

READ ME FIRST TEMPLATE

Note to Faculty:

Please consider using this “Read Me First” template in your online courses. This would be the first thing your students will be reading to start their week in your class. It highlights your weekly readings, assignments, videos to watch, announcements, learning outcomes and whatever information you would like students to know. It serves as a **checklist** for students and provides them with a **structure** they can follow to ensure they are able to meet course requirements for the week and throughout your course.

Note to Faculty:

Purple text refers to the template. Maroon text below the Clean Template are notes for you to consider.

A clean copy of the template is provided at the start of this document. You may customize it to suit your needs. Explanations/suggestions for using the template are included in maroon text. Also included are Taft College Distance Education resources as well as best practices, tips and references.

CLEAN TEMPLATE:

For the First Week of Class:

READ ME FIRST (WEEKLY SUMMARY) – WEEK OF JUNE 7-13, 2020

For this week (Week 1), you will –

- Familiarize yourself with our learning management system which is what we are using here (it’s called Canvas). Make sure you go through the different features and areas in the [Virtual Tour of Canvas](#) (you can click on *Virtual Tour of Canvas* to access it) so you know where to find your class, etc. It is important that you are able to navigate Canvas effectively throughout this class. (Note: if you see an underlined phrase or word such as *Virtual Tour of Canvas as in above*, you can click on it and it will take you to the website.)
- Read Chapters 1 & 2 of your textbook (pages X through Y)
- Introduce yourself by writing an Essay and providing your
 - ⇒ Name
 - ⇒ Program you are enrolled in (for example, Dental Hygiene. Go to <http://taftcollege.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2019-2020/Catalog/Degrees-and-Certificates> for more information)

- ⇒ Your year at Taft College (1st, 2nd, etc.?)
- ⇒ What made you decide to pursue this program
- ⇒ What kind of job you would like to have after graduation
- ⇒ What's your favorite thing to do to help you relax? (e.g. listen to music, watch movies, play the guitar, etc.)
- ⇒ What are your hobbies and/or interests?

Submit your Introduction essay by emailing it to me at _____. I will post your essays in the **“Student Introductions Discussion Forum”**

Watch my video where I introduce myself in Zoom. You can find this video at <insert URL here>

Zoom is a videoconference system we will be using in this class to have live discussions and office hours. I will also use it to post some of my videos for the class as in my introduction video.

Watch my video lecture for Chapters 1 and 2 which you can find at <insert URL here> . To find my video lectures another way, go to the **“Video Lectures”** link in Canvas for each week.

To contact me, please email me at _____@taftcollege.edu. I will respond to your email within 24-48 hours during weekdays. If you email me Friday evening, I will respond on Monday or Tuesday. If you have an urgent matter, please include the word “Urgent” in your email subject heading.

I will have office hours on Mondays from 10:00am – 12nn and Wednesdays from 2:00pm – 4:00pm via Zoom. Feel free to drop by with your questions. Go to <insert Zoom URL here> to join me in Zoom.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- 1) Define the term “psychology” and share your definition with your instructor and classmates
- 2) Give two example of different types of psychology and explain what each of them mean (e.g., social, developmental, forensic)
- 3) Describe the type(s) of psychology that is most interesting to you and explain why you are most interested in it

To learn more about using Zoom, review the [Zoom Student resource](#) which is also found on the [DE Student Toolbox](#).

For the Second Week of Class:

READ ME FIRST (WEEKLY SUMMARY) – WEEK OF JUNE 14-20, 2020

For this week (Week 2), you will –

- Read Chapter XX of your textbook (pages X through Y)
- Participate in the Discussion Forum by posting your responses to questions and/or comments by me and your classmates. Before participating, make sure you watch the video on posting your responses in the Discussion Forum which is found in the [DE Student Toolbox](#).
- Your assessment will be based on you doing the following:
 - ⇒ Post a response to my question
 - ⇒ Post your own question from our readings for this week or a current event
 - ⇒ Post a response to someone who answered your question
 - ⇒ Post a response to another student's question

Each posting should be at least one paragraph long (at least 3 sentences). One-sentence responses such as “I agree” or “I do not agree” will receive no point.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

- 1) Add learning objectives here.

