# Welcome to [My Example Online Student Course Letter]!

I’m Jean-Marie Taylor, the instructor for this fully online course, and I’m excited about the opportunity that waits for us this semester. Let’s get started!

Are you ready for online learning? Check out this article about online learning and the characteristics of successful online learners to see if you’re ready for what’s in store for you: [http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorisals/pedagogy/StudentProfile.asp](http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/tutorials/pedagogy/StudentProfile.asp)!

I’ve provided some information below to help get you oriented BEFORE our class begins. Please read through this entire message: There’s some really important stuff in here that you don’t want to miss.

## Course Start Dates and Synchronous Meeting Times

This course is scheduled to **begin on May 17th** and **end on June 27th** (six weeks). We will have **two REQUIRED virtual meetings: Thursday, May 27th and Thursday, June 10th.** You will be given the opportunity to “sign up” for one of four possible sessions: 7:30AM, Noon, 4:30PM, or 8:00PM. For these virtual sessions, we will be using a program called Skype. More information about Skype is provided in the orientation module for our course, including information about selecting a headset for use in this course. (You can contact me in my Skype “office” any time you see that I am “Online”; when my status is set as “Away,” you can still message me and I will get back with you as soon as I am able. )

Nearly all of our interactions will be facilitated using ReggieNet, our course management system. You can access our ReggieNet course from either My Illinois State or directly from <https://reggienet.illinoisstate.edu>. Your ReggieNet user name is your ULID and your password is your ULID password. More information about ReggieNet is provided below.

## Time Requirements

To be successful in this course, you should expect to spend at least three hours per day EVERY DAY working on activities related to this course. You’ll be expected to log into our ReggieNet course at least once a day to complete assignments, check and respond to email, and to read and respond to discussion posts. It sounds like a lot, but this is an intensive (and short!) course and the time will go VERY quickly; I want to help you stay on track – if you get behind, there likely won’t be time to catch up.

## Exams

There will be three exams in this class and they will all be taken online in ReggieNet in the Tests & Quizzes area of the course; the dates that the exams must be completed/submitted are available in the course calendar.

## Getting Started with ReggieNet

If you are not familiar with ReggieNet, there are a few resources that you might find helpful provided below.

* [ReggieNet Overview for Students](https://assets.illinoisstate.edu/ctlt/Technology/Reggienet/Reggienet_Overview_for_Students.pdf)
* [Using Discussion Forums](https://youtu.be/6gDNPhw2FeM)
* [Taking a Test or Quiz in ReggieNet](https://youtu.be/YBxYGWv5VsQ)

When you log into ReggieNet for the first time (or any time you change computers off campus), it is very important that you do a **“Browser Check”** to insure that you can access the course and complete all the activities. **Note: Pop-ups must be enabled for the site** (quizzes, email, and discussion messages REQUIRE the use of pop-up windows and won’t run without them), and the file upload function requires Java. When you log in to ReggieNet, you will likely receive a “**Java Security Warning**”: **You MUST click “NO”** in order for all of your ReggieNet tools to run correctly.

For this course, you should install and use Firefox as your web browser. Firefox is a free program that is very similar to Internet Explorer: It can be downloaded at <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>. In the experience of the support people at Illinois State University, students using Firefox will experience fewer technology issues when using ReggieNet than those who use Internet Explorer. Mac users should use Safari rather than Firefox. Safari is also a free download and can be acquired at <http://www.apple.com/safari/download/>.

 If you are having difficulty with getting your computer set up correctly, you can call the University IT HelpDesk at 438-4357(HELP).

Once you have logged into our course, read the Welcome message and follow the instructions. The first course module will involve your completing a variety of orientation activities so that we can resolve any technical issues before we get into the “meat” of the course and to give you a chance to practice using a few of the tools we’ll use in this course: take a survey, post a discussion message, send an email, etc. The orientation module will be available for you beginning May 10th and must be completed by Wednesday, May 19th at 11:55PM. You must complete the orientation module in order to move on to the other areas of the course.

If you need assistance with using ReggieNet (or Microsoft Word or other software program), it is your responsibility to seek it out in a timely manner! You have a variety of resources available to you including the University IT HelpDesk (<https://ithelp.illinoisstate.edu/>). Additionally, you can get help from the online “Help” within ReggieNet and from the student ReggieNet resources page at the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology website at <https://ctlt.illinoisstate.edu/technology/reggienet/students/>).

If you need help with more “academic” issues, such as writing support or study skills, please visit the Julia N. Visor Academic Center at <https://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/help/>.

## Office Hours

I will have virtual (online) office hours on Tuesdays and Fridays from 1:30PM – 2:30PM, and on Thursdays from 7:00PM – 8:30PM. You can reach me at those times by instant messaging me in ReggieNet (using the Message tool) or Skype (my Skype name is “jean-marie.taylor”, sending me an email via ReggieNet mail, or calling me on the telephone at 438-8931! You can also set up an appointment for times outside my virtual office hours – send me an email and we can figure out a mutually convenient time and “place” to meet.

## Here’s the quick recap of what you need to do BEFORE Wednesday, June 3rd at 11PM:

1. Check out the online learning article, *Are YOU Ready for Online Learning*?
2. Watch the ReggieNet tutorials and print out the handouts, if necessary.
3. Log in to ReggieNet.
4. Complete the Browser check on the computer you plan to use regularly for your coursework.
5. Log in (go in) to our course.
6. Read the *Welcome* message and follow the directions there.
7. Complete the orientation module!

If you have any general course or syllabus questions, please post them to the *General Course and Syllabus Questions* topic on the discussion forum so that I can answer them for everyone! Here’s fair warning: If you email me a “general” question, I’ll reply and ask you to post it to the discussion forum for me to answer. “Personal” questions (and private concerns relating to your own grades, health issues, etc.) should be sent to me via email within ReggieNet.

I look forward to meeting you all soon!

Jean-Marie Taylor
Coordinator, Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology

**Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY).**