

Hi everyone!

I hope this message finds you all doing well physically, intellectually, emotionally and, at least at a distance, socially!;) (PIES from Chapter 4...get it?) I am writing with great news, and I know we could all use some. I have found a way that we can have class together virtually beginning Monday, March 30 at 10:00 AM using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Using this tool, which I have now set up for you to access through our current Blackboard page (link can be found on the left side of the page), we will be able to:

1. Hold class at our regularly scheduled days and times
2. All be together in the same virtual classroom in real time
3. Hear and see each other (if you so choose ~ the microphone option can be muted and unmuted and the webcam disabled if you prefer to just listen and watch class) On that note, please double check your microphone and webcam, as especially if you are a member of a presentation team, you will want and need to utilize those tools. If you would like to participate in live discussions and you will also need to make sure they are in working order.
4. Continue with presentations with the whole class able to be “present”
5. Continue to monitor attendance
6. **Important Note: The *Google Chrome* or *Firefox* browser will need to be used to access Blackboard Collaborate...others don't work well with this learning platform.**
7. If you are still working as a team to prepare your presentation, I can set up small groups in Blackboard Collaborate to help you meet and continue to connect virtually...I know many of you may be using other platforms like Google Hangout, etc. and that is completely fine, but if that would be helpful just let me know and I'll get it done asap.
8. You may go to our class Blackboard page today and see that the link is all ready for us to get started next week. You'll see it in the blue area on the left side of the main page and it is titled ***Spring 2020 HDFS 3306.002 Online Portal***. That is where you'll click to join our class meetings when the time comes.
9. Let's talk about Exam 2 on Monday when we meet...please don't stress about that
10. Screen sharing is possible with Blackboard Collaborate, so I can still share my PowerPoints and other needed links and materials as I lecture following the team presentations, and teams can still share what they have worked hard to prepare

Attached you will find our updated class schedule and a handout that gives you detailed instructions for logging in to our synchronous course sessions as well as how to share your screen if needed, etc. I want to keep this brief since this is technically still spring break for you all, but I also want those of you anxious about what your academic future may hold to have all the info that I have at this point.

In closing, I know this is not the way any of us envisioned finishing the semester, and I think it's fair and completely fine to acknowledge that we are all sad and disappointed to learn that the only way we can be together for the next two months is virtually. I'm sure it won't surprise you to know that I have had more than a few tears over the fact that I will see you for the remainder of the semester through a screen only...maybe you have, too. However, I want you all to know that I am still completely committed to honoring my promise to make our HDFS 3306 learning experience the very best it can possibly be given the circumstances, and I hope you will be committed to keep learning as much as you can as well. We can set up phone, Skype, Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate online meetings during office hours if you'd like. I am personally really looking forward to starting our class routine and very grateful that I can still connect with you all weekly using technology...even if it is not as good as having class face to face, it is still a blessing! If nothing else, these unexpected and unprecedented events have given us all the opportunity to remember and reflect on the importance of showing compassion, respect, understanding, flexibly and kindness...all lessons so related to our course and its content. ☺

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns that I can help with at this time...I'm here to support and assist you through this transition.

Take good care,

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