

Course Tour & Tasks & Tips

I had planned some informal pictures to help students—especially ones not using a full screen computer—be able to function in Blackboard. I have realized that I need technical help to solve some of the problems.

The tasks you must do are:

1. Take the Syllabus Acknowledgment Quiz. (Points: 1) You cannot stay in the course without doing that.
2. **Tip:** Today, make sure you figure out how you are going to plan your work and not miss any deadlines. For some people, their best method is printing out the Course Schedule and taping it above your computer. Do something to make that schedule prominent.
3. **Tip:** Today, compare the Course Schedule with your current commitments. Why? If you cannot do some assignment on the date listed, you must arrange with me to do it early.
4. **Tip:** Today, examine the Course Schedule. Notice what you have to plan and cannot just do at the last minute in this course. Examples:
 - You have to use the Unit Study Guide to know the questions for the exam.
 - You have to understand the textbook and the primaries to do the writing assignment.
5. Reply to the Syllabus & Success discussion and its two related documents: the Course Schedule and the Course Plan. You can also see the examples that your instructor shows students when explaining the class. Ask questions and—if you know the answer—help someone with the answer.
6. **Tip:** Today—if you do not use Ctrl-F (Find), try it with the syllabus. Look up something like late work.
7. Post your introduction. Read the directions first.
8. Complete your plan for the grade you want and submit it. If you have questions, ask.
9. After the date in the Course Schedule, do Distance Education's required Sample Respondus Exam so you will be able to take the 3 Unit Exams and the Final Exam.
10. Before you do anything else, prepare your computer and do all of the things that you need to do **before** you start the class. You can earn 10 points for replying to the WCJC email I sent to all of you and I copied below, but more than that you can have much greater odds of success if you do these things.

Reply to this email saying "I will do each of these things" and I will record 10 points for this graded assignment. Tip: When you will see the words "Graded Task" or "This is
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a Graded Task” at the end of a Subject line or a heading or something like that, it means the task is part of the required work and earns points.

I only use your WCJC student email address for communication **before** Blackboard is available or for alerts of some kind. We use the email IN Blackboard (called Messages).

Copy the URL <https://wcj.blackboard.com> into a browser window. It takes you directly to Blackboard without going through WCJC’s access.

1. Make it a favorite or bookmark it or just put its URL some place safe so you can do always your work.

Why do you have to do this? Thus far, WCJC’s website and portal have been down (days and days last Spring). On the other hand, Blackboard has been **always up and running**. If the only way you know to get to Blackboard is the WCJC website, you can get far behind.

2. Notice that Blackboard looks very different. Among the differences is an area at the TOP right that says 2 things:

- My Blackboard (This is your entry screen with some basic information.)
- Blackboard Help (This is the screen with things you need **before** the first day.)

3. On My Blackboard, there is the login section, but you cannot get in the course until Distance Education does their tasks **on Tuesday morning before 8. **Tips:****

- You must have your Banner ID to log in both for the user ID and the password.
- Once you log in, then do change your password.

4. On the upper RIGHT, click on the word Blackboard Help.

You see a different screen. Not doing these things below can zap your joy and your grade.

5. Look in the box **Technical Support** on the left. The box contains all of these things.

a. Look for the heading **Resources** and then click on the link **Computer Requirements** and make sure that your computer/device will work with Blackboard, including your browsers. This is a long link; look at it carefully. I care about you guys, but I am not a tech person, but a historian. All I can do is tell you common workarounds that I learned in distance learning classes, but they may or may not be enough for the solution. IT can help you (a link to making an IT request is above in the Technical Support Browser).

Tip: With this long webpage and the long page below, use Ctrl-F to help you find all the information applicable to what you need.

b. Click on the link [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Scroll down or use Ctrl-F to see if the information applies to you.

c. If you do not already have **2 different browsers** on your machine, do it now. Check **Downloadable Resources**. Chrome and Firefox are available there.

Caution: Safari has had problems so use the guidance to make it work with Blackboard. **Why?** Blackboard and our Distance Education Department, and certainly not this non-techy teacher have no control over browsers. With the upgrades to these browsers, one day they work; one day they do not. Trying another browser does help.

d. Some people do not have Adobe Reader—FREE-- and some computers do not supply it automatically. You **must** have Adobe Reader to use essential documents in this course and others. In this course, the study guide that tells you the possible questions on the exam is a **PDF**, the course schedule that tells you when things are due is a **PDF**, the syllabus that provides details about the course that you must understand is a **PDF**, and there are many more PDFs in the course.

6. You can study from the Study Guides and my Lessons (think of them as chapters of a textbook but with bullets and optional information) and maps and with the Learning Quizzes and Learning Discussions (all provided in the course and covered in the syllabus).

On the other hand, you do need a historically reliable source for facts for our written work and when you just want to look up more. Think of textbooks as a form of encyclopedia. The required textbook serves as the facts for your written work and a quick way to look up things when you need more.

The Department requires this textbook David M. Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen, and Mel Piehl, *The Brief American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, 9th edition. It is the one-volume edition containing 41 chapters and is used for both History 1301 and History 1302. The ISBN is 9781337124645; however, that ISBN is a “bundle” and includes both the textbook and an online program called Mindtap. In this course, we will not use Mindtap.

My checking last Fall said that the WCJC bookstore was cheaper than online sources. You can buy the book anywhere you please, but I would check the WCJC bookstores for the price first.

7. This course is a little different so do pay attention in Getting Started so you can figure out how it can help you. In part, I am trying to help mobile users without hurting anyone else.

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