

Here's a sample letter to all the students. All additional comments will be marked by []'s.

February 25, 2007[current date]

Dear Student [each letter will be individually addressed],

Welcome to Photo Retouching with Photoshop [course title]! I'm glad that you've decided to take this class and look forward to working with you for the next few weeks [or however long the course will be]. You will develop technical skills needed to edit digital photos in this class and will become proficient with the basic editing features in Photoshop. This letter will provide you with a brief introduction about me and the course.

[This is just a short introduction. Depending on the course and audience, I would adjust accordingly] My name is Michael Kung, and I am a MAE student at the University of Florida. I have worked with Photoshop for 9 years and have taught this course numerous times. I'll do my best to anticipate any questions you might have and address them in the lesson, but if you don't understand anything during any part of the lesson, just contact me. It gets lonely sitting in my office, so any emails are always welcome ;-) In addition to Photoshop, I'm a big fan of technology. I always do my best to keep up to date with the latest programs and gadgets.

If this is your first online course, you might have some anxieties about how an online course works. Don't worry – it's quite simple. First just go to the course website at <http://plaza.ufl.edu/mkung/retouch/> [or log in depending on if/what type of course management system I'm using]. Here you can access the different class sessions and download our syllabus, course manual, class files, and additional resources. Carefully read through the syllabus! It will tell you what you need to do for the course.

If you are still really uncomfortable with the idea of an online course, you can try taking a short quiz located here: <http://eli.nv.cc.va.us/eliforme/deforme.asp> . This will test to see if distance education is right for you. After you take this quiz, we can discuss the results and determine what we should do. I'll do my best to help you and make sure you're satisfied with the course!

Next, I would like to provide you with some tips on how to be a successful online student. [this is also simplified – it could be changed based on the type of class and type of course]

- Remember that how much you get out of a course depends greatly on how much you put in. If you choose not to do the work, you will not gain a full understanding of the course materials.
- Don't procrastinate. It's quite easy for you to think, "I can put this off until tomorrow" because time limits are not strictly enforced. If you pace yourself, you will not be overwhelmed by the amount of work in the class. Make sure you set a certain time each week to complete an assignment.
- Join the community. Make friends in the forum and keep in touch with me. You'll feel less isolated if you feel comfortable with the class. You will have plenty of people willing to help you.
- Stay motivated and committed. You've made the choice to take an online course so do your best to complete the course. Do it because you want to and not because you're forced to.

I hope this letter has made you feel welcome and helped allay some of your anxieties about this course. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I check my email regularly so you can expect a reply within 24 hours! 😊

Sincerely,  
Michael Kung

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