

Surviving College

Lessons from a Lifelong Learner

Mark Olson, Grantham University



SURVIVAL GUIDE

FOR ONLINE STUDENTS

Ashley Page, Grantham University

Textbook for GU101

Updated December 2017

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Welcome to Grantham University! Congratulations on starting the path to reach your educational goals!

Being an online college student can be challenging. We are here to help you succeed.

In this document, we have collected various resources and tips to help you navigate through your college journey.

Please remember that you are always encouraged to reach out to your Student Advisor and your instructors with any questions.

Let's start with some basic information you need to know.

Technical Requirements

The Grantham University catalog states:

Grantham University provides limited technical support for course related software applications and online resources.

This requires that the student's computer meet the following minimum technical requirements.

COMPUTER HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS – OPERATING SYSTEM:

- Windows 7, 8, 8.1, or 10
- Broadband internet connection 1Mbps or faster
- Java 7 (or higher)
- Acrobat Reader version 2015 (or higher)
- Adobe Flash Player version 19 (or higher)
- Internet Explorer 9 (or higher) or Firefox v31 (or higher) or Chrome 36 (or higher)

Macs are capable of navigating Grantham's web-based applications; however, Grantham cannot guarantee full functionality. The student is ultimately responsible for remedying any incompatibilities between the Mac platform and the Grantham online learning environment. Several courses require the installation of third-party software. This software may or may not be compatible with Macs. It is the student's responsibility to run the software on a compatible platform.

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GID

Once you register and enroll in classes you'll be given a Grantham Student ID, or GID. Keep track of your GID and memorize it if you can! When you contact your Advisor or Instructor you'll need to provide this number. This helps verify your student identity. It's a way of protecting you.

You can always find your GID on the G-LIFE page, in the middle column, in "Student Center."

STUDENT CENTER

GID: G [REDACTED]

Open Full View

Course	Credit Hours	Instructor	Grade
--------	--------------	------------	-------

Active Courses Start Date: Term:
There are no Active Courses

Future Courses
There are no Future Courses

Planned Courses
There are no Planned Courses

Recently Completed Date: Term:
There are no Recently Completed Courses

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G-LIFE

Glife is the portal (website) you use to access just about everything you need while you are a student at Grantham University.

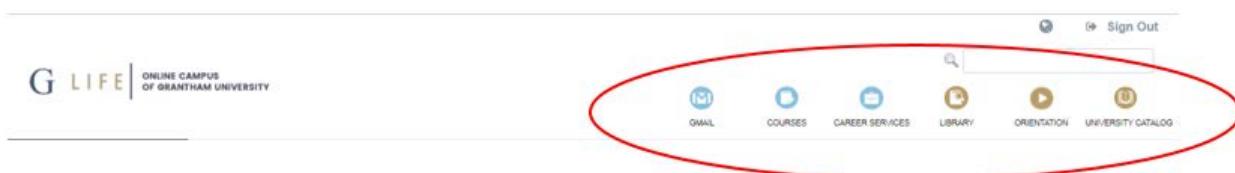
The URL for G-LIFE is: <https://glife.grantham.edu/>

Here is a quick tour of G-LIFE. On your screen, GLIFE consists of five areas:

1. **Top ribbon**. The top ribbon contains links to Gmail, Courses, Career Services, Library, Orientation, and the University Catalog.
2. **Left sidebar**. The left sidebar is dark blue, with links to Home and News & Events.
3. **First column**. The first column contains tiles for Contact Information, Password Management, Payments, Account Status, Student Connections, and Voter Registration.
4. **Middle Column**. The middle column contains tiles for My E-mail, Student Center, and Textbooks and Gear.
5. **Right Column**. The right column contains tiles for Announcements (university-wide, which are different from those you will find in your course announcements); Quick Links, and Grantham University governance information.

Now we will explore each area.

The GLIFE top ribbon:



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GMAIL

Don't miss important information! Your Student Advisor or Instructor will reach out to you through your Grantham email. It's important to check your email ---- and to check it often!

From the G-LIFE page, click on the GMAIL link:



TIP: Set up your smart phone to receive Grantham emails (remember that your Grantham email is actually a Gmail account).

TIP: You can forward Grantham (Gmail) emails into another email account. For instance, if you regularly check a yahoo or work-related email account, you can have Grantham University emails sent to that account.

