

When Does the Course Open? What Happens on the 1st Day?

I will have the course where it is available by 12:00 AM on the first day listed by WCJC. The actual hour that you can see it will depend on the Distance Learning Department, but I have seen courses become available between 12:00 AM and 9:00 AM.

After 12 years teaching in distance learning, on the first day, I just try to get everyone into course and get all of you to follow the “Read Me First” page and to complete what Distance Learning calls “Getting Started” activities. Those tasks are provided in a “Getting Started” folder on the main page where we work all the time (called Learning Units & All Assignments).

What If You Have Never Done a Distance Course Before?

If you have never done a distance learning course before, I really recommend that you do the Getting Started tasks and **then call me** or—if your hours do not match my listed office hours—propose a time by email and tell me a reliable phone number at that hour. I will reply back that I can or can’t call you at that time. **I am glad to help any of you.**

Cautions Meant to Protect You: a) Distance Learning is harder than face-to-face classes. It requires higher reading skills and higher levels of self-management. b) An 8-week class—and this is an 8-week class—are endurance contests for teachers and students. c) As the registration materials say, this is **not** a correspondence course or a self-paced course. d) There are due dates and you have to make them. They are listed at the end of the Syllabus in the Course Schedule—a required schedule in each distance learning course offered by WCJC.

Things to Do Before You Login to Our Course

1. Use the “Computer Requirements” link in the center of the screen **before** you login.
2. If you need to download a different browser, use the links in the lower right corner.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn login page for Wharton County Junior College. The page is divided into three main sections: Blackboard Login, Student Help Desk, and Additional Information. The Blackboard Login section includes a login form with fields for Username and Password, and a Login button. The Student Help Desk section provides contact information for IT support, including a phone number and hours, and links to a Request for IT Support Form, Computer Requirements, Frequently Asked Questions, and Blackboard How-To Videos. The Additional Information section includes links to the Distance Education Department, WCJC B&N Bookstore, and DE Student Handbook, as well as a section for Faculty with links to Schedule and Downloadable Resources (Download Firefox, Download Chrome, Download LockDown Browser, LockDown Browser User Guide).

Callout Boxes:

- Top Left:** Save this URL in case the WCJC site is down (rare) and Blackboard is still up. (Points to the address bar)
- Top Right:** Tip: An 8-week course is hard. Be sure you match online learning. If you have never taken an online class, consider this useful self-test. (Points to the Additional Information section)
- Middle Left:** Read this and this. (Points to the Blackboard Login section)
- Bottom Left:** Tip: If you are on a public computer, logout when you are done. Blackboard stays open. (Points to the Blackboard Login section)
- Bottom Center:** Use the “Computer Requirements” link before you login. Having a new device or that your device worked last term won’t protect you. Your device and your current browser must match Blackboard. Students are not seeing links, not see all quiz questions, and so on. Check first! (Points to the Computer Requirements link)
- Bottom Right:** If you need to download a browser, use these links. In general, Firefox seems safest. (Points to the Downloadable Resources section)