January 5, 2015

Greetings,

You are registered for my INFS 205 online class for Spring 2015.

Please ensure that you have read and understand my syllabus, which can be found at:

http://www.utm.edu/staff/lholder/infs205/

Please note that all assignments (and final exam) will be downloaded from, and uploaded to, the SAM 2013 website. I will NOT be using BlackBoard for this class. All communications will be via email. Please be sure to include "INFS 205 NC1" in your subject line, so that I can easily recognize incoming emails from this class.

You may begin working on the assignments at any time. All are due by the last day of class (April 24) although I HIGHLY encourage you to work on them at a steady rate throughout the term. Remember you are allowed multiple attempts, so there is no reason not to get a good score on each and every one of them. I would recommend working on Word first, and Access last, although the order in which you work on the assignments is up to you.

While taking a class online might seem "easier", in reality, it is actually more difficult, since there are no in-class meetings to work on and/or discuss the material, so the task of learning and applying the skills are entirely up to you and at your speed.

Be aware that, after turning in an assignment, there is a report that is automatically generated, which tells you how to scored, and also provides links to information about each task (via the online textbook). This enables you figure out your mistakes and to re-submit the assignment (up to 5 times). Be sure to find the link on my INFS 205 page, "SAM 2013: How To Prepare and Use" for more information on how to set up and use SAM 2013.

I wish you the best in your endeavors.

Larry Holder
INFS 205
January 5, 2015

Greetings again,

SAM 2013 is an online resource for handling the Microsoft Office assignments, and accessing your electronic textbook.

First, go to this page:

http://www.utm.edu/staff/lholder/infs205/

Then click on the link "SAM 2013: First Day of Class Materials" which goes to:


Then, open/print the SAM Student Manual (it's a PDF). There is also a Getting Started video, and a Getting Started Guide (PPT).

When you are ready to create your SAM 2013 account, there is a link to the "SAM 2013 Login" on the first link above.

To complete the account setup, you must first purchase the Access Code. Note also that it will ask for an Institution Key (IKEY). For us, this is:

T2109586

Let me know if you have questions after reviewing the above.

Larry Holder
INFS 205
January 5, 2015

Remember, for SAM 2013, you need to purchase an Access Code, then go to the SAM site and set up your account (institutional key T2109586).

Once you've set up your account and are logged in, you must also remember to "join" the section -- it is not automatic. Near the top, there are links to "Activities" and "Sections". Once you click on "Sections" you will see two things below it: "My Sections" and "Join a Section". Be sure to select the proper section, which for you is "INFS 205 NC1 (21758)" for Spring 2015. Until you join the appropriate section, you will not see any of the assignments for it (under "Activities").

Once you've joined, go to the Activities List to see the available assignments, and Reports to see the results of submissions. Note that the Reports section includes a Study Guide link to provide you precise links to more information about how to do each step, which you can use to figure out corrections to your work.

Remember, the ISBN for the Access Code / E-book bundle is 9781285734255. Please be aware that, from what I've seen/heard, there are at least 2 reputable sources for this, the UTM bookstore and amazon.com. There may be others; just be sure you use this exact ISBN number. Where you purchase is entirely your choice. Be careful in your purchase -- an access code is good only once, so beware of "used" products and questionable sellers.

Larry Holder
INFS 205
January 5, 2015

Greetings all,

I want to emphasize the importance of pacing yourself in this class. I recommend aiming for completion of at least 1 assignment per week, starting with the Word projects. The next easiest would be PowerPoint. Then Excel, and finally, Access. You can do them in any order you choose, but this is the most logical progression for the average person, and the order I go with when teaching in the classroom.

I will be available for questions via email. Don't forget that part of SAM 2013 is the online textbook, and I may refer you to material in the book. Of course Google is also an excellent place to figure things out. The important thing here is, don't ask me a question until you have first tried to find the answer in the book -- I am an adjunct, which means I have a day job; I'm not just sitting here twiddling my thumbs waiting for something to do (in case you wonder what I do, I am the database administrator who keeps Banner up and running). I know a lot of folks try the projects without reading anything, but when you find yourself covering new material, read up on it first.

I will be checking on progress as the weeks go by. Everything is due by the last class day of the semester, but don't wait until the last minute to do them, or you will find yourself with insufficient time to do it all correctly, and I am not here to bail out procrastinators.

I am more than happy to answer questions regarding getting set up in SAM 2013. The sooner you get that done, the better, so go purchase your access code and get the ball rolling. I spoke about that in earlier emails.

All said and done, let's have a great semester.

Larry Holder
INFS 205
January 8, 2015

Greetings all,

To find out more about Office 365, which is freely available to you, here is the link:

http://www.utm.edu/departments/its/help/studentadvantage.php

You can also use the on-campus computers, which should all have Office 2013 installed. Home/student versions of Office 2013 are ok, except they won't have Microsoft Access when you are working on that module. The best to use is the full version on the campus computers (closest to what the textbook and SAM 2013 expects), but Office 365 is acceptable as well, and has the advantage of being available from anywhere via the web (in addition to being free to you as a student).

