



Welcome to MSU-Northern

Extended University

A Student's Guide to Learning Via NORTHNET

We are pleased that you are considering participating in Montana State University—Northern's NorthNet distance learning program. The information on these pages is designed to assist you in becoming familiar with entering Northern from a distance. If you have any questions, the resource staff will be pleased to assist you.

Northern is committed to serving the entire Northern Montana region, including Great Falls and Lewistown, with over 50 broadcasting sites. We are an access-oriented regional university, aimed toward helping you achieve your educational goals and building economic opportunities for our communities.

NorthNet was developed with the help of our communities, including the Agricultural Extension Service and Vision Net, a consortium of rural telephone cooperatives. Vision Net has and will continue to make considerable investments in the technology needed to provide state of the art telecommunications to Montana communities. Additionally, federally-funded grants have been instrumental to NorthNet's implementation.

While NorthNet offerings continue to expand, we believe that it is important for you to know that, currently, entire degree pro-

we serve. Most of our 50 sites offer course work that allow you to begin your college education and access various educational resources. Northern is an institution that will consider a variety of arrangements to ensure that learning experiences offer substance, integrity, and flexibility. We all want you to explore possibilities, aim high, achieve your goals, and experience life to its fullest.

NorthNet interactive courses are "distance education" courses taught over the NorthNet telecommunications system. These courses are designed to meet the needs of adults who are unable to attend classes on a typical class schedule. The courses are offered at an originating site (a specially designed classroom located at MSU—Northern). The instructor teaches from this special classroom. Some students usually are in the same classroom with the instructor. Other students are located at other sites throughout the state that are "linked" to the originating site through the NorthNet system.

In most cases, your NorthNet course instructor will be in a different location from your location, and your classmates will be located in various classrooms throughout the state. The NorthNet system provides a two-way interactive telecommunications





Welcome to MSU-Northern

Extended University

the instructor at the originating site and students in various receive sites. “Two-way interactive” means that, when you are at any of the NorthNet sites, you can see and hear people at all the other sites. It is like being in the same room, except that they are miles away. At any time, you can see only one site at a time on the television monitor at your site.

Participating in a distance education class requires students to use some special strategies in order to get the best possible learning experience. These strategies are as follows:

- Obtaining course materials;
- Participating in class discussions;
- Promoting maximum teacher-student interaction during class;
- Taking tests; and,
- Completing and submitting distance learning assignments.

Obtaining course materials. Course handouts will either be mailed to you in advance, or distributed in class by a site facilitator.

Participating in class discussions. While your instructor may be at a different site than you are, during class you will be able to see and hear her or him just as if you were in the same room. You can ask questions or make comments at any time by

simply speaking into the microphone. When you get to the site, your site facilitator will give you instructions on how to use the microphones. Class discussions in NorthNet courses may be slightly more formal—that is, directed by the instructor—than in traditional courses. The instructor may assign specific discussion topics in advance, and will probably call on each site in turn. Be sure to identify yourself when you begin speaking, and to use your microphone correctly.

Promoting maximum teacher-student interaction during class. Although NorthNet may seem strange in some ways, remember that you are participating in an exciting new technology. You will be able to learn and communicate without extra driving and time away from your home or job. Your instructor will do everything he or she can to make distance learning a productive and comfortable experience for you. Suggestions for how you can help include the following:

- You can expect the instructor to establish audio contact with your site at the beginning of each class. If this does not occur, call the MSU—Northern NorthNet Control Room at 265-4127.
- Identify yourself when you are speaking and asking questions. Stating your name and your location (site) is helpful to the instructor.





Welcome to MSU-Northern

Extended University

- If you do not receive a verbal response from the instructor when you ask a question, try to get her/his attention.
 - Since you are located some distance from the instructor, you may find it more difficult to interact with fellow students and with the instructor. Be sure to persist in getting an answer to your questions and in expressing your views.
 - Try to find another student at your site with whom to work both inside and outside of class. This will make it easier for you both to get the necessary work done.
 - Remember students at other sites may overhear and be distracted by any conversations you have with classmates during class. Avoid talking, or speak in whispers if necessary, unless you wish your communication to be broadcast to all participants.
 - If only a few students are at your site, please sit together in the middle of the classroom so that camera movements can be kept to a minimum.
 - Classes may be videotaped and may be available for checkout. Check with your instructor to see what provisions have been made for videotaping your class sessions.
 - If you notice any problems, please notify the instructor immediately so that the problem can be addressed as soon as possible.
- Taking tests.** Most of your examinations will be given in class. However, some may be take-home examinations, and still others may require a proctor to monitor your examination. The extended course syllabus will give you information about the testing procedures for your specific course.
- Completing and submitting distance learning assignments.** Some suggestions to help you be most efficient and effective in doing your assignments are as follows:
- Use resources in your local community as much as possible for completing your assignments.
 - Do not get behind in your assignments. When you are at a distance from your instructor, catching up is difficult.
 - Investigate library resources early in the term, so that you may reserve needed materials or order them through interlibrary loan well in advance.
 - Complete your assignments with careful attention to completeness and quality, but in a timely manner.
 - Be sure to make a duplicate copy of any assignments you submit, particularly if you mail them. The instructor cannot be responsible if an assignment is lost in the mail.
 - Make sure that your assignments are submitted by the deadline established by the instructor.

