

## **Minnesota Virtual Academy Online Syllabus for Reaching Your Academic Potential**

### **Instructional Contact, Communication and Academic Support Information**

#### **Course Instructor and Communications Name: Deirdre Diggins**

**Phone #:** 866-215-2292, Opt 4, ext. 9006 **Skype name:** Deirdre.diggins

**School Email address:** [ddiggins@mnva.org](mailto:ddiggins@mnva.org)

**Email address:** [deirdrediggins@hps294.us](mailto:deirdrediggins@hps294.us)

**Class Connect times:** Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Teacher Contact Time Class Connect sessions are designed to provide instructional, academic, and social support to our students. These sessions are provided to tie the lessons within the Online Learning System and the MN standards together to improve student achievement. Class Connects sessions are conducted via Blackboard. The times scheduled for Class Connects are listed above. Attendance for Class Connect sessions is mandatory. Attendance is recorded by attending class live or by watching the recording and submitting the required documentation to your teacher.

The instructor will respond to students within 24 hours on scheduled school days, Monday through Friday, unless the teacher has previously notified their students that they will be unavailable for a period of time. Non-verbal communication is the primary communication platform for MNVA-High School teachers, students, Learning Coach, and administration. Often, the information is time-sensitive, and many items require a specific response. Most communications to MNVA-High School students will be sent via e-mail. However, teachers might use other methods such as Skype or phone calls to contact students if that method is preferred. Major projects or research papers submitted by the students will be processed and graded within a week.

**Student-to-Teacher Communications** Students may contact the teacher using the following methods: Teacher Skype Username: Deirdre.diggins

**Teacher Phone and voicemail:** 866-215-2292, Opt 4, ext. 9003

**Teacher E-mail:** [ddiggins@mnva.org](mailto:ddiggins@mnva.org)

## **Course Policies**

### **Attendance and Activity**

#### **Student Attendance Expectations Attendance Policy**

The Minnesota Virtual Academy school year is 174 days in length and students should participate 6 hours a day for 5 days a week. The overall attendance should equate to 6 hours daily; the daily online lessons would be a large portion of this overall time. Daily, teachers will verify the attendance hours and active participation in the course and document additional attendance hours spent in curricular activities outside D2L to capture a student's overall attendance. It is this overall attendance that should equate to 6 hours daily; the D2L hours would be a large portion of this overall time. For students who do not demonstrate adequate attendance

hours and active participation in their course, teachers will notify parents/guardians of the attendance concern, discuss the situation, and record an absence(s), if warranted. For students who do not show improved attendance hours and active participation in their course, teachers, advisors, and administration will notify parents/guardians of the attendance concern, discuss the situation, and record an absence(s), if warranted.

### **Absences**

Under Minnesota Compulsory Attendance law, children ages 7 – 18 must go to school every day. Children under age seven who are enrolled in kindergarten or a higher grade are also subject to the law. A student is considered absent if they miss 1 or more hours of a school day. Students are expected to participate in all classes assigned each day. Missing a class period, which generally fills one hour of school, will be reported as an unexcused absence, unless it meets the requirements for excused absences and the school has been notified in advance. A school day is comprised of the following, and missing any of these will result in an absence for the day:

- a. The scheduled online lessons in the D2L
- b. D2L lessons, equaling approximately 6 hours of school work (for full-time students) must be complete in the D2L (Minn. Stat. §120A.41)
- c. Ideally students will complete each subject on a daily basis, or as scheduled weekly within the default settings. If students wish to modify their assigned schedules, this may be done if it is agreed upon by their assigned classroom teacher(s) involved in the modified schedule;
- d. Online work must be verifiable. Work is verified by completing both online and offline activities, assignments, and assessments. If online work should ever need verification for authenticity, students and/or learning coaches must submit all paper copies of said activities, assignments and/or assessments to their assigned homeroom teacher by the due date given;
- f. The scheduled direct service instruction provided by a special education teacher, English Learner teacher or other specialist, as outlined in the student's service agreement.

### **Recording Attendance**

Good attendance is essential for school achievement and success. If your child is ill or has a valid excuse for the absence, you must notify the school by reporting it on our online e-form, posted on our school website and made available through the school advisors and homeroom teachers. Teachers are solely responsible for reporting unexcused absences. Daily, teachers will verify the attendance hours reported in D2L by reviewing the time spent on completed lessons and will document additional attendance hours spent in curricular activities outside the D2L platform to capture a student's overall attendance. It is this overall attendance that should equate to 6 hours daily. For students who do not demonstrate adequate attendance hours and active participation in their coursework, unexcused absences will be reported for that day.

