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| Sullivan University Online Style Policy | |
| Writing Style | * Use Active voice * Use Present tense  (example: *Submit your paper…* rather than *The paper will be due . . or The paper is due.)* * Use more personal address of *you* rather than *students* * Minimize use of contractions * No ampersands unless part of the official citation; minimize use in paragraph text. |
| Formatting: Blackboard Items/Pages | \*Keep formatting consistent throughout course.  Font   * LMS Default font and color * No underlines other than links * ALL CAPS are used sparingly if at all * Color text and fonts other than default may be used *sparingly* to set off special items; for example, stand-alone quotations, side bars, etc. * Color alone should not be used to convey information – 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (c) and WCAG 1.1   + Replace color with icon (such as exclamation point inside circle defined as the ‘Important’ or ‘Warning’ Icon) or with cue words such as ‘Important:’,’ Remember:’, or ‘Note:’ – screen readers will read these items   Titles   * Web pages have descriptive titles – WCAG 2.4.2 * Web pages have distinct titles   Headings   * If creating a page within Blackboard: * Blackboard uses Title <H1> and <H2> in navigation, therefore a page title entered in the Name field will be <H3> in the html code * Do not use a Title at top of page unless it is an organizing subhead that would be the next level down from a paper’s title * Use Sub Heading 1 and Sub Heading 2 to further organize the content * Do not skip heading levels, but levels may be used more than once for equal content subdivisions/levels   Bullets   * Default bullets * Use numbers for a sequence or to list a specified number of items |
| Formatting | Punctuation and Spacing   * One space after punctuation marks * Double-space between heading and paragraph * Subheadings use either one or two spaces between subheading and paragraph * Periods go *inside* quotation marks   Color and Contrast - WCAG 1.4.1   * If using colors to highlight or create focus do not use colors known to cause color blindness or strobing effects (red/green, blue/yellow, etc.) * Do not use color as the only means of transmitting information - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (c) and WCAG 1.1 (screen readers do not discern colors) * Ensure sufficient color contrast between elements of the page/slide * In bar charts and other color-coded graphics use a combination of color and texture to distinguish items   Include a legend |
| Formatting: Handouts | Handouts   * For Word doc to be used as is (linked or uploaded as completed pages):   + Use a Title at the top of the page (14 pt Arial bold, 6 pt spacing before, 10 pt spacing after)   + Use Heading 1 (12 Arial, 6 pt spacing bold before and after) and Heading 2 for subheadings (10 pr Arial bold, 6 pt spacing bold before and after)   + Do not skip heading levels, but levels may be used more than once for equal content subdivisions/levels   + [Sample doc with Headings as described](https://sullivanedu.sharepoint.com/sites/InstructionalDesign/Shared%20Documents/Templates/Handout%20Heading%20Example.docx) * Discourage use of pdf format as they are not 508 compliant – WCAG 1.4.5 |
| Naming Conventions | * Weeks are used with numbers (Week 1, Week 2) – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4 * Avoid referencing chapter numbers in content—use topics instead (for example: Week 1, Introduction to Qualitative Research) * Instructional content, assignments, and discussions include titles that refer to the topic – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4 * Assignments and naming of assignments are consistent in Syllabus, Course Schedule, and Weeks – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4 |
| Links | * Use descriptive link text – WCAG 2.4.4   + For library resources, show citations (rather than link)   + Put required urls in parenthesis * Links open in new window |
| Images/Non-text Content | * Keep image borders and spacing consistent throughout course (exceptions allowed) * Use alternate text to describe relevant pictures - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (a)   + Use enough text to give context   + Generally less than 120 characters   + In BB use the description field rather than the Title field * Use null alternate text if picture is solely decoration (adds no meaning to the page)   + Not the same as having no alt tag   + <alt=””>   + Do *not use* a Title for the image either * For complex graphics use long description or provide a link to an alternative presentation - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (a) * Use the embedded math editor – WCAG 1.4.5, 1.4.9   + Do not use images of math equations |
| Tables | * Minimize use of tables for page layout   + No use of 80% tables for layout except for schedule pages   + Sometimes simple tables can be easily converted to lists or ordered lists   + If *required* use subheadings   + Div tags can be used for readability and indentations * Data tables *must use* headings and summaries to assist readers- 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (g) and (h) * Use table heading styles for table columns and rows - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (g) and (h) * Within each row use <th>Title of Row 1</th> to designate headings of rows * Use table summary to describe the table contents (see example below)   + This is more than, and not the same as, the caption   + Use captions     - <caption> tag immediately follows the <table> tag e.g.,:   <TABLE border="1" summary="This table gives some statistics about fruit  flies: average height and weight, and percentage  with red eyes (for both males and females).">  <CAPTION><EM>Fruit Fly Statistics</EM></CAPTION>  ….</TABLE> |
| Content Readability | * Unusual words are defined – WCAG 3.1.3 * Abbreviations and acronyms are defined – WCAG 3.1.4   + Acronyms are spelled out on first use * A mechanism for unusual words that require pronunciation for comprehension (such as medical terms?) is available – WCAG 3.1.6 AAA level |
