

Myths (and truths) About Online Courses

While most students will succeed in online courses, many will struggle, and those who struggle typically don't fully understand what online courses entail before they registered. Therefore, we present some common myths (and truths) about online courses:

Myth #1: Online courses are easier than face-to-face courses.

The truth is that if you believe this, you'll be in for a rude awakening. Although online courses cover the same content as their face-to-face counterparts, they require at least as much time as face-to-face courses. Typically, successful students report spending more time, not less, in an online course.

Myth #2: Online courses are self-paced, meaning that you can finish a course at any point during the semester.

The truth is that there are a few self-paced online courses at LPC, but the vast majority require you to adhere to due dates for assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. If you register for an online course, expect to finish the course on the instructor's timeline (i.e. at the end of the semester), not yours. Regardless of the course structure, online students need to be organized, disciplined, and motivated to learn.

Myth #3: There is virtually no communication in online courses, and students feel isolated.

The truth is that most online courses make full use of email, discussion board postings, announcements, chat and other tools in order for you to stay connected with the instructor and with your fellow students. Many courses even have group assignments in which students work collaboratively with one another.

Myth #4: It's easy to cheat in an online course.

The truth is that all LPC instructors have access to an online anti-plagiarism service that compares student writing to web sites and databases. When creating exams in Blackboard, instructors have such available options as randomizing questions and answers, setting time limits, and prohibiting students from backtracking within an exam. Instructors have other tools that deter and detect cheating, but we'll leave those to your imagination.

Myth #5: Students can add an online course to an already fully loaded schedule and easily succeed in it.

The truth is that students can easily add an online course, but they probably won't easily succeed in it. Research at LPC has shown that when students try to do this, they end up either withdrawing from the online course or receiving a low grade in it.