### **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

**Parents or legal guardians must report all student's absences to the attendance e- form prior to the student absences. Absences may be excused because of illness, religious observance or instruction, family emergency, funeral and bereavement, or for medical, dental, orthodontic or counseling appointments. All other absences are presumed to be unexcused (Minn. Stat. 120A.22, Subd. 12). Excessive excused absences for medical reasons may require doctor's verification of the absences.**

If a student is having attendance or academic concerns, a meeting may be scheduled to discuss the situation. The school or the parents/guardians can request this meeting. Possible solutions might include: the child's participation in an attendance plan, referral to a community agency for counseling, tutoring, mediation, modification of the child's schedule, educational assessments, accompanying the child to Class Connects and attending virtual classes for one day, or referral of the child to alternative educational programs and services available in the district. If the school mandates that the student is to attend a virtual all-day work session (i.e. complete work in Black Board Collaborate under the supervision of teachers who can monitor and assist the student) and the student does not attend, it will be counted as an unexcused absence.

### **Truancy**

A student who has missed three or more class periods for three or more days is considered a "continuing truant" under the law (Minn. Stat. §260A.02, Subd. 3). A student who is absent for one or more class periods for seven school days or more is

considered an "habitual truant" under the law (Minn. Stat. §260C.007, Subd. 19). A parent or guardian must compel the attendance of a child at school pursuant to Minn. Stat. §120A.22. Failure to meet this obligation may result in legal action. In cases of habitual truancy, both a parent and child may be subject to juvenile court proceedings, if deemed necessary by the child's resident county. If the child is referred to juvenile court for truancy (applicable to children age twelve and over), the child may be subject to a variety of court-ordered dispositions, including suspension, restriction or delay of the child's driving privileges, pursuant to Minn. Stat. §260C.201.

If a student is having attendance concerns, parents may schedule a meeting with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to a child's truancy. Possible solutions might include: the child's

participation in an attendance plan, referral to a community agency for counseling, tutoring, mediation, modification of the child's schedule, educational assessments, accompanying the child to school and attending classes for one day, or referral of the child to alternative educational programs and services available in the district.

### **Vacations and Extended Breaks**

Families wishing to take vacations or extended breaks during the school year must notify either their student's grade level advisor or homeroom teacher of the absences prior to the vacation. Extended breaks must have approval from the Administration if the vacation is planned for more than three days. Failure to notify the school personnel in advance of the absence will result in the day(s) being marked as unexcused absences and subject to all Minnesota school attendance laws.

### **School Closings**

Because MNVA is a virtual school, we are not subject to school closings due to inclement weather. Students are expected to log in and participate in their daily classroom schedule, even when Houston Public School's traditional sites are closed.

Academic Support Available Each student, in addition to the availability of scheduling one-on-one sessions with the instructor, homeroom teacher, and counselor assigned to offer assistance. The homeroom teacher will be monitoring individual class attendance, work with their homeroom students to complete the PLP (personalized learning plan) and checking in with their student to provide support in terms of academics and any school related issues. The counselors

serve to ensure the student is enrolled in the necessary coursework, both for graduation requirements and preparation for pursuits beyond high school.

**Technical Support Available** If a student is using his/her home computer, the student is responsible for computer hardware and software issues. If a technical need arises in regard to course material or a course CD, the student should contact K12 Technical Support at (866) 512-2273 and the technical support staff will assist him/her with the issue. If an MNVA-HS student is experiencing difficulties with an MNVA-HS-supplied computer, the student should contact K12 Technical Support immediately at (866) 512-2273 so the repair can begin promptly. The student should contact his/her teachers and the MNVA-HS office toll-free at (866) 215-2292 option 4 if he/she is experiencing technical issues.

**Communications with Resident District for Part-time Students Format and Frequency of Reports:** The Lead Academic Advisor faxes grades at mid-semester and the end of the semester to the local school contact person, the parent and the student. If requested by the enrolling district, progress reports are faxed on a more regular basis. **Format and Frequency of Communication:** The Lead Academic Advisor phones or emails the enrolling district if any of the following issues arise:

Plagiarism Lack of Attendance Lack of Progress toward Course Completion Compliance requirements due to 504 Plans or IEPs. **Final Grades and Submission:** The Lead Academic Advisor faxes final grades within 10 days of the end of the semester unless the enrolling district has requested the grades earlier.

