The University Experience course (UE 101) serves as a general orientation and introduction to graduate studies at Western Carolina University. It introduces students to the most common technologies associated with higher education, and to some of the resources most advantageous to them at WCU, but it’s most important function is to build a community of learners at the undergraduate level.

The course is 0-credit and will be assessed as Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. “Grades” will be assigned for some individual assignments to familiarize you with assessment in WebCat, which is a common course supplement tool for many classes at WCU regardless of campus or instructional delivery method (residential/on-campus or distance).

Assignments

The course is scheduled for the week prior to the beginning of classes. There are five (5) assignments: one due each day of that week. Each assignment should take .5-2 hours to complete (most can be completed in less than an hour).

Day1:

Pre-Assessment Survey (Online Student Assessment and WebCAT mail)

Your fellow graduate student community (Discussion Board Posting and Response Assignment)
Day 2:
Scavenger Hunt: resources for the WCU Undergraduate Student
(Document Attachment Assignment – WebCat email)

Day 3:
Academic Honesty
(Discussion Board Posting and Response Assignment)

Day 4:
Using Hunter Library Online
(Database Access and Document Attachment Assignment – WebCAT email)

Day 5:
Final Course Survey (Online Student Assessment and WebCAT mail)

CoursEval
(Information sent to you via your Catamount email account)

Optional

Check with your program director to see if you may be in classes that require any of the following technologies. There are optional assignments in UE 101 that provide basic information about these technologies

- iTunes assignment
- WIMBA

Technology

Western Carolina University strives to ensure that students have access to the highest quality education, taking the maximum advantage of the changes in information and communication technologies. Newly admitted degree-seeking undergraduate and all distance learning students are required to have an appropriate, networkable computer. The computer requirement includes a software and hardware component. When you click on Computer Requirements,
you will go to the Computer Requirement page. If you have questions, you may contact the Information Technology Help Desk to assist you.

• **MyCat vs WebCat**

  o **MyCat**
  
  The MyCat Portal allows you to access your student records:
  - Receiving your grades as WCU does not mail out grade reports
  - Requesting an official transcript
  - Reviewing your unofficial transcript which shows the course work you have transferred into WCU and what courses are in progress
  - Reviewing your financial aid award information
  - Accepting the charges so your financial aid may be applied
  - Reviewing your account information
  - Paying your tuition and fees
  - Changing your address information or personal information
  - Set-up your Catamount Mail Account
  - Complete the Release Form

  o **WebCat**
  
  WebCAT is WCU’s online course interface. Any class may have a WebCat presence. Some courses are taught exclusively online via WebCat, but many face-to-face courses also have WebCat materials for the course. WebCat contains an email function that only mails to members of the course.

**Email in WebCat IS NOT the same as your official Catamount Email (see below).**

Catamount Mail is the official communication method for university/student communications including messages concerning notifications and alerts as well as course information from instructors.
Use WebCat to

- Log in to any online courses or access online materials for many other courses
- Check your browser
- Find WebCAT tutorials
- Access Java
- Access WIMBA
- Access Elluminate
- Find software downloads from Information Technology
- Receive student support

- **Browser Check**
  Before logging in, it is highly recommended that you perform a browser check to see if your computer is properly configured to use the “WebCat” Blackboard Learning System.

- **Pop-up Blockers**
  WebCat sometimes uses small browser windows to deliver requested content. Some pop-up blockers incorrectly interpret small windows as pop-ups and block them. If you have installed a pop-up blocker, turn it off while using the Learning System.

- **Java Security Certificate**
  After logging in to the Blackboard Learning System, you will be prompted to accept a Java Security Certificate. You must click Yes or Always to ensure that Learning System functionality using the Java will work properly with your browser.

**Catamount Mail Account**

Catamount Mail is the official communication method for university/student communications including messages concerning notifications and alerts as well as course information from instructors. This is to ensure you get important personal messages.
When you log into My Cat, look for Email Preferences found at the bottom of the left-hand column. When you click on the link, you will see two locations for information. One is labeled Email Questions and the other is labeled Catamount Mail Setup Instructions. Please set-up your account as soon as possible so you do not miss any important messages from the university or your instructors.

Course Facilitator/Instructor

Your course facilitators/instructors welcome you to your course using the Mail tab in the course. You may have several people (staff, administrators, program directors, and faculty members) participating in your course. Each course facilitator/instructor shares some personal information about himself/herself and gives you contact information.

Remember you need to use the Mail tab within WebCAT and you need to search for your instructor's name under the list of recipients. You may need to scroll down to see all members of your class including your instructor. You cannot type in a WCU email address in the course Mail (includes email.wcu.edu and catamount.wcu.edu accounts).

Overview of Western Carolina University (WCU)

The link takes you to the main home page at WCU. You are a current student so if you click on the Current Student link at the top of the main page, you find many resources for you to use. The Learning Modules titled Academic Success introduces you to primary library resources.

Release Form

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Before any WCU administrative office can discuss most specific issues pertaining to a student’s records with third parties, we must have consent from the student. University personnel must be able to verify a student's identity before discussing the student's academic records by telephone – including conversations with the student.

- Log in to My Cat
- The Release of Student Information link may be found at the bottom of the left-hand column.
- Complete this process as soon as possible.
Overview of Your Program Page

You need to bookmark the link to your program web site. On the web site, you will find resources, forms and manuals to assist you.

Netiquette Information

These are the basics when it comes to netiquette in the online environment. You need to remember that a human being is going to be receiving your email or reading your discussion board post so adhere to the same standards of behavior online that you follow in real life. You do need to watch your spelling and grammar because you do want to make yourself look good online. Please do not SHOUT or flame people. Please respect other people’s bandwidth, time and privacy. We want you to share your expertise and knowledge so help your classmates by responding and communicating as appropriate in the course. Above all, please be forgiving of other’s mistakes and ask for clarity when you are unsure how a person meant something. We do not get the tone and timber when we type!

Expectations of Online Learners

To be a successful online learner you are expected to:

- Have the proper equipment
- Have basic computer skills (for virtually class):
  - Creating and saving Microsoft Word documents
  - Keeping your course materials in folders on your computer
  - Be willing to actively participate in online group activities
  - Provide quality and quantity responses in your course
  - Learn new technical skills
  - Some classes may require further skills:
    - iTunes U Assignment
    - Creating and saving html files
- Be self-disciplined
- Manage your time well
- Communicate regularly
- Write correctly (spelling and grammar)
- Commit the time your program requires
The final survey information will be sent to you via MAIL within the course. The Course Evaluation (CoursEval) will be sent to your Catamount Mail Account after the course has ended.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities. Students who require disability services or reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and provide current diagnostic documentation to Disability Services. All information is confidential. Please contact Disability Services for more information at (828) 227-2716 or 144