Dear Virtual Psychology Student,

Welcome to the Online edition of Psychology 240: Abnormal Psychology at College of the Canyons. My name is Professor Mehgen Andrade and I am your instructor for the course and am looking forward to working with you during the coming semester! 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.

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: All students will be required to post to the Introductions Discussion Board by midnight on the first day of classes (January 5th) to avoid being dropped. 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….
It’s all in the syllabus!

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.

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, Psychology

College of the Canyons