

Tips for Online Classes

Online courses are growing in popularity at colleges. At Fresno State, students often access their online courses on a platform called Canvas. Online courses may seem like an easy, convenient alternative to a traditional face-to-face lecture class. But they require responsibility, self-discipline, and self-motivation. Ever heard statements like these about online classes?

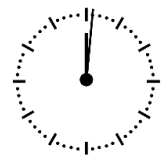


“I can just stay home, sleep in, and study at night. I don’t have to go to school.”

Yes, but the campus has plenty of resources to help you with your class. If you stay home for your online class, you need a reliable computer, Internet connection, and study space. The campus has all that, plus tutoring, the library, and your classmates! But they’re not available on campus 24/7.

“I can do my work whenever I want.”

Sort of. You can start a lot of assignments whenever you want. But online classes still have deadlines to finish your work. And when Canvas time-stamps the work you submit, it doesn’t make exceptions: If your work is due at midnight, 12:01 is too late.



“The online class is so easy, it’s a lot less work than the regular class.”

No, “online” does not mean “easy.” “Regular” does not mean “hard.” Online is just a different format. The professors still want you to learn the same topics you learn in a face-to-face class. Many students actually spend more time on an online class because they have to participate frequently in discussion boards and other activities.



Keys to Success in Online Classes



🔑 Set aside time to be “in class”

Treat your online class like a face-to-face lecture class. For each unit of your course, spend 1 hour “in class.” Use this time to log on to Canvas, participate in discussion boards, or e-mail your classmates or professor. You could also meet your classmates in person or go to your professor’s office hours.

🔑 Interact with others in the class

In Canvas, you can find a class roster under Tools. You can send messages to your professor, a classmate, or the whole class. Find a study buddy! Just be careful about what you send through Canvas and who you send it to.

🔑 Remember the 2-to-1 ratio

Spend 2 hours studying for each unit of your course. (In a 3-unit class, the 2-to-1 ratio means 6 hours of study time.) Spread out study hours throughout the week.

🔑 Use technology to make learning fun

Canvas isn’t the only online learning tool. Some classes use Zoom for live video meetings, YouTube videos for lecture material, and even online polls. And there are plenty of websites and free apps to help you learn, create, and collaborate in your classes, including Box, Evernote, Google Drive, Khan Academy, Prezi, Quizlet, Screencast-O-Matic, and StudyBlue.