

Best Practices for Distance Learning

Dear GW Law Students,

As our community continues to engage in online learning, it is important to establish and maintain good habits. The Dean of Students Office has prepared this collection of strategies for you to consider implementing. You can always contact our office by telephone (202-994-8320) or email (deanofstudents@law.gwu.edu).

Distance learning is just as time consuming as in-person learning. The only “time savings” you experience should come from eliminating a hefty commute. Otherwise, the time you spend preparing for class and time in class should be exactly the same. Consider allocating any time savings to working on additional practice problems.

Establish safe-guards to promote productivity. In comfortable and familiar spaces, such as your apartment, you may be tempted to be less disciplined than if you were inside the law building. These distractions could be your pet, technology, or other people, all of which can be disruptive when you are attending classes online. To combat these distractions, set up a learning space that is as distraction-free as possible. Turn your cell phone onto ‘do not disturb’ mode, or consider installing one of these FREE Google Chrome extensions:

“Kill News Feed” - Replaces your Facebook News Feed with a message reminding you not to get distracted.

“Strict Workflow” - Blocks user defined websites for 25 minutes. Based on Pomodoro technique.

“StayFocused” - Configure the amount of time you want to spend on particular websites before Chrome blocks your access to them.

“RescueTime” - Tracks the time you spend on particular websites and compiles it into a report.

Embrace discipline and routine. Time management is as important for learning at home as it is for learning on campus. If your habit was being inside the classroom and setting up your materials ten minutes before a class began, continue to do that. If you previously had spent the time after your last class reading to prepare for another class, continue to do that. Avoid letting household daily chores impede your learning and studying. If you wouldn't wash your dirty dishes in the physical classroom, don't do it in the virtual classroom. If you are a morning person, continue to wake up early. If you find dressing professionally makes you more attentive in class, then continue to do that.

Be social, virtually. Just because the community is social distancing does not mean you should feel isolated. Utilize video-conferencing technology to continue to meet with your classmates and friends. By remaining connected while social distancing, you can continue to stay motivated to master the law.

Utilize electronic resources. GW Law is excited to partner with Wolters Kluwer to provide digital access to their Online Study Aid Library. GW Law students can now access all thirty-eight of Wolters Kluwer's popular Examples & Explanations titles, as well as other world-class study aids, through an online subscription available at ebooks.aspenlaw.com. The Wolters Kluwer Online Study Aid Library also offers over 200 videos with coverage of 21 course areas. Students have unlimited access to these resources at any time from any location. For more information on how to access the Wolters Kluwer Online Study Aid Library, please contact the Jacob Burns Law Library.

Continue to abide by the Academic Integrity Code. While your classroom has shifted from inside the law building to a remote location, you are still bound by the GW Law Academic Integrity Code. Do not let at-home shortcuts compromise your academic integrity.