

Online courses at EOU may be different from face-to-face courses you have taken in the past or courses that you have taken at other colleges or universities. When you enroll in online courses at EOU, keep in mind the following:

1. **Online courses take as much time, if not more time, than attending traditional face-to-face courses.** While you do not spend time commuting to and from a physical location or sitting in a classroom, the time that you do spend online “in class” is significant. Anticipate spending at least three hours a week doing coursework for every course hour you take (i.e., for a five-credit-hour class you can anticipate spending fifteen actual hours each week accessing the course, completing readings and assignments, participating in discussion boards, etc.).
2. **Online courses require substantial reading, writing, discussion, and participation.** Online courses will require you to interact with both your instructor/professor and other students in the course. In addition, online courses might require careful textual reading and careful viewing of multimedia materials than do face-to-face courses. While lectures in face-to-face courses may help students identify the most important information in assigned readings, online students might need to read all course texts and identify the important information without the help of lectures.
3. **Online courses are not “independent study” or correspondence courses that allow students to complete all of their work at their own pace.** However, online courses can allow great flexibility and freedom for students with challenging schedules. The primary difference is not in the *pace* or scheduling of courses. The primary difference is that the courses are available through a different medium (online).
4. **EOU’s online courses are rigorous college courses that include the same learning objectives and follow the same schedule as their face-to-face counterparts.** Just as you would meet for an entire term in a face-to-face course, and cover a particular amount of materials, you should anticipate weekly schedules, due dates throughout the term (quarter), and regularly scheduled course activities.
5. **Online instructors or professors will be available frequently, but not constantly.** Just as with instructors or professors in face-to-face classes, online instructors have multiple time commitments and cannot sit in front of a computer 24 hours a day to respond to student questions or email as they arise. However, you should expect that an email that you send or question that you ask will be answered in a timely and friendly manner.
6. **Online courses come in a wide variety of course designs.** You might be frustrated because an online course is not “just like” another online course that you are in or have previously taken. Online courses, just like face-to-face courses, will vary in delivery, design, due dates, and instructional methods. Online courses are taught by diverse faculty with a variety of educational backgrounds, and that diversity is reflected in individual instructors’ courses, just as. Attending one online course does not ensure that future online courses will be taught in a similar manner.
7. **Online courses will require that you have access to technology that is required to complete the course.** In addition to a working computer and consistent internet access, you might need to have access to digital cameras, scanners, microphones, headsets or other tools that help you complete the course. These tools will differ by class and should be indicated at the beginning of the course or in the course syllabus. If you do not have consistent access to tools specified by an instructor, you might need to reconsider taking an online class.

An example of a rubric that might be used to mirror these principles can be found at <http://www.csuchico.edu/celt/roi/>. To access the rubric itself, and an explanation of how it is used, click the PDF to the left of the screen. The site also provides a history of the process of creating the rubric, as well as the sources consulted in developing the rubric at this site.