

Chabot College Distance Education Committee- November 2005
Online Courses History 7 and 8- United States History surveys
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To the Distance Education Committee Members:

I have taught online courses at Diablo Valley College and Chabot College in History and Social Science. Additionally, I maintain a weblog for my other non-online classes at Chabot, Vista, and DVC for most of the classes I teach (see resume for any necessary details). I taught History 7 online at Chabot the summer of 2004, but I was only provisionally approved with the assistance of Rick Moniz as the committee had not been able to get to my materials by the last meeting and I had already been assigned the course to fulfill department needs. Given I had experience, Rick Moniz offered to support me throughout the summer and the committee granted me provisional approval. I am resubmitting my responses to the Distance Education Committee in hopes of being officially approved to teach further online courses at Chabot, namely History 7 and 8. Further, I am scheduled to teach the equivalent of History 7 at DVC in Spring of 2006. The following is a response to the checklist on the college Campus Proposal Form. Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions. Having been at Chabot happily teaching since 2001, I look forward to expanding my professional possibilities by becoming an official and ongoing part of Chabot's online distance educational community.

1. Need and Justification:

Online and additional Distance Education courses are necessary and growing trends in modern academies. At the community college in particular, these new technologies are a means by which to reach even more nontraditional students as well as students with significant schedule conflicts and personal demands. This enables the college to grow with the surrounding community and meet more of the intellectual and professional training needs of the public it serves. History 7, in particular, is taught online at Chabot by only a small number of faculty. Adding more courses and having more eligible instructors helps fill the need of an increasing student demographic using the help of technology. In addition, contingent on committee approval, I will be eager to share my experiences and knowledge with colleagues to help grow the diversity of the institution, as I've done at DVC since 2000.

2. Course Content Delivery

For summer 2004, History 7 was proposed and on the schedule as an online course only with no mandatory class meetings. I have done this before, although in the future, I would be interested in meeting at least one or two times throughout the semester for potentially more sound pedagogical basis. However, as aforementioned, I have taught all online courses with success in the past without sacrificing academic integrity. It simply requires strict guidelines and focused one-on-one and group virtual contact via e-mail, and discussion forum (synchronous and asynchronous contact several times weekly with specifically task driven interactions- described under Evaluation section of

this document). I am also available for private consultation weekly on campus in my office, in person and by phone, for those in need of additional assistance.

In lieu of using a pre formed cartridge from corporate publishers, I employ several texts to be used comparatively, CD-ROM, online sites and virtual "field trips," plus historical sources I have collected for analysis to be posted on Blackboard. I mainly use the text *Out of Many* (or similar text), used by other online instructors in history at Chabot, with companion guides containing alternative information and views less known by many students. The companions I used in the past were Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* and James Loewen's *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Students also read and understand the contents and historical context of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution using Pauline Maier's cogent analysis in an accompanying pamphlet.

Students do simultaneous reading and exploratory assignments and address specific questions to answer in essay form biweekly, as well as participating in individual and group discussions online that are closely monitored by the instructor for the recording of what I call a "mental attendance" grade. Students are required to make a minimum of two postings per week. One addresses a specific query put forward by the instructor and the other a response to other student remarks which generates debate over historical interpretations. Therefore, like my in class courses, all student work is in writing with students critically thinking about course materials and constructing logical arguments in the process of analyzing historical sources tasked with a variety of historiographic endeavors.

For example, students are required to critically examine America's past, not merely recount it by comparing and contrasting cultures and concepts of the periods and the interpretations of the several sources employed, both in hard text and primary documents posted online by the instructor.

For the summer eight week session at Chabot with History 7, I spent about eight to ten hours a week posting comments and analysis, and communicating with student groups online as well as individually via e mail concerning specific remarks about the work done. I also use multimedia sites with audio and video to enhance student learning as well as often reserve videos for students to view for additional supplemental information and perspective.