Here's how to Forward Grantham GMAIL to another email account:

Click on the little gear icon in the top right corner of your Gmail screen:



Select "Settings" from the dropdown menu.

Select the "Forwarding and POP/IMAP" tab at the top of the screen, then follow the instructions to send Grantham Gmail to your other email account.

Settings

General Labels Inbox Accounts Filters and Blocked Addresses Forwarding and POP/IMAP Add-ons Chat Labs Offline Themes

Forwarding: Learn more Tip: You can also forward only some of your mail by [creating a filter!](#)

POP Download: Learn more
 1. Status: POP is disabled Enable POP for all mail Enable POP for mail that arrives from now on
 2. When messages are accessed with POP
 3. Configure your email client (e.g. Outlook, Eudora, Netscape Mail) [Configuration instructions](#)

IMAP Access: (access Mail from other clients using IMAP) Learn more
 Status: IMAP is disabled Enable IMAP Disable IMAP

 Configure your email client (e.g. Outlook, Thunderbird, iPhone) [Configuration instructions](#)

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Google Hangouts

You can initiate a Google Hangout, which is a real-time communication feature (video call, phone call or messaging). This is a great way to contact your instructors or classmates.

When you are in Gmail, click on the icon that consists of nine little white squares in the top right corner of the screen:



From that dropdown menu, select “Hangouts”



Hangouts

This will open a screen that allows you to select the person you want to contact, and the mode of communication (video call, phone call, or messaging).

For more information on Google Hangouts, click [here](#) to access the website “Get Started with Hangouts”:

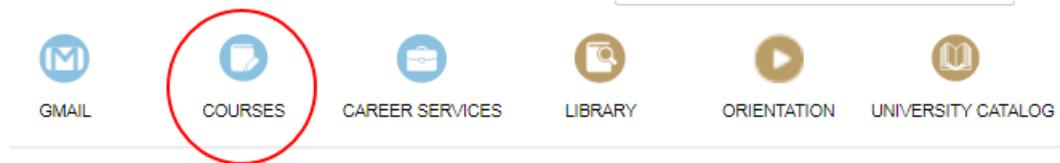
<https://support.google.com/hangouts/answer/2944865?co=GENIE.Platform%3DDesktop&hl=en>

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Blackboard

Your courses are offered through an LMS (learning management system) called Blackboard.

You can access your courses through the “Courses” link in the top ribbon of GLIFE.



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Course ID, Name and Section

In every online course you'll see the course ID, name and section in the top left corner. An example is shown below.



Course ID: CO101

Course Name: Intro to Public Speaking

Course Date: 05-JUL-17 – 29-AUG-17

Course Section: 27015

TIP: When emailing your Instructor, you'll need to include your name, GID, course ID and section number.

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Technical Difficulties in Courses

If you experience a problem with one of your courses, please notify your instructor immediately.

This may include issues such as clicking the wrong button when submitting assignments, or experiencing a loss of internet service during an exam or quiz. Sometimes it seems that Blackboard has a mind of its own, and you are not sure why it is acting up! Please reach out to your instructor or student advisor immediately so our technical support can resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

One common issue is the choice of internet browser. For best results, it is recommended that you use either Firefox or Chrome.

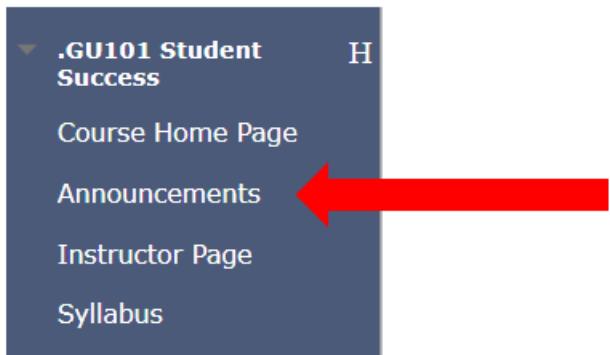
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Announcements (in Courses)

Course announcements are a way for your instructor to share valuable information with you. Pay attention to these!

They will include tips and details for what your instructor is looking for in your assignments. This is your key for survival success in a course. Plus it gives you an insight to your instructor's personality and way of teaching.

To view these announcements click on the 'Announcements' link in the left sidebar of your courses.



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Discussion Forum

Discussions, or weekly discussion boards, will be in each of your online courses here at Grantham. Each discussion board will have a prompt (question) for you to ponder. You will submit an initial post (your response to the prompt or question for the week).

