

August 17, 2009

Dear Art History Student:

You are currently registered for the on-line Art History for the Fall semester 2009. Welcome! By now you should have received an orientation letter from Three Rivers Community College providing general information. I am writing to provide you with more specific information about this course and to invite you to preview the course website beginning on Monday, August 24th at **midnight**. Prior to Monday, the course was under construction.

Some of you may be nervous about taking an on-line course for the first time, and others of you are probably just curious about what lies ahead. I suggest that you start by looking at the following sections:

- **Course Tools** menu on your left-hand side you will find icons for the **syllabus** and **goals** (also called learning objectives). This will give you an idea of my teaching philosophy which is designed around constructivist teaching and best practice for online learning.
- **Homepage** and **Frequently Asked Questions**; located on the homepage.

Let's Get Started includes a detailed introduction of what you can expect from the course. It includes course policy on "netiquette", student and teacher contracts, an overview of technical resources, grade rubrics and other helpful information. Let's Get Started is organized as a table of contents and includes these items. Make sure to click the + and - buttons to open all the pages.

How to Do Well – In Lets Get Started review the document "Student Contract" which you will be required to submit during the orientation week (August 26 to September 6) as evidence of your readiness for and commitment to the course.

Learning Modules– the course is organized by weekly Learning Modules (with the exception of Lets Get Started, which begins on August 26 and ends on Sunday September 6). New Learning Modules will be released on a weekly basis at Midnight on Sunday. Modules end on Midnight of the following Sunday. With the exception of two Learning Modules that are open for two weeks. I often change the duration of a Learning Module or topic depending on how well the class is doing as a whole, or to accommodate the learning needs of the class – *as a whole*.

Office Hours; I am an Adjunct Faculty who teaches two sections of Art History. Although I do not have an office on campus, I do offer real-time Chat appointments at scheduled times. The Chat tool is located in the Course Tools menu. Chat works like any other chat function you might use on a

social networking sites like Facebook. Office hours will be posted the first week of class.

How to Log In; See page two below for instructions on how to log in.

Technical Help; Blackboard Vista is user friendly. We occasionally encounter technical snafus with our browsers, internet connection, or BbVista during the semester that require us to problem solve and trouble shoot. Problem solving is one of our course goals and has been built into how the course is paced. Please refer to the **24/7 Technical Support Link** on the Homepage; I am not able to provide technical support.

A note about the course design and my teaching philosophy; I just completed the nine-week professional development course called iTeach. My teaching philosophy and course design has recently undergone a dramatic Change. Traditionally Art History has been taught as a chronological sequence along a timeline from ancient times to modern (see the text book). Throughout the semester I will be beta testing new course activities (lessons) based on problem-based learning that will mix and match non-sequential art historical eras to teach you how to write about art, discuss art and analyze art.

The course officially begins with the Orientation Unit on August 26, the course is under construction until then!

A note about E-mail after orientation: The Mail tool is not enabled in Blackboard Vista. E-mail is an extremely inefficient method of communication between participants and facilitators once the course starts. All questions related to assignments and the course will be posted to the "Course Questions & Discussions" board.

You may mail me at ehall@trcc.commnet.edu with any questions or concerns. I look forward to working with all of you during the semester!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hall

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How to Log Into Art History Online

1. Enter Web Site address: <http://www.my.commnet.edu>

2. In the empty box next to NetID, input your 8 digit student I.D. number followed by @student.comnet.edu

(Do not put the @ symbol in front of the 8 digits.

An example of a Netted is 12345678@student.comnet.edu)

3. In the empty box next to Password, input your pin number, which is your 6-digit birth date (example April 15, 1989 would be 041589), unless you have changed your pin.

4. Click on Login

5. Once you move to a new screen, click on the Student tab (upper left)

6. Click on > Click Here to Access Blackboard Vista

7. Click Check Browser, which is located in the upper right corner of the screen.

Run all checks. When you are done, you may close this window.

8. Disable pop-up blockers (turn pop-up blockers off) for this web site. (If you use Internet Explorer, go to the very top menu bar, hit Tools, select Pop-Up Blockers, Pop-up Blocker settings, in the empty box under Address of Web Site to Allow input <http://www.my.comnet.edu> then click Add and click Close)

9. Click on My Blackboard Vista

Art History I Students:

10a. You should now see your personalized "My Blackboard Vista" screen. Dragging the sidebar on the right, scroll down until you see ART*-K101 11271.109111-Art History I. Click on - ART*-K101 - 11271.109111-Art History I-Art History under the course list.

Art History II Students:

10b. You should now see your personalized "My Blackboard Vista" screen. Dragging the sidebar on the right, scroll down until you see ART*-K102 11272.109111-Art History II Section Instructor: Elizabeth Hall . Click on - ART*-K102 - 11272.109111-Art History II under the course list.

