Make sure you have a syllabus for the course you are taking. Read it carefully; it should answer most of the questions you have about the course.
2. Textbooks, study guides and other course materials may be purchased at the Sierra College Bookstore. Please click on the Online Bookstore link on our website which will take you to the Sierra College Online Bookstore, where you can pull up a list of required books by course code and even purchase at the same time if you wish..
3. Preview your textbook by scanning the table of contents, major chapter headings and subheadings.
4. Be sure that your computer meets the minimal requirements and that you have internet access.

DEVELOP A STUDY PLAN

1. Be sure to log on *at least* 3 times per week and *no later* than the first few days of the semester.
2. Have your assignments ready on a disk or your hard drive so that when you log on you will be able to easily submit them.
3. Keep a good set of notes for each topic. By doing this, you will be able to review for exams without cramming.

AVOID INTERRUPTIONS

1. Let your family or roommates know about your critical computer use and ask that you not be disturbed during your class work time. You need to treat this class as if you were actually sitting in the classroom on campus.
2. Avoid all interruptions and distractions while you are working in your online class. Wear comfortable clothes, turn off the TV, & take the telephone off the hook. (How many classes can you attend while wearing your fuzzy slippers?!)
3. Motivate yourself to log on at least 3 times per week so as not to get behind on assignments. Instructors will post the due date of when assignments are due.

RECRUIT A GROUP OR STUDY PARTNER

- ✎ Try to identify one or more classmates with whom you can get together with to review your assignments, discuss class sessions and study for your exams. You will be able to meet some of your classmates through the discussion boards.
- ✎ Look for ways to relate and apply the knowledge you are gaining. Share your experiences with your study partners.

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT

- ✎ Contact your instructor when you have questions about course content. They are available by email or phone, or you can make an appointment for an on-campus meeting.
- ✎ If you have any concerns or questions throughout the semester you can call the Distance Learning / Media Center, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm at (916) 781-0406 in Rocklin.

TELEVISED COURSES

Taped backup copies of the classes are only available in the case of a signal outage, so only register if you are able to watch the class live, or have a reliable vcr to tape a copy for yourself. We will continue to have copies of the first two weeks of each semester for those who are late adds, and these tapes will be available through the 4th week of the semester at both the Rocklin & NCC campuses. If you are having signal difficulties, please call our Signal Hotline for more information, at 781-7111.

Cable companies & channels for each city we currently broadcast to:

Studio A / Room LRC127		
Auburn	Starstream	5
Granite Bay	Starstream	5
Grass Valley	Comcast	15
Lake of Pines	USA Media	98
Lincoln	Starstream	5
Loomis	Starstream	5
Nevada City	Comcast	15
Newcastle	Starstream	5
Penryn	Starstream	5
Rocklin	Starstream	5
Roseville	Comcast	16
	Surewest	75
Truckee	Suddenlink	67
Studio B / Room LRC107		
Auburn	Starstream	21, 54
Granite Bay	Starstream	54
Grass Valley	Comcast	14
Lake of Pines	USA Media	99
Lincoln	Starstream	54
Loomis	Starstream	54
Nevada City	Comcast	14
Newcastle	Starstream	54
Penryn	Starstream	54
Rocklin	Starstream	54
Roseville	Comcast	17
	Surewest	76
Truckee	Suddenlink	68

To receive these channels, you **must** subscribe to one of the above listed cable companies and live in those areas. At the present time, satellite

networks do NOT receive our signal, even though many of their representatives might tell you otherwise. If you are outside of these areas & *occasionally* receive our cable signal, there is a **high probability** that you won't be able to view our channels consistently and could miss valuable class time. We do not tape classes for students, nor are there taped copies available on a regular basis, (only in the case of a signal outage are tapes available), so only sign up for a televised course if subscribe to one of the mentioned cable companies and receive our channels, or if you have another way of watching the class.

Our telecourses allow interactivity between you and your instructor through the telephone. You can call in during class time and ask your instructor questions and are able to participate in class discussions if you so desire.

PHONE NUMBERS:



*Main Distance Learning Phone Number
(916) 781-0406*

SIGNAL HOTLINE: (916) 781-7111

Call this number to hear the daily signal status & to inform us of any signal problems you are having.