Remember you can find our class syllabus, as well as links to SAM 2013 and its resources, here:

http://www.utm.edu/staff/lholder/infs205/

Also a reminder that while all projects have the same due date of last day of classes for the semester, it is a good idea to try to complete at least 1 per week. I will be checking on progress.

Larry Holder
INFS 205 NC1
January 16, 2015

Question:

I am enrolled in your online INFS 205 course. I've been checking SAM daily for assignments but haven't found any yet. Have I done something wrong or have you not posted any assignments yet?

Answer:

When you login to SAM 2013, be sure you click on "Activity List". The Activity Calendar is not much help, because all assignments are due on the last day of class (you will see on January 5 that there are 12 projects assigned, and on April 24 that 12 projects are due).

When you click on Activity List, keep in mind these are in Alphabetical order. I recommend you do the assignments in this order:

WORD
POWERPOINT
EXCEL
ACCESS

This starts with easiest first. Also, PowerPoint skills share some of the Word skills, and likewise Excel and Access are more technical and have a few things in common.

Be sure to read the material for how to use SAM 2013 (there is a link to this from my main INFS 205 page). In particular, remember that after you upload an assignment (up to 5 tries), it will "auto-grade" and then you click on Reports to see the results (which show you what you missed, as well as where to go to find out more about the topic).

The Activity List also includes a link to your e-textbook... the type is "Reading" and the available is "Always". It probably shows up at the end of the list.

I highly encourage everyone to work on Word 1 ASAP, so that you can figure out the basics of using SAM 2013 from start to finish, and I can clarify anything about using SAM 2013 early on. As with the above question, I will reply to everyone so that it is beneficial to all, much as when one person asks a question in a regular classroom. I will also add this email reply to our "Notifications" document.

HTH (Hope This Helps),
Larry Holder
INFS 205 NC1
FEBRUARY 17, 2015

If you wish to work on tutorials within the textbook (for your own learning, not to turn in for credit), here is how to obtain the data files that will be referenced:

Go to our main page at http://www.utm.edu/staff/lholder/infs205/
Then click on supplemental files link.
Save the zip file to your PC, then extract it.
When asked, the password is INFS205 (no blanks, all uppercase).

Again, this is optional, and not required for doing the SAM assignments that are submitted and auto-graded.
MARCH 10, 2015

If you are working with a version of Microsoft Office that does not have a particular Theme or Cover Page, etc, just choose another one and ignore the points taken off by the auto-grader. I am aware of this, and I will adjust the points when I figure up your actual score. In general, if you earn at least 90 points or so on such assignments, you are in good shape. If in doubt, email me the report from the autograder, and I will review the specifics on what you missed.

To avoid these problems, if at all possible use the Office 2013 available on campus lab computers. However, if you use Office 365 or a personal copy of Office, you can expect some differences here and there. I would caution that you should use either Office 2013 or Office 365 (which should be at the 2013 level) and not an older version such as Office 2010. The newer version has some features that are not available in 2010.
Because of the number of folks with work conflicts, I am going to try something different this semester...

I will open the 3 assignments of the final exam at NOON on MONDAY (April 27), and leave it open until NOON on TUESDAY (April 28). That will give you a full 24-hour window to complete the 3 assignments. Note that under normal circumstances, exams are only given a 2 hour window. It is my intention that somewhere in this 24-hour period, you are able to find at least 2 hours to complete the assignments. Keep in mind that you can already be studying the steps for these assignments (as mentioned below), so when you begin actually doing the assignments, you should be able to "hit the ground running". But again, there will be a full 24-hour window of time to submit (and re-submit) these 3 assignments for the exam.

Larry Holder
INFS 205 NC1

(THE FOLLOWING WAS SENT PRIOR TO THE ABOVE)

From: Larry Holder  
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2015 10:17 AM  
Subject: INFS 205 NC1 - final exam (Spring 2015)

The final exam for INFS 201 NC1 will be online. On Friday, April 24, three assignments (Word, Excel, Access) will open up from 12:45 pm until 2:45 pm. You will complete them just like regular assignments, except you will have a total of 2 hours to do all submissions (and any re-submissions) of these 3 assignments. Like regular assignments, the highest attempt of each will count. At 2:45 pm, no further submissions will be possible. You are responsible for being at a suitable computer during these 2 hours. You are also on the honor system to do your own work with no assistance from other people (although you are free to consult your e-textbook or use Google to figure things out).

To enable you to better prepare, I have posted the instructions for each of the 3 exam assignments, as PDF's, on the INFS 205 page at http://www.utm.edu/staff/lholder/infs205

This will allow you to study ahead for the specific steps you will need to successfully complete the exam assignments. You will not have access to the actual files to edit and submit until the 2-hour window opens on exam day.

Please let me know if you have a work schedule that absolutely prevents you from taking the exam at the above time. Otherwise, please adjust your schedule, work or otherwise, to accommodate the exam.

Larry Holder
INFS 205 NC1