| Multimedia | * Moving, blinking, scrolling content must have a user mechanism to pause, stop, or hide - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (j) and WCAG 2.2.2 * Pre-loaded animations should indicate download progress – WCAG 2.2.2 * Three flashes or below threshold – do not include anything that flashes more than three times in any one second – WCAG 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 * An alternate text presentation is provided - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.24 (e) * Provide warnings that something that flashes/strobes is coming so students can skip/not view the item   Note: Even Optical Illusions can trigger some seizures or migraine headaches |
| Videos | * Videos made by Sullivan for use in Online courses are stored on Screencast.com and on sullivanonine.net * Videos made by Sullivan may be embedded or a link to Screencast/sullivanonline provided * All videos contain closed captioning - 508 Subpart B - Technical Standards 1194.22 (b), 1194.24(c) and WCAG1.2.1 and 1.2.2 This requires funds that to date the provost has not approved |
| Course Schedule | * Course name and number appear at top of schedule * Textbooks listed at top of schedule with complete APA citation and ISBN13 number   Weekly Assignment Table   * View dates with link to calendar from sullivanonline.net at top of Due Column * Days only (omit times) are indicated in the Due column * Each week must have a title * No links to readings within the table * Due Date column uses Sunday with the exception of Discussions   + - Discussions use “Initial post due Wednesday, Responses due Sunday” * Display Total in the last row of the grading criteria table * All assignments are listed in the Course Schedule * Due days are mentioned only in the Course Schedule with the exception of Week 11 where a specific day may be mentioned   Assignment Descriptions   * Include brief descriptions of assignment categories with any pertinent directions * Minimize links to Rubrics or project directions   + Project descriptions go into left navigation item |
| Weekly Assignments Page | * + Assignments are contained in a Weekly Assignments page that includes a list of assignments, such as readings, discussions, and assessments – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4   + Naming convention and formatting for assignments – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4   Discussion 2.1 – Brief Title  Discussion 2.2 – Brief Title  Assignment 2.1 – Brief Title Assignment 2.2 – Brief Title  Quiz 2.1 Midterm/Final Exam (note Midterm is one word)   * Do not refer to where assignments are submitted * Naming is consistent throughout a course – WCAG3.2.3 and 3.2.4 * Turn on *Track Number of Views* in all assignments   Discussions   * Include discussion description * Discussion descriptions are copied into discussion – WCAG 3.3.2 * Options in *Forum Settings*:   + - If post first is desired select *Participants must create a thread in order to view other threads in this forum*     - Select to grade or not; if graded set grade points to 100   + Attach rubrics to discussion if needed     - Select “Yes(with Rubric Score)”   Assignments   * Assignment directions are not included within the Assignment – WCAG 3.3.2 * Text subheadings can be added to discussions and assignments directions * Attach rubrics to Assignments if needed   + - Select “Yes(with Rubric Score)”   + Under Submission Details: Number of Attempts must be set to “Unlimited Attempts” and Score Attempts must be set to “Highest Grade” * Under Submission Details: SafeAssign must be selected for plagiarism check if desired * Set Primary grading to Percentage, Secondary to “None” * Check “Track Number of Views” |
| Peer Review Assignments | Peer Review Assignments   * Due to Blackboard restrictions a Peer Review Assignment is set up as follows:   + First week of assignment Students upload assignment to a discussion forum where they exchange files     - No discussion is required     - Ensure discussion is assigned to the proper grading category   + The following week Peer Review Discussion takes place in a companion discussion board with the same identifying naming convention     - If review is done within the original paper the review is uploaded again to this week’s forum for file exchange |
| Assessments | * You may add a test description as well as instructions as needed in the Assignment page only unless the information is required for successful completion of the exam * Each assessment has instructions that may include content covered and time limit. The description is included on the Assignment landing page - WCAG 3.3.2  Example:   This quiz covers Chapters 1, 2, and 3 and consists of 20 multiple choice questions. You have 30 minutes.   * Tests always use a warning before time expires – WCAG 2.2.1   + Note that Blackboard automatically generates warning times based upon length of test time entered in the test options * *Test Availability* Options:   + Use the Link to the test   + Do NOT use Force Completion   + Timer: ensure settings match assessment description   + Attempts allowed: 1 (unless otherwise specified by SME)   + Turn Autosubmit on if timed test * Present test questions all at once (some exceptions allowed) * Randomize questions unless valid reason for flow prevent this |
| Assessments | **Entering Test Questions - Options**   * Question Sets or Random Blocks may be used in complex exams   + Use Question Set to groups like items together in a set that can be randomized, e.g., questions from Chapter 1 or all multiple-choice items, for ease of directions   + Use Random Blocks to pull items from a pool based on question type * Check Answers Randomized if required   + Since answers may be randomized, verbiage should state *All/None of these* rather than *All/None of the above* * Do not use Question Names   **Review Settings**   * Check Feedback Options   + Formative feedback - After Attempts are Graded: Score, Incorrect Questions, All Answers, Correct, Feedback (if any is used) |
| Gradebook | * Gradebook Center Settings are percent based   + Use a weighted column called Overall   + Total for all assignment categories should equal 100%   + Each assignment is worth 100 points unless there is a compelling reason for an alternate schema (due to using a percent-based gradebook)   + Assignments types and titles match those listed in the Course Schedule * Gradebook Center Primary Display should be set to Percent, Secondary display: None |
| Other | * SME is not referred to by name or by personal experiences that require undue explanation by someone else teaching the course |