The numbers to participate in your LIVE class:

Classroom #127 (SierraTV Studio A) – (916) 781-0414

Classroom #107 (SierraTV Studio B) – (916) 789-2994

Toll free number to call an instructor at Sierra College:

1-800-242-4004

Then dial 1 +extension of the person you are trying to reach

The Homework FAX number on Rocklin campus: (916) 789-2992

Rocklin Campus Testing Center: (916) 789-2915

NCC Campus Testing Center: (530) 274-5304

If you are in the 530 area code, dial:

274-5300 + 1 + the extension number you are trying to reach

CLASS EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS OF TELEVISED COURSES

- ✎ You should watch your particular class or classes at the regularly scheduled time from home or other designated access site. You are not required to participate in the class discussion, but the opportunity is available during live class time.

- ✎ You are required to read the textbook, study guide, and course documents as assigned by your instructor. It is recommended that each lesson be read before the class period, unless specified otherwise by the instructor. Required books for each course are available at the Sierra College Bookstore, or via the online Bookstore by clicking on the Bookstore link.

- ✎ You are to complete assignments or special projects given by your instructor and turn them into the testing center (4th floor of the Rocklin campus LRC). There is a FAX machine at the Rocklin site to receive homework or other documents, *however some instructors may decline papers transmitted through this medium*, so please check with the instructor on their policies.

- ✎ Exams may be taken at either the Rocklin or Nevada County campus. Instructors will typically give you between two and four days to complete your exam, which they will specify during class time, as well as other pertinent information regarding the exams.

NEW SIERRA COLLEGE BOOKSTORE ONLINE FEATURE:

You can get your course books online! Just visit our website & click on the Bookstore link to visit the Sierra College Online Bookstore, where you can enter your course information to find out what books you will need for your televised classes!

ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

You may turn in your assignments and pick up course work or graded materials from your instructor at the Testing Center located in room 402 at the LRC in Rocklin or at the NCC library. If you are unable to come to campus, a FAX machine is located at the Rocklin campus that you may be able to send homework & other documents to - *however, your instructor **must** approve of this method to turn in your class work for their particular class.* The number for the FAX is (916) 789-2992. It will be your responsibility to come to campus to pick up your graded assignments, as staff will not be able to release grades over the telephone.

TELEVISED COURSE TESTING POLICIES

1. Exams may be taken at the Testing Center on the 4th floor of the LRC on the Rocklin Campus, the Library at the Nevada County Campus, or at the Truckee Center. Professors typically allow between two and four days, which they specify during class time, for an exam to be taken at either location. If you require a change in test dates, you'll need to negotiate that with your professor and your professor must notify the Testing Center.
2. You must present your scantron, blue book or paper to the proctor prior to receiving the test. The proctor will sign and date the test taking materials and only those materials may be used and turned in for the test. Make sure you have everything you need before accepting the exam (this includes scantrons, #2 pencils, blue books, scrap paper, etc.)

3. YOU MUST SHOW A STUDENT ID AND SIGN THE SIGN-IN SHEET BEFORE YOU TAKE AN EXAM.

4. Sit at the table designated by the exam proctor. Exams may not be taken at the study carrels. Remove all materials from the table except the testing materials and those specified by the professor. Once you have received the exam, you may not leave the testing area without turning in the exam to the proctor.
5. Your professor is responsible for the specific instructions to be followed for each exam. No talking is permitted during testing; see the proctor if you have any questions. The proctor may or may not be able to clarify questions you have. You are encouraged to write a note to the professor if any part of the test is not clear.
6. All exams must be completed by posted closing times at the library where you plan to take your test. Allow at least one hour to complete an exam. The proctor may refuse to administer any test that cannot be completed by closing time.

If you have any questions regarding a test or assignment you may call the Testing Center on the Rocklin Campus at (916) 789-2915.

TESTING CENTER

HOURS: ROCKLIN CAMPUS LRC Room #402

Monday through Thursday – 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Friday – 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Saturday – 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

NCC CAMPUS LIBRARY

Monday through Thursday – 9:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Friday – 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

CLOSED SATURDAY

Madelyn Helling Nevada County Library

(530) 265-7050

Monday & Thursday - 10:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Tues, Wed, Friday – 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Saturday – 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TELEVISED COURSES

Q. Can I record the classes and watch them later, or do I have to view the telecourses LIVE?

A. Sierra College Telecourses are designed to be "LIVE" and "interactive." While there is no restriction against recording the broadcasts, students who do this in lieu of watching the telecourse LIVE, do so at their own risk and the Sierra College Media Department will not make individual video tape copies for students. Videotapes of prior class sessions are **not** available, so it is **imperative** that you are able to watch it live or have a reliable VCR to tape a copy for yourself.