## **. B) Course Outline**

### **Course Name: Reaching Your Academic Potential**

Students learn essential academic skills within the context of their learning style, individual learning environment, and long-term goals. This course helps students develop habits for more successful reading, writing, studying, communication, collaboration, time management, and concentration. It also provides insights into how the brain works when it is learning, and ways to maximize its potential.

## **Course Outline**

### **Unit 1: Reaching Your Academic Potential**

Students learn how their academic potential is tied to self-awareness and learn about the role of brain development in improving academic potential during teen years.

- Course Introduction: Reaching Your Academic Potential
- Thinking About Thinking
- You Have Strengths

### **Unit 2: Your Mind and Your Mindset**

Students learn about multiple definitions of intelligence and how mindset and self-efficacy can affect behavior and outcomes. They look at myths regarding learning, achievement, success, college, and career.

- Defining Intelligence
- Urban Legends of Intelligence and Identity
- Choice and Consequence

### **Unit 3: Learning as Process and Preference**

Students learn the fundamental processes of learning within the brain, identify their personal preferences in learning, and learn how those preferences relate to personal preferences in careers.

- How the Brain Learns
- Your Own Learning Preferences
- Learning Preferences Go To Work

### **Unit 4: Effective Work Habits**

Students look at brain functions related to concentration and distraction, look at their own current behavior, and identify strategies to reduce distractions. They also identify characteristics of good work environments and design an improvement plan for their own work environment.

- Do Not Disturb! Avoiding Distractions
- Work Habits for Life
- Design Time: Your Space

### **Unit 5: Memory and Studying for Tests**

Students look at how the brain processes information and commits it to memory. They look at the purpose of testing and learn coping skills to reduce test anxiety, then create a test study plan.

- Memory
- What Testing is For
- Taking a Test? Take a Breath.

## **Unit 6: Taking Tests**

Students develop strategies for coping with test anxiety, look at different test-taking techniques appropriate for different kinds of questions and different kinds of tests, and learn about academic integrity.

- Your Strategy for Tests
- Academic Integrity on Tests
- Your Own Test Case

## **Unit 7: Making Decisions and Setting Goals**

Students learn how parts of the brain are involved in decision-making and explore the role of critical-thinking, reasoning, and value systems in decision making. They learn the processes for making decisions and setting goals and set a short-term goal identifying milestones and potential barriers. They learn that the choices they make in the short term will set the right path for life beyond high school.

- Making Decisions 101
- Setting Goals 101
- Making Goals Real

## **Unit 8: The Career Ahead**

Students learn the specialized functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain; how an individual's preferred hemisphere may be a factor in career preference; and the psychological, financial, and personal rewards and sacrifices associated with careers. They take the Career Interest Profiler assessment, and investigate some of the careers identified.

- Career Choices and the Brain
- Career Choices and Rewards
- Career Interest Profiler

## **Unit 9: Focus on Reading**

Students learn how the brain functions during reading and apply self-efficacy principles to reading. They identify habits of good readers and develop reading strategies. They read career oriented

materials in order to gain an understanding of the nature, preparation, commitment, and workload associated with specific careers.

- Reading and the Brain
- Reading and You
- Remembering What You Read
- Reading in Action

## **Unit 10: Focus on Writing**

Students learn how the brain functions during writing and apply self-efficacy principles to writing. They review the stages of the writing process, and write a mission statement and career goal.

- Writing and the Brain
- Getting Ready to Write
- The Writing Process
- Writing in Action

## **Unit 11: Focus on Math**

Students learn how the brain understands and manipulates numbers and apply self-efficacy principles to math. They learn the characteristics of successful math students and identify strategies and resources to improve math fluency. Students look at real-world applications of math.

- Math and the Brain
- Succeeding at Math
- Math and the Real World

## **Unit 12: Communication**

Students look at how the brain functions during spoken communication and compare and contrast appropriate communication styles used in different settings. They identify non-verbal factors in communication and strategies for remembering the content of communication.

- Communication and the Brain

- Communication Styles
- Listening and Body Language
- Capturing What You Hear
- You in Front of Others

### **Unit 13: Research**

Students look at different forms and purposes of research and how to determine if resources are valid. They learn how to organize and present their findings, and how to construct proper citations. They apply principles of good research to determine colleges that fit their personal criteria.

- Research and Valid Resources
- Orderly Research Means Usable Research
- Research, Plagiarism, and Academic Integrity
- Research for Your Future

### **Unit 14: Creativity and Collaboration**

Students explore creativity and effective habits for collaborating with others. They learn what it means to be a good “netizen” and analyze various scenarios of teamwork on the job.