3. Nature and Frequency of Instructor-Student Interactions

I interacted with students in an eight week summer session about eight to ten hours weekly. During a regular semester, I plan to interact 3-6 hours weekly in a given course. Much of this time is spent directly responding to student remarks as well as prompting them to debate specific issues guided by the course texts and online sources. Lectures are posted in addition to reading assignments and research directives. Assignments are clearly posted at the outset of the term along with grading policies and due dates and fundamentals of online education offered to students by guiding them through the nature of the technological medium, in this case, Blackboard.

Students are made aware of Chabot's student services as well as all the excellent IT informational sites the campus offers.

4. Assignments and Methods of Evaluation

I use all the following: readings, responses, research papers, critical reviews of historical texts, online community comments in discussion groups. More specifically for History 7 and 8, students have an array of reading assignments from various sources, both hard copy, CD-ROM rather than course cartridge, and online posted resources as well as "virtual field trips" (when students are assigned to visit several websites for information regarding certain topics including museums, other college departments, academic journals, audio/video material, etc.).

The grades for the course are determined by evaluations of student performances submitted in writing via e mail and online postings in Blackboard. These assignments include student responses to questions designed to get them thinking critically about several texts simultaneously (driven by instructor prompts specifically per section and chapter). As an example or grade model, these responses are due every two weeks and constitute 40% of the grade (20pts. each bi-weekly in summer adjusted for full term courses). Another 40% is divided between discussion group posting moderated by the instructor where students must have "mental attendance" with a minimum of two posting per week (10pts. per week). One is based on instructor driven comments, the other a response to other student responses designed to generate a salon type debate online. It functions as an in-class discussion period. The remainder of the grade is determined by a critical book review due during the last quarter of the course (20pts.) which includes extra credit options for students who wish to extend the length and depth of the assignment.

Please note that ALL course information, the nature of assignments and evaluation, and due dates are explained thoroughly and clearly posted at the outset of the course. A student's first task is to, via e-mail, introduce themselves to me, their interests, why they signed on to the course, and if they read the introductory material followed by any concerns.

5. Technical Support

There are many locations where students can get support for technological issues surrounding an online course. Among the most relevant for Chabot students would be the college website technology section and Blackboard link <http://clpccd.blackboard.com>. However, the place to begin is with the instructor and on the course site which will have information readily available for students to access. This includes the rudimentary function of e-mailing the instructor or telephoning any preliminary issues or concerns about course mechanics posted on the Welcome Page.

6. Student Services

Again, the Chabot College website has the best sources available for student assistance that the instructor will post on the course website. Students are required to review all the following materials at the outset of the course. These include the

Academic Counseling Department as it is a fine place for students to begin their quest for information about academic concerns (<http://chabotweb.clpccd.cc.ca.us/Counseling>). Another site for online assistance and Blackboard in particular is <http://clpccd.blackboard.com>. For library instruction, students can access the library at <http://chabotweb.clpccd.cc.ca.us/library> and for the Reference Librarian in particular, chabotref@clpccd.cc.ca.us or by phone at 510.723.6764. Also, the instructor is available for face-to-face meetings weekly with students in need as well as by phone during the week and private e-mail anytime.

7. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Chabot Disabled Student Resource Center (<http://chabotweb.clpccd.cc.ca.us/DSRC/>) has all the relevant information students need to assess any, among a wide range, of learning challenges they may face. Counseling appointments can be made by calling 510.723.6725. The instructor also makes this information available on the course website and is available for personal contact for students in need.

8. Class Size and First Term to be offered

The course size should be the same as in-class offerings. In many cases, additional students can be added at instructor discretion as the retention rates for online courses is historically lower than the more traditional in-class method, but that is changing. Retention rates improve with experience and additional institutional and professional peer support. History 7 is already taught online at Chabot by Rick Moniz and Lupe Ortiz, both of whom assisted me in preparing for summer 2004. Further, Susan Tong agreed to act as support for me in any way if need be for the summer session I taught, but no assistance was needed. Minta Peterson and Lynn Sandoval were and are also available for consultation. Also, remember, I have taught online before at DVC and Chabot with success, so I do have online educational experience. As previously noted, I am teaching online at DVC Spring 2006.

I am eagerly looking forward to my online educational opportunities at Chabot College and await any specific queries from the committee members. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Mickey S. Huff
History and Social Science