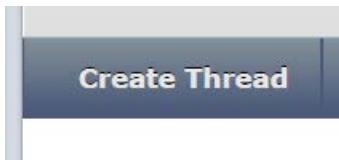
[W1 Discussion \(Click Here\)](#)

Enabled: Statistics Tracking



Complete Your Weekly Discussion Board by Sunday

When you enter the discussion forum, you will click "Create Thread" to submit your initial post.



Your initial post is due by Sunday of each week. Be sure to check the discussion forum again before 11:59 p.m. (Central time) Tuesday so that you can provide your follow up posts to at least two of your peers (or your instructor).

Why do we have discussions? Discussions encourage you to apply real life examples to the things you've learned in the course that week. It's a way of opening up a conversation about what you've learned. This helps you gain other perspectives pertaining to the learning materials.

Dr. Athena Kennedy describes the purpose of discussions in her blog post:

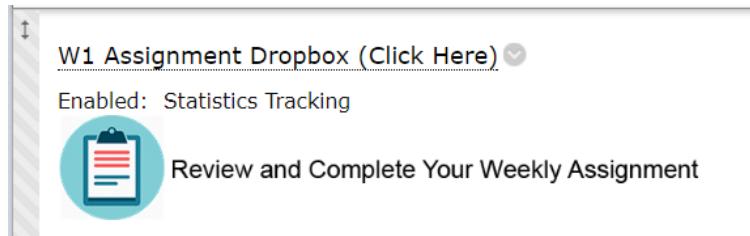
<http://blog.online.colostate.edu/blog/online-education/tips-for-online-students-participating-in-class-discussions/>

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Assignments

Each week you will have at least one assignment to submit.

In the "Weekly Content" folder, you will see the link to the Assignment Dropbox.



A screenshot of a digital interface showing a "W1 Assignment Dropbox (Click Here)" button. Below it, a message says "Enabled: Statistics Tracking". To the left is a circular icon containing a clipboard icon. To the right is the text "Review and Complete Your Weekly Assignment".

You may prepare your assignments in a Word document. Sometimes, you will be asked to submit an Excel document, PowerPoint presentation, or perhaps even a video recording. These can all be submitted through the Dropbox.

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Submitting Assignments (Assignment Dropbox)

Once you click on the link to the Assignment Dropbox, you will see something like what is pictured below.

Be sure to check out the grading rubric.

To see what the assignment actually entails, click on the links for either "another browser page" or "PDF format."

Points Possible
100

[View Rubric](#) 



Review and Complete Your Weekly Assignment

Here are links to your week 1 assignment details:

- View W1 Assignment details in **another browser page** ([click here](#))
- Or, download W1 Assignment details in **PDF format** ([click here](#))

After you have completed your assignment, title your file(s) with: CourseID_LastName_W1Assignment (ex. GU101_Smith_W1Assignment)

Attach your assignment file(s) to this dropbox, and press Submit.

As you keep scrolling down the page, you will see how to submit your work.

In the box that says “Attach Files,” click “Browse My Computer.”

See the image below:

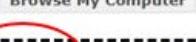
ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION

Text Submission 

Write Submission

Attach Files 

SafeAssign accepts files in .doc, .docx, .docm, .ppt, .pptx, .odt, .txt, .rtf, .pdf, and .html file formats only. Files of any other format will not be checked through SafeAssign.

Browse My Computer  Browse Content Collection

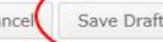
Plagiarism Tools

I agree to submit my paper(s) to the Global Reference Database 

ADD COMMENTS

Comments

When finished, make sure to click **Submit**.
 Optionally, click **Save as Draft** to save changes and continue working later, or click **Cancel** to quit without saving changes.
 You are previewing the assignment - your submission will not be saved.

Text Submission: Write Submission

Clicking on “Write Submission” opens a textbox where you could type in your assignment.

TIP: DON’T copy and paste your documents into this section! If you do submit in this area, you will be asked to re-submit your papers in the ‘attach files’ section.

[Attach Files](#)

Click on “Browse My Computer” and find your assignment.

By attaching your files here, your instructor can give personalized feedback on your papers. You’ll see the feedback as comments to the right side of your paper.

[SafeAssign](#)

SafeAssign is an anti-plagiarism program in Blackboard.