Notes to faculty, best practices and tips for online teaching and student learning as well as resources/citations are included below to provide background for the Template.

For the First Week of Class:

READ ME FIRST (WEEKLY SUMMARY) – WEEK OF JUNE 7-13, 2020

For this week (Week 1), you will –

- Familiarize yourself with our learning management system which is what we are using here (it's called Canvas). Make sure you go through the different features and areas in the [Virtual Tour of Canvas](#) so you know where to find your class, etc. It is important that you are able to navigate Canvas effectively throughout this class.

- ☐ Read Chapters 1 & 2 of your textbook (pages X through Y)
- ☐ Introduce yourself by writing an Essay and providing your
 - ⇒ Name
 - ⇒ Program you are enrolled in (for example, Dental Hygiene. Go to <http://taftcollege.smartcatalogig.com/en/2019-2020/Catalog/Degrees-and-Certificates> for more information)
 - ⇒ Your year at Taft College (1st, 2nd, etc.?)
 - ⇒ What made you decide to pursue this program
 - ⇒ What kind of job you would like to have after graduation
 - ⇒ What's your favorite thing to do to help you relax? (e.g. listen to music, watch movies, play the guitar, etc.)
 - ⇒ What are your hobbies and/or interests?

Note to Faculty: You can review student Essays and follow-up with them if you have questions before posting their essays in, say, a “Student Introductions Discussion Forum.”

- ☐ Submit your Introduction by emailing it to me at _____. I will post your essays in the “**Student Introductions Discussion Forum**”
- ☐ Watch my video where I introduce myself in Zoom. You can find this video at [<insert URL here>](#)

Zoom is a videoconference system we will be using in this class to have live discussions and office hours. I will also use it to post some of my videos for the class as in my introduction video.

- ☐ Watch my video lecture for Chapters 1 and 2 which you can find at [at <insert URL here>](#) . To find my video lectures another way, go to the “**Video Lectures**” link in Canvas for each week.
- ☐ To contact me, please email me at _____@taftcollege.edu. I will respond to your email within 24-48 hours during weekdays. If you email me Friday evening, I will respond on Monday or Tuesday. If you have an urgent matter, please include the word “Urgent” in your email subject heading.
- ☐ I will have office hours on Mondays from 10:00am – 12nn and Wednesdays from 2:00pm – 4:00pm via Zoom. Feel free to drop by with your questions. Go to [<insert Zoom URL here>](#) to join me in Zoom.

Note to Faculty: Feel free to change the way students can contact you and how you would like to hold virtual office hours. The above is a suggestion. What is important is that your students know when they can expect to hear from you after they contact you. It will set

realistic expectations and you could remind them about it as often as necessary. For example, you can post the above contact information for the next three weeks in your Read Me First posting.

By the end of this week, students will be able to (for example):

- 1) Define the term “psychology” and share your definition with your instructor and classmates
- 2) Give two example of different types of psychology and explain what each of them mean (e.g., social, developmental, forensic)
- 3) Describe the type(s) of psychology that is most interesting to you and explain why you are most interested in it

To learn more about using Zoom, review the [Zoom Student resource](#) (you can click on Zoom Student resource to access it) which is also found on the [DE Student Toolbox](#) (Note: if you see an underlined phrase or word, you can click on it and it will take you to the website.)

Note to faculty: list down **learning objectives** for the week such as above. For more information on Learning Objectives and Bloom’s Taxonomy, go to

- <https://ctle.utah.edu/resources/Blooms-Taxonomy.php> and the PDF version can be found at <https://ctle.utah.edu/resources/pdfs/bloom-handout.pdf>
- additional information is available at <https://teaching.uncc.edu/services-programs/teaching-guides/course-design/blooms-educational-objectives>

Note to Faculty: If you would like to have students join you in Zoom for a live discussion and/or office hours (to answer student questions, etc.), please have students review the [Zoom Student resource](#) here which is also found on the [DE Student Toolbox](#).

