The Online Student Success Team

The Office of Online Student Success exists to create an environment where online students feel supported as members of the Syracuse University community. As an Online Academic Advising Office, we engage with students to help provide them with the coordination of resources and strategies to empower academic and personal development and success. Additionally, we support engagement and familiarity with the online environment through practice sessions, resources, connection to our ITS HelpDesk, and more.

Questions? We’re here to help! Please do not hesitate to contact us at orangeonline@syr.edu or 315.443.3256.

Asynchronous and Synchronous Course Content

Many of Syracuse University's online courses have two components to complete your weekly coursework:

1. Asynchronous Course Content: Your instructor will assign coursework that is required to complete PRIOR to your live session meeting time. This coursework could include:
   - Videos
   - Readings
   - Assignments
   - Projects

2. Live Sessions (Synchronous Sessions): Live sessions allow you to join your instructor and classmates in a virtual classroom. Typically, once per week at a designated time, your class will meet in an online web meeting room. This session will place you in a live virtual classroom where you will interact with your instructor and fellow classmates. Many instructors will use these live sessions to review and expand on the course content you completed PRIOR to your live session.

Know your Virtual Environment

Blackboard is a web-based course-management system and your virtual learning environment while enrolled in online courses. Blackboard is designed to allow students and faculty to participate in courses delivered online using online materials and activities. You will need your SU NetID and password to access your course(s) in Blackboard.

Inside Blackboard you will find:

- Your courses & course materials
- Announcements
- Discussion boards and threaded discussions
- Online quizzes or exams, and more

If you have problems logging in or need assistance, please contact the ITS Service Center at help@syr.edu or 315.443.2677. The ITS Website itself has its own wealth of information you may find useful. Pay particular attention to the Services Section for other important information.

Accessibility & Hardware Requirements:

For the best Blackboard Learn experience with your screen reader, use Firefox® and JAWS® on a Windows® system. On a Mac® use Safari® and VoiceOver.

Your computer must meet the following minimum hardware requirements:

- Minimum of 2 GB available disk space
- Dual-core processor: 2.0 GHz
- RAM: 2 GB+
- Internet connection; Minimum download speed: 5 Mbps / Minimum upload speed: 3 Mbps
Blackboard Collaborate (within Blackboard) will serve as the platform for:

Class Discussions: Your online course may have required live sessions for instruction and class discussion. Live-session class discussions require that you participate with a microphone and web camera. You must be prepared to discuss that week’s asynchronous material in your weekly live-session class discussion. This means if you have class on Monday, you must have completed that week’s asynchronous material prior to your scheduled live session on Monday.

Office Hours: Instructors may post online office hours to give students opportunities to ask and clarify questions about the course, review assignments or upcoming coursework.

Study Groups: In some courses, you may be assigned a group project where you will need to meet on a regular basis to complete the project. As a student, you have the ability to create Blackboard Collaborate sessions for you and your group members to work on group assignments.

Assignments: Are created by your instructor and can be used for simply submitting homework or to participate in a back-and-forth review process of projects and papers.

Taking Online Assessments: There are a variety of testing options within this program, some examples are: submit a paper, upload a document, complete an online test, and do an online presentation. Your instructor will provide guidelines for online exams.

*The format of course assignments and tests should be listed in the course syllabus - make sure you have read the syllabus and are able to be prepared and make any needed accommodations for assignment and test requirements.

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### Joining Your Live Class Session

To access a live session, first log into Blackboard and click on your specific course in the "My Courses" section of your landing page. Then, select the section your Instructor has indicated for joining the live sessions.

After you select the date and time for the appropriate session, click on "Join Course Room" or “Join Session.” Generally, you can join the session up to 15 minutes in advance.

Each live session link is unique to an individual session and a user in that session. This means that the link only works for you in that session. If you don’t see "Join Course Room", it is possible the session has not opened yet; be sure to check the sessions date and time you selected.

Upon entering the live session, you will be prompted to set up your audio and video.

If you have joined a Collaborate Live Session on a browser, you have the ability to use your phone for audio.

The Collaborate Panel takes your session experience to the next level. You now have a single space to go to engage other attendees with all the great collaborate tools.

- Chat with everyone in the session or privately with other moderators
- View attendees and their roles
- Moderators and presenters can share content or start polling
- Set your personal settings

The Session Menu opens a collection of high-level session actions and information. Open it using the Session menu button at the top left of the screen.

Tools and features you use only once or twice during a session are conveniently grouped in the menu.

- Find details about the session
- Moderators and presenters can record sessions that can be reviewed in the Course Tools and Collaborate section in Blackboard
- Connect your phone for audio
- Get help or report an issue