Through this program, you and your instructor will be notified of instances in which your submitted assignment contains material that exists elsewhere, and is attributed to someone else.

You will see a report that indicates what percentage of your work was found elsewhere.

You’ll see a brief comment that “SafeAssign accepts files: .doc, .docx, .docm, .ppt, .pptx, .odt, .txt, .rtf, .pdf, and .html”.

These are the files generally accepted for your online courses.

However, your instructors may want a specific file (such as .doc or .docx instead of .pdf).

Look in the course announcements or assignment details for acceptable file formats.

[Plagiarism Tools: Global Reference Database](#)

After uploading, you must click “I agree to submit my paper(s) to the Global Reference Database”. This part is required for EVERY submission or you’ll be asked to re-submit the paper.

[Add Comments](#)

The add comments section is where you can include notes to your instructor.

[Save As Draft](#)

This option will only save your submission in case you need to come back to it later.

It will not submit the assignment for it to be graded.

If you click “Save As Draft” your Instructor will only see ‘in progress.’

[Submit](#)

You will still need to finalize the submission by clicking “Submit.”

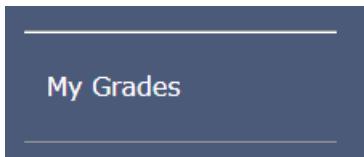
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Feedback from Instructors (on Assignments)

Submitting your assignments is only half the battle of surviving an online course. In order to grow we must receive feedback.

Reading feedback is your key to success in the classroom! Don't just look at the grade you receive. Look past the grade and consider the feedback from the Instructor.

Many students forget to look back at the feedback they receive from instructors. This can be fatal to your grade! To find feedback, click on "My Grades" in the left sidebar of any of your courses:



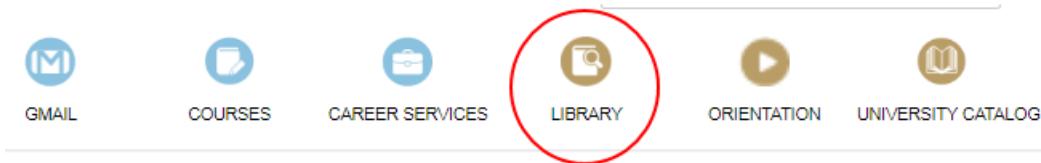
Survival Tip: Don't let grades define you, take the feedback and learn from it!

Your instructors take time to give comments on your papers. This will help you improve your future assignments and apply the material you're learning in that course.

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Library - EBSCOhost

Grantham also has a library, EBSCOhost, where you can access the database to gather articles and research for papers you're writing. This is available from the G-LIFE top ribbon.



Below, you will see the launching page for exploring our online library.

LIBRARY

Home Community / Home / Library

EXTERNAL LIBRARY RESOURCES

EBSCOhost Click Here to Begin

GALE Criminal Justice Collection

IEEE

Library Support

✉ library@grantham.edu

* If you are experiencing problems with the link above try copying and pasting the email address into the recipients of your mail client.

- For most of your library research, you will use EBSCOhost.
- If you are studying Criminal Justice, you will use the Gale Criminal Justice Collection.
- If you are studying any technology program, you will use IEEE.

Please note that there is an additional way to access the library while you are in your courses. When you are “in your courses,” you are inside the LMS (learning management system) called Blackboard.

Blackboard also has a ribbon across the top of the screen with links to resources:



Clicking on the Library link from the Blackboard ribbon takes you to a page with much more information.

Take a look at the left sidebar in the Library Resource Center (see below).

▼ **Library Resource Center** H

- [Home Page](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Grantham Library Website Resources](#)
- [Grantham Library Program Specific Websites](#)
- [EBSCO Tutorial](#)
- [Discussions](#)
- [Tools](#)
- [Help](#)

On the right side of the screen, you will also see the links to the three databases on the Library Resource Page.

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Resources



* Links Open in a new window *

Watch a short video about how to search for material in the online library EBSCOhost:

http://support.ebscohost.com/training/flash_videos/intro_to_ehost/intro_to_ehost.html

Or, follow the five steps listed below to conduct a search in EBSCOhost: (Continue on next page)

Step One: Click on the image of EBSCOhost



Step Two: Click on 'EBSCOhost Research Databases'.

GRANTHAM UNIVERSITY



EBSCOhost Research Databases

CINAHL Plus with Full Text



Step Three: Choose your database. This step is important! Under the "Continue" button first click 'Select/Deselect all' to highlight all of the databases. This will give you a wider search.