For the Second Week of Class:

READ ME FIRST (WEEKLY SUMMARY) – WEEK OF JUNE 14-20, 2020

For this week (Week 2), you will –

Note to Faculty: please add more activities you want students to do here and include as much details to help students follow your instructions.

- Read Chapter XX of your textbook (pages X through Y)
- Participate in the Discussion Forum by posting your responses to questions and/or comments by me and your classmates. Before participating, make sure you watch the video on posting your responses in the Discussion Forum which is found in the [DE Student Toolbox](#).

□ Your assessment will be based on you doing the following:

- ⇒ Post a response to my question
- ⇒ Post your own question from our readings for this week or a current event
- ⇒ Post a response to someone who answered your question
- ⇒ Post a response to another student's question

Each posting should be at least one paragraph long (at least 3 sentences). One-sentence responses such as "I agree" or "I do not agree" will receive no point.

Note to Faculty: as part of a weekly discussion posted in the Discussion Forum, the series of postings between you and the students facilitate faculty-to-student and student-to-student interaction which are key to actively engaging students in an online course.

By the end of this week, students will be able to:

Note to faculty: list down *learning objectives* for the week below

- 1) Add learning objectives here

Best Practices/Tips for Faculty:

As you plan for your week's activities, consider the suggestions below from three resources. These resources have a common theme which is an adaptation from Chickering's and Gamson's "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education" (**see reference below).

The Seven Principles include:

1. Encourage Contact Between Students and Faculty
2. Develop Reciprocity and Cooperation Among Students
3. Encourage Active Learning
4. Give Prompt Feedback
5. Emphasize Time on Task
6. Communicate High Expectations
7. Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning

***Chickering and Gamson's Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education - Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. American Association for Higher Education Bulletin, 40(7), 3–7*

Below are **three resources** with examples for how the Seven Principles have been adapted for online teaching and student learning.

A. Teaching Online and the Seven Principles for Good Practice

<https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/teaching-online-seven-principles-good-practice/>

The University of North Texas Health Science Center offers examples and several resources using Canvas tools.

B. Applying the Seven Principles for Good Practice to the Online Classroom

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/applying-the-seven-principles-for-good-practice-to-the-online-classroom/>

Dr. Oliver Dreon from Millersville University's Center for Academic Excellence offers additional examples/suggestions in applying the Seven Principles.

C. Instructional Strategies to Help Online Students Learn: Feedback from Online Students

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11528-017-0216-y>

Drs. Firm Faith Watson, Marianne Castano Bishop and Debra Ferdinand-James offer strategies from a dissertation study on the *Top 10 Strategies Recommended by Online Students*. These strategies include:

- 1) Availability/responsiveness : Faculty provide their availability and respond in concrete ways (e.g., provide quick response to email; be available for consultations in person, via phone or videoconference; encourage students to contact them; provide responses in class or the next day/next class as appropriate instead of longer times)
- 2) Engagement/ interaction with students : Faculty be able to competently and effectively engage or interact with students on a regular basis
- 3) Instructor feedback : Faculty provide constructive criticism or critique regarding student's work/learning activities in a timely manner
- 4) Foster interaction/communication : Faculty implement activities that promote and encourage faculty-student and student-student interactions and communication that supports a learning community among students and faculty

- 5) Instructor expectations : Faculty provide adequate criteria for completing coursework which should be precise, timely, clear, realistic, detailed, and give examples
- 6) Learning guidance : Faculty guide students in the learning process which could help them have confidence that they are on track in meeting the course requirements
- 7) Course organization : Faculty provide a clear structure or path for them to complete their course activities
- 8) Meaningful coursework : Faculty provide meaningful learning experiences/activities for students to do that support their personal interests and academic pursuits
- 9) Synchronous sessions : Faculty provide real-time sessions that support their learning experience (e.g., exchange and express ideas, clarify or review course content or topics, advise students on academic progress, etc.)
- 10) Various instructional methods : Faculty use several means to help students grasp the course concepts or complete coursework