Q. What should I do if the TV signal goes out, and I am unable to watch my class?

A. In the event of a signal outage, please call our new Signal Hotline at **(916)781-7111** for a daily signal status update and to report any signal problems you are experiencing. In the event that the signal is down, you will also receive information on how to make arrangements with us to view a backup tape of your missed class.

Q. How do I register for a Televised course?

A. Registration procedures are the same for TV courses as they are for regular classes at Sierra College. See the instructions in the front of the course catalog for more information on the registration process. If you are trying to add a telecourse during the semester add/drop period, you will need to obtain an add/drop form from the Admissions and Records Office and have it signed by the course instructor, if the instructor is accepting more students. The Distance Learning Department does not have add codes and cannot sign the add forms - the best way to get a hold of the instructor in person for their signature is to show up for the particular class you are trying to add, as they might be hard to track down during other times since they are also teaching in other classrooms on campus throughout the day.

Q. How do I obtain course documents, like the syllabus or class handouts?

A. All Class documents will be available at the Testing Center on the 4th floor of the LRC, or in the NCC library. They are also available online: Just go to our website and navigate to the televised courses, then click on your particular class to go into the ERes document retrieval system.

Q. How do I take tests or turn in homework assignments? Do I have to come to the campus at a certain time or date?

A. Homework assignments can be turned in, tests taken, and handouts picked up at one of the Distance Learning Testing Centers. The Rocklin Testing Center is located in Room 402 of the Learning Resource Center. The Nevada County Testing Center is located in the LRC at the Grass Valley Campus. Assignments may also be faxed to the Testing Center *with instructor approval* (please call for the fax number.) Course instructors will announce testing dates ahead of time, and will generally give TV students a 2-4 day window to take exams at the Testing Center, which they will specify during class time. Students can take the exam at any time during normal operating hours, at either Testing Center location.

Q. I have a satellite dish. Can I receive the Sierra College Channel?

A. Unfortunately, Sierra College television channels are not available via satellite (traditional dishes, DirecTV®, or Dish Network®.) You must subscribe to one of the cable providers listed in order to receive our broadcasts.

Q. I live outside of Placer County. Can I have the college make tapes for me?

A. Unfortunately, we do not provide this service as our TV courses are intended to be interactive and viewed live so that the students can call in and participate in the class. There will *no longer* be tapes available of previous classes, so please *do not register* if you do not have a reliable way of viewing the class live or taping a copy for yourself.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

EQUIP YOURSELF WITH THE REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- ✂ Make sure you have a syllabus for the course you are taking. Read it carefully; it should answer most of the questions you have about the course.
- ✂ Textbooks, study guides and other course materials may be purchased at the Sierra College Bookstore.
- ✂ Preview your textbook by scanning the table of contents, major chapter headings and subheadings.
- ✂ Check your television prior to the first live program. If you are experiencing technical difficulties, be sure to get in touch with your cable company as soon as possible. If you experience a cable outage or power failure during one of your classes, be sure to call the Sierra TV Signal Hotline at 781-7111 for further instructions.

DEVELOP A STUDY PLAN

- ✂ Be sure to watch your televised course or courses at the scheduled broadcast time.
- ✂ Plan to complete your textbook and study guide assignments before your class is broadcast.
- ✂ Keep a good set of notes for each topic. By doing this, you will be able to review for exams without cramming.

AVOID INTERRUPTIONS

- ✎ Let your family or roommates know about your critical television-viewing schedule and ask that you not be disturbed during your class period. You need to treat this class as if you were actually sitting in the classroom on campus.
- ✎ Avoid all interruptions and distractions while you are viewing your television course. Take the telephone off the hook if there is no one there to answer it for you.

RECRUIT A GROUP OR STUDY PARTNER

- ✎ Try to identify one or more classmates with whom you can get together with to review your assignments, discuss class sessions and study for your exams. You will be able to meet some of your classmates through the testing center.
- ✎ Look for ways to relate and apply the knowledge you are gaining. Share your experiences with your study partners.

ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT

- ✎ Contact your instructor when you have questions about course content. They are available by phone during the hours indicated in your syllabus, or you make an appointment for an on-campus meeting. You may also correspond with your instructor by phone or e-mail.
- ✎ If you have any concerns or questions throughout the semester you can call the Media Center, Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm at (916) 781-0406 in Rocklin.

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