

**Graduate School Course Review Committee**  
**Recommended Best Practices**

(Created March 13, 2015; Endorsed by the Graduate Council on May 7, 2015)

**Graduate Differentiation for 400-level Courses**

Common differentiations the Course Review Committee sees and their thoughts regarding weak, unclear, adequate, and too much differentiation.

Weak: instead of 5-6 page paper, 7-8 page paper and in-class presentation is 10 minutes not 5

Unclear: project/paper is graded more rigorously

Better... separate rubric is used for graduate students (clarify the higher expectations)

Adequate:

Major project topic must be cleared with professor and expectation is to tackle a more complex issue than undergrads; grads will present a summary of their topic (and undergrads don't)

Additional project or paper that is about 10% of the work

Additional questions on exams/homework and leadership roles in projects

Research paper is expected to be longer (perhaps 25% longer), use primary sources, include an annotated bibliography, and synthesize material from sources into new conclusions

A bit too much:

All weekly posts twice as long as undergraduate, plus extra questions on exams and an extra project

**Technology Requirements - Online/Blended Courses**

Below is an example of technology requirements from a syllabus with amendments from the Instructional Design and Learning Technologies Center.

**Course Requirements**

Lectures, PowerPoint slides, tests, discussion forum questions, grades, and assignments will be posted on SIUE's Blackboard site at <https://bb.siu.edu/>. Simply click each link to access the materials. I have labeled each link and content area as intuitively as possible. For example, assignments are under the Assignment link, tests are under the Test link, etc.

Technology requirements: Because this is an online course, you are expected to have reliable Internet access on a regular basis. It is your responsibility to address any computer problems that might occur. Such problems are not an excuse for delays in meeting expectations or for missing course deadlines. Support for using Blackboard is available by calling 618-650-5500, or by visiting the SIUE web pages that provide information about Blackboard, e.g. <http://www.siu.edu/its/bb/>

At a minimum, you will need the following software/hardware to participate in this course:

- computer with an updated operating system (e.g. Windows, Mac, Linux)
- updated Internet browser (Apple Safari, Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox)

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- DSL or Cable Internet connection or a connection speed no less than 6 Mbps. A secure, encrypted Wifi (requiring a login and password) is acceptable. Note that some Blackboard components will not work properly on free wifi from places like Starbucks, Panera's or McDonalds.
- Microsoft Office (SIUE Students can now get Free Office 365 at <http://www.siue.edu/its/news/2014/09/office365.shtml>)
- any other specialized software or basic software such as Adobe Reader, Media Players, Cloud Storage, Java, anti-virus software etc. (See: <http://www.siue.edu/its/software/index.shtml>)

### **Blackboard Maintenance**

Please note that there are scheduled maintenance times for Blackboard. It is essential that you be aware of those times and make sure that you have submitted any work in progress (e.g. tests, assignments, posts to journal, wikis or discussion boards) prior to the systems being shut down for maintenance. Any work in progress will be lost when the servers go down for maintenance. Visit the Blackboard Maintenance Times (<http://www.siue.edu/its/bb/maintenance.shtml>) web site for specifics times.

### **Disability Support Services**

This is the recommended syllabi statement for all online courses at SIUE.

*If you are a student with a disability that requires curricular or co-curricular accommodations, please go to Disability Support Services for coordination of these accommodations. All accommodations are individualized and require documentation of the functional impacts of the disability and severity. DSS is located in the Student Success Center, Room 1270; you may contact them to make an appointment by calling (618) 650-3726 or sending an email to [disabilitysupport@siue.edu](mailto:disabilitysupport@siue.edu). Please visit the DSS website located online at [www.siue.edu/dss](http://www.siue.edu/dss) for more information.*

### **Faculty are encouraged to remember:**

- All online matter must be accessible to students with print and media disorders. This material includes; online text matter, reference material as well as video and audio files. ITS is a very good resource to assist with accessible online materials.
- All accommodations are valid in online courses. Testing time extensions are valid accommodations and faculty should increase testing time to double time for those students utilizing this accommodation. Instructions on how to allow a student double the time on Blackboard examinations may be found here: <https://kb.siue.edu/page.php?id=64004>
- Students with disabilities cannot be required to be proctored during online exams unless the entire class is being similarly proctored.
  - If you do not have any quizzes, exams, or finals, then double time is not necessary.

Please address any questions and concerns to DSS regarding this or any DSS matters.

Please note:

- It is inappropriate to inquire of students with disabilities the nature or diagnosis of their disability.
  - All students with disabilities are directed to show their DSS ID card to faculty when requesting assistance with an accommodation.