

Distance Learning at EWC – Orientation Module: Distance Learning

Hi. Thanks for watching this module about distance learning at Eastern Wyoming College. I'm Aaron Bahmer, Instructional Technologist for EWC, and my job is to support faculty as they deliver distance instruction to you and to support you in using the technology necessary to learn at a distance.

After viewing this segment, you should be able to: access the Distance Learning area of the EWC website, identify how EWC typically delivers distance classes, find your textbooks from the online bookstore, and access the Library area of the EWC website.

Let's start out by visiting the EWC website. Our web address is e-w-c-dot-w-y-dot-e-d-u. Here, you can easily find links to the EWC online bookstore and to the EWC Library. You can find more information about distance learning by first clicking "Academic Services" on the home page navigation, then click the "Distance Learning" link on the right-hand side of the Academic Services page.

Here on the Distance Learning page, look to the right to see links to helpful information, like how to be successful in your distance classes and the list of distance classes available. You may want to add this page as a favorite or bookmark in your web browser so you can access it quickly. You can also find links to the EWC Library and Bookstore here. Let's visit the Library, first.

This specialized library page includes many pieces of information about the library and the services it offers to distance students. Be sure to watch the short video introduction by EWC librarian, Casey Debus. Here you can search the EWC library and other libraries across the state, including resources you can read online. The top of this page includes several gold-colored tabs that lead to further information about research, plagiarism, and writing style guides. Remember, you can get to this page from the Distance Learning link for "Distance Library Resources" or from the EWC Library page by following the link for "Outreach Services."

From most anywhere on the EWC website, you can find a link to the EWC Bookstore at the very top of the page. Clicking this link opens a new tab in your browser for the Follett company website for Eastern Wyoming College. Here, you can browse products sold by our bookstore including EWC-branded clothing and gift or collectible items, learning supplies, and,

of course, textbooks. Let's take a look at how you might find the textbook for a class. First, we're going to click the "Books" link on the bookstore site. This process allows us to make some quick selections of term, department, course number, and section number. Once those are set, click the [Submit] button. The page will then display any required materials for your class. Textbook listings may include several options for buying or renting new or used books or even accessing digital books, as available. In some circumstances, you may be able to use part of your financial aid award to purchase textbooks online.

Eastern Wyoming College offers classes by two delivery modes: online and web conference. Online classes are asynchronous, meaning you access your class materials and do the course work at times that suit your needs. You don't have to meet with the rest of the class at a certain time. Keep in mind, that just because you can work on your class at any time you like, it doesn't mean that there aren't deadlines that you must adhere to.

Web conference classes are synchronous, meaning that everyone in the class meets together at a specified date and time for class presentations. This kind of class will likely be supported by online materials and assignments that you can access outside of normal class meetings – just like homework for any other class.

Regardless of the delivery mode, you will have to be an independent learner. This means that you have to find the motivation within yourself to open and read the textbook, read or listen to your instructor's notes. You have to figure out how to make the course content make sense to you so that you understand it and can perform well on class activities, assignments, and tests. It means you have to plan ahead in order to complete projects and submit them on time for grading. You have to set aside time to practice new skills and commit new vocabulary to memory. You have to be your own advocate for your learning and be brave enough to ask questions of your instructor – either through the class interface or by phone and e-mail.

Learning at a distance is not easier than actually going to a class. Some hints for success include: set aside specific time each day to work on your classes; access your class at least once a day to make note of announcements and new discussion postings and to interact with your online course materials; create your own study notes from textbook readings and other course items; and designate a quiet study area, free of distractions. Talk to your family or roommates about the importance of your classes and the place and times set aside where and when you need to focus

your energy toward learning. Find a study partner—even if they aren't taking the same class as you. Compose anything you write for class using a word processor and save it on your computer where you can find it later—if the writing is for a discussion, copy and paste it from your saved document. Complete projects before the due date. Be sure to ask questions, and seek help when you need it.

I hope this brief introduction to distance learning at Eastern Wyoming College has helped you to access the Distance Learning area of the EWC website, to identify how EWC typically delivers distance classes, to find your textbooks from the online bookstore, and to access the Library area of the EWC website. Distance learning isn't for everybody, but it is sometimes a needed option for students' busy lives and can be a rewarding way to earn college credit toward completing your degree program.