Continue

Select / deselect all Note: Selecting all databases for search may result in slow response time.

Academic Search Complete

Academic Search Complete is the world's most valuable and comprehensive scholarly, multi-disciplinary indexing and abstracts for more than 12,500 journals and a total of more than 13,200 publication native (searchable) PDF format. Searchable cited references are provided for more than 1,400 journals.

[Title List](#) [More Information](#)

Business Source Complete

Business Source Complete is the world's definitive scholarly business database, providing the leading scholarly journals in business and management. Over 1,700 journals are included, with coverage extending back to 1886. In addition, searchable cited references are provided for more than 1,400 journals.

[Title List](#) [More Information](#)

Regional Business News

This database provides comprehensive full text coverage for regional business publications. [Regional Business News](#) Click here for a complete title list. Click here for more info.

[Title List](#) [More Information](#)

eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost)

This growing subscription package contains a large selection of multidisciplinary eBook titles representing nearly 1,000 titles. This package ensures that users will have access to information relevant to their research needs.

Step Four: Enter key words (such as “global warming”) in the search bar. Then click search!



Step Five: Go to left-hand side of the screen. You'll see a ‘Limit To’ section. Select ‘Full Text’ and ‘Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals’. Many of your assignments may require peer reviewed articles.

Select the date you want (some assignments will require research no older than 10 years).

Then select the “Source Types” – for college level papers, select “Academic Journals.”

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Limit To

- Full Text
- References Available
- Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals

2007 Publication Date 2017

[Show More](#)

Options set

Source Types

- All Results
- Academic Journals (5,944)
- Journals (5,944)
- Reviews (147)
- Magazines (27)

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Google Scholar

If you are struggling to find the research you want from Grantham's library (EBSCOhost) you can also try an outside resource: Google Scholar.

A word of caution: many of the articles found on Google Scholar are not free of charge – you may be asked to pay for the download.

Click here to access Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/>

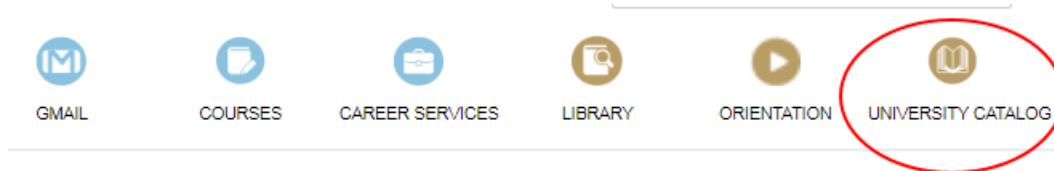


Articles (✓ include patents) Case law

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University Catalog

The catalog is a valuable resource – almost like a contract which outlines the policies of the University, along with the information about the courses and programs of study.



Here is the URL to access the catalog: <https://www.grantham.edu/m/catalog.pdf>

A new volume of the catalog is printed each year; but, we also update the catalog throughout the year, issuing an “addendum” as needed. The addendum appears at the beginning of the PDF document, so you will be aware of the changes that occur.

When you first enroll with the University, you “enter” under a “catalog year.” So if you started taking classes in September of 2017, you entered under the 2017-2018 catalog year (volume 29). We will adhere to these policies and programs of study until you either:

1. stop out for a significant length of time (365 days or more) and must be re-admitted (you’ll “enter” under a new catalog year)
2. or until you graduate (if you are continuously enrolled).

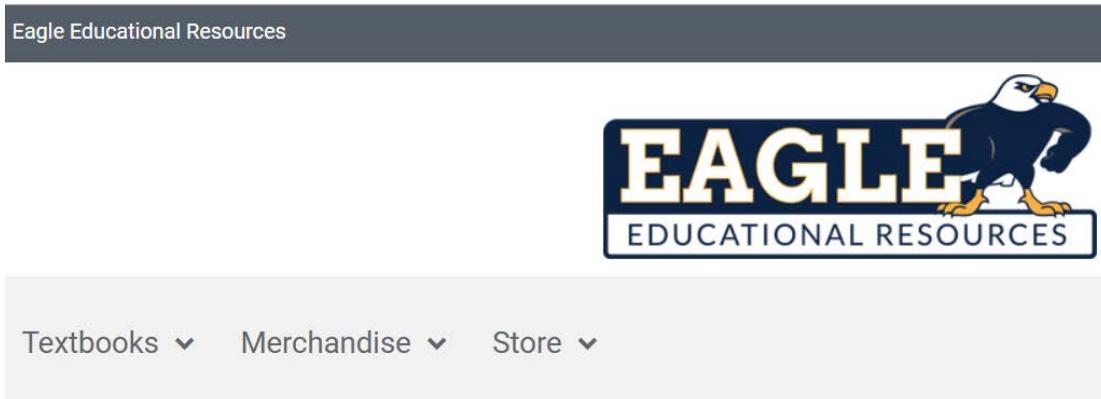
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Bookstore – Eagle Educational Resources