- Creativity 101
- Collaboration and Criticism
- Teams and Leaders
- Collaboration and Careers

### **Unit 15: Academic Potential and You**

Students apply fundamental concepts of this course to their life in high school and beyond. They identify short-term and long-term goals, and the specific academic requirements to reach those goals. They also identify strengths they already possess and areas in which they could use improvement. Finally, they identify sources of support that will help them reach their goals and overcome challenges.

- The Test Case Who Is You

Students may use either a Mac or PC with the following capabilities:

QuickTime®

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this class. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Ability to use the Internet and e-mail, download files from e-mails and the Internet, and attach files to e-mails and upload files is also required.

Final Exam (Date, Time and Location): The final exam for this course is scheduled for Tuesday, January 15, 2019.

Extra Credit Option (If available) In general, there are few opportunities for extra credit in this course. An announcement will be posted should an extra credit opportunity arise. Students are encouraged to do the regular coursework, so there is little need for extra credit. No extra credit will be granted until all assignments required have been submitted with care, effort, and diligence.

## **Assessment of Student Work**

Speed: 1.8 GHz or better

RAM: 512 MB (minimum)

Disk space: 20 GB or more

CD-ROM or DVD drive

Monitor: 15-inch flat panel

Audio: 16-bit sound card

Modem: 56 kbps (minimum)

Microphone and speakers

Operating system: Windows XP SP2 or better

Microsoft® Internet Explorer version 6.0

Adobe® Reader®

Macromedia Flash™

Shockwave™

Grading During online courses, students will receive grades for homework assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, participation and other activities. Students will be able to see their grades at any time by going to their grade books. If students have questions about grading procedures, they should contact their instructors. Students are required to save their work throughout the semester. By saving their work, students will be able to retrieve any assignments in question and review them with their teachers in the event of a dispute or question over a grade.

## **MNVA-HS Grading Scale**

93-100 = A 4.0 83-86 = B 3.0 73-76 = C 2.0 63-66 = D 1.0 90-92 = A- 3.7 80-82 = B- 2.7 70-72 = C- 1.7 60-62 = D- 0.7 87-89 = B+ 3.3 77-79 = C+ 2.3 67-69 = D+ 1.3 0-59 = F 0

### **Late Work Policy:**

Late work can often disrupt the learning process; therefore, no late work is accepted. It is disruptive and works against the district's policy on college and career readiness. However, we all know that some legitimate excuses arise for students needing to turn in work beyond the due date. Extensions will be granted in advance with legitimate reasons. Communicate your need for an extension prior to the due date. Extensions after the due day may be granted, but only after communicating within one week beyond the due date with the teacher regarding an emergency or any special circumstances.

In addition, units will be closed out in a progressive manner. While lessons in those units MAY still be available for the purpose of student learning, drop boxes will not be available, and assignments turned in via e-mail will not be scored. A unit will be closed out when the class has progressed to two units beyond any unit. So, Unit 1 is closed out when the class reaches Unit 3, and so on. Exceptions are made to late- arriving cohorts from other schools. Finally, once mid-term has occurred, no work from the previous term will be accepted.

If extenuating circumstances prevent you from completing work before a deadline, please contact your teacher in advance. The late policy may be adjusted on a case by case basis at the discretion of the teacher. Students with IEPs and 504 Plans may be subject to a different policy as stated in their IEP or 504.

**Policy for Addressing Academic Dishonesty** If a student is found plagiarizing or cheating, disciplinary action will be taken. The student will be notified by the teacher regarding the plagiarism. The teacher will also send notification of the plagiarism to the MNVA-HS office to be placed in the student's file.

- First offense: the student will be required to redo the assignment. Based on the teacher's syllabus, the student's grade will reflect a reduction of points for the plagiarized assignment.

- Second offense: the teacher will notify the student and his/her learning coach and arrange a meeting to discuss plagiarism and establish a system to ensure the behavior stops. The student will receive a zero on the assignment or be asked to redo it for partial credit.

- Third offense: a meeting will be called between the student, learning coach, teacher, advisor and administrator to address the recurrent plagiarism and discuss an academic plan to correct the problem and increase the student's understanding of academic integrity.

***Repeated offenses may result in the recommendation that the student be removed from the course. Removal from a course is subject to authorization by administration and, where necessary, will result in a failing grade in the course for the semester.***

### **Minnesota Academic Standards Alignment (If no Minnesota Academic Standards exist, alignments follow national professional standards.)**

A complete list of alignments can be found at <http://mnva.k12.mn.us/page/2692>