Dear Virtual Psychology Student,

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.

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 Canvas beginning on the day that the class officially starts.
Instructions for logging in to Canvas can be found here: https://coc.instructure.com/login/canvas
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 a combination of various graded assessments, which may include discussion boards, assignments (generally written essay style submissions), quizzes, 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. 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. **BOTH BOOKS ARE REQUIRED!**
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 Canvas, 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.

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. 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 20-40 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.

Additional Resources

Canvas

The course can be accessed via Canvas at cv.canyons.edu on the first day of the course. Follow the login instructions at the bottom of the screen to log in. Here, you can also access Canvas user guides with helpful tips for navigating and using Canvas. For any Canvas related issues please call the Canvas Student Support line at (661)362-3344 during college business hours, or (877)889-9052 for 24/7 support.

Distance Learning

Check out the Distance Learning website for more information on a variety of topics that can help you be a successful online student such as: exam proctoring, learning styles, computer skills, and tips for student success. If this is your first online course, feel free to take our online learning readiness assessment to assess your skills.

The Learning Center (TLC)

The TLC provides FREE tutoring resource to COC students including:

- Face-to-face & ONLINE tutoring
- Testing Center: offers test proctoring services for courses that have required proctored exams
- Study Jam Review Sessions
- Computers with over 300 software programs

For more information visit the TLC Website.
Disabled Students Program & Services (DSPS)
College of the Canyons DSPS provides educational services and access for eligible students with documented disabilities who intend to pursue coursework at COC. A variety of programs and services are available which afford eligible students with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of the college programs and activities through appropriate and reasonable accommodations. For more information on their services visit the Disabled Students Program & Services website.

Online Counseling
The Counseling Department offers appointments online. You can schedule an appointment by visiting the Online Counseling website. Counselors can help you map out a plan to reach your educational goals as well as advise you on course selection and registration.

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