One resource you’ll use often is the Grantham bookstore. This is where you can order textbooks for your courses. The link to the Bookstore is in the middle column of G-LIFE.

A screenshot of the Grantham Bookstore website. At the top, there's a dark grey header bar with the text "TEXTBOOKS AND GEAR". Below it is a blue banner with the text "CONNECT WITH GRANTHAM" and social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and a magnifying glass. Underneath is the "EAGLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES" logo, featuring a stylized eagle. Below the logo, the text "GET YOUR TEXTBOOKS AND EXCLUSIVE GRANTHAM GEAR" is displayed, followed by a blue button with the text "SHOP NOW".

Here you'll be able to purchase more than just textbooks—you can purchase Grantham t-shirts and gear to show your Grantham pride!



To order textbooks click on ‘Textbooks.’

A dropdown menu will appear, with the option to “Buy Textbooks.” Select that option.

On the next screen, you will see “Find It, Add It, Buy It”

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Find It > Add It > Buy It

Not sure what to do? Click for instructions.

Grantham University textbooks

1. Select a Campus Term

2. Select a Department

3. Select a Course

4. Select a Section

ADD COURSE TO LIST

You'll be asked to enter the campus term, department, course and section number.

Campus Term: Consists of the year (2017) and the week of the year (01 through 52). For example, 201802 is the campus term for week 2 of the year 2018.

Department: These are the departments for courses. For example, ACC is the prefix for all Accounting courses; AH is the prefix for all Allied Health courses.

Course: This box will be populated with the courses that are offered, based on the campus term and the department you selected.

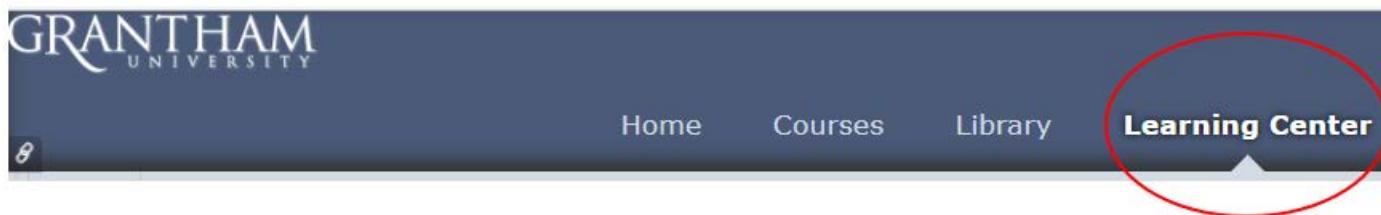
Section: The default is “ALL.”

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Tutoring

Tutoring is available for math, writing, computer science, accounting, and engineering.

From the top ribbon in Blackboard, click on “Learning Center.”



From the Teaching and Learning Center home page, you can request a tutor:

The screenshot shows a web page titled 'Tutor'. The main content area has a light blue header with the word 'Tutor' in bold. Below this, the text 'Need a Tutor?' is displayed in bold. A paragraph explains that the center provides individualized tutoring in most subjects for undergraduate and graduate students who need additional assistance with their course work. It encourages users to complete a form below. A link 'Tutor Request Form' is provided. At the bottom, there is information about live chat, including a link 'Writing Center Live Chat'.

Make sure you schedule tutoring appointments several days before your assignments are due.

We provide a wide range of academic assistance (see image below):

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Just take a look at all the resources available to you in the Teaching and Learning Center:

- [Academic Skills](#)
- [Academic Success Workshops](#)
- [Accounting Resources](#)
- [Additional Resources](#)
- [Business Resources](#)
- [Computer Science Center](#)
- