Dear Virtual Psychology Student,

Welcome to the Online edition of Psychology 240: Abnormal Psychology at College of the Canyons, Spring 2015 (Section 14211). My name is Mehgen Andrade and I am your instructor for the course and am looking forward to working with you during the coming session! Please read this entire letter for details about logging in to the course and the amount and type of work required. If you have any further questions that this letter does not answer, please send me an email at mehgen.andrade@canyons.edu.

Our class begins February 9th and ends June 5th. It will be required for students to log into Blackboard and post the Introductions Discussion Board by midnight on Monday, February 9th to keep your spot in the class. Be sure to log in and say hi so you can keep the spot you registered for!! The calendar with specific due dates will be included in the Syllabus.

To start things off...
This is a 100% online class, which means that there will not be any on-campus or face-to-face meetings. Examinations will be administered online, as well as having an opportunity to take an exam in a classroom setting during each exam period. This course will be available on Blackboard beginning on the day that the class officially starts. Instructions for logging in to Blackboard can be found here: http://bb9.canyons.edu.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you use Internet Explorer and experience any difficulties, please observe the following guidelines:
How to Disable Compatibility Mode:
1. While in Internet Explorer Click on Tools (You may need to click the ALT key on your keyboard for the menu to show up.)
2. Click Compatibility View Settings
3. Uncheck the bottom two buttons leaving the first one checked and click close.

Only officially enrolled students will have an account, and you must complete the orientation discussion board by the first day of class, or risk being dropped from the course.

What you need to do in this class...
Our online class will include various graded assessments, including discussion boards, assignments (generally written essay style submissions), and exams. The course is organized in modules, where each module covers approximately 3-5 chapters and includes each of these graded components. The Discussion Boards require a personal response to a question I pose to the class, as well as a response to another student. It encourages reading of the chapters ahead of time but is most heavily based on your own opinions and reflections. The assignments require more in-depth reading and understanding that is demonstrated in a well-organized and clearly written essay. There are times that the assignments may require other types of activities. Exams are done ONLINE and are presented as multiple-choice questions, one at a time. Again, in order to really do well, you will need to read each chapter and use the practice quizzes that are provided to be best prepared. Generally, there is one graded submission per week. The details for each task is included in the syllabus and I will make it available to you no later than the Friday before classes begin so you can
schedule accordingly. In some cases, I may have it available even earlier to you. If you have any questions regarding expectations, please let me know!!

**Required Materials and Technology**
I strongly recommend purchasing the textbooks prior to the beginning of class, as course work will begin immediately.

The books are:

Given that this is an online course, you MUST have available to you a computer with reliable internet access and a valid e-mail address that you check regularly, preferably daily.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to use a computer with reliable internet access. If your internet connection is dropped because of a faulty connection or you have other difficulties with your computer, it is your responsibility to troubleshoot the problem. While COC does provide online support for students, having faulty equipment is not a valid excuse to request a make-up on a quiz, exam, or discussion board post, nor is it a valid excuse for missing any announcements posted or e-mail messages sent with time sensitive information about assignments and due dates.

**Are You Ready for Online Coursework?**
As noted above, work for this class will be completed using Blackboard (Bb), an online course management system. In order to succeed in this course, you should be familiar (at a minimum) with using internet browser software (such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.) and with sending and receiving e-mail. If you are unsure of your skill level and whether or not you are ready for online learning, please visit this site to take a number of self-assessments designed to help you determine your readiness.

As the instructor of this course, it is my job to help you learn about the field of psychology and give you constructive feedback toward that end. I will help you with using BlackBoard (Bb) and other online tools necessary to complete course assignments. However, it is not part of my job to provide instruction on how to use a computer, the fundamentals of the internet, e-mail programs, or any other basic aspect of online learning. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have reliable equipment and network connections before signing up for this (or any) online class. A flaky computer or unstable internet connection is not an acceptable reason for missing assignments in this course.
Also, for online coursework, it is very important for students to be intrinsically motivated! Why? Because you won’t SEE me at any time, so it is easy to fall away from the course. I encourage students to consider taking classes in a FACE-to-FACE setting if they are very enthusiastic about the material to really get the experience.

**If You Think This Class Will Be Easy**

If you are already familiar with taking online courses, this class will likely feel comfortable. If this is the first time you have taken an online course, I’d like to point out the differences between the online environment and the traditional classroom. Although online classes have many advantages, including added flexibility, they are unique in several ways and, therefore, may not be for everyone. First, online and hybrid classes require students to utilize good time management skills and possess a high level of self-motivation, since the instructor is not visible on a daily basis, and "out of sight" can mean "out of mind." Although I make every effort to keep you apprised of deadlines, I will not always be visible to you and will not be repeatedly asking you about why you have not completed your assignments. Second, online and hybrid courses require students to learn by reading course material and responding in writing on examinations and assignments. If you enjoy reading and feel that you communicate well in writing, then this format may be for you. To successfully complete this hybrid course, you must read the required textbook, complete discussions and other writing assignments, quizzes and exams.

Because this is an online course, you are required to master the material outside of a classroom setting. This requires approximately 20 hours per week of studying in order to complete the reading assignments and other work for this class. If this seems like more than you can manage without external prompting, perhaps a more traditional class is for you. If you are highly motivated, then this is the course for you. This class promises to provide you with a good overview of the field of psychology, as well as the opportunity to interact with a wide variety of students from many different backgrounds.

If you have specific questions about this course, please contact me by e-mail at mehgen.andrade@canyons.edu. If you have general questions about distance learning programs at College of the Canyons, you can visit the [COC Distance Learning Web Site](#).

Again, welcome to the class!

Sincerely,

Mehgen Andrade

Professor of Psychology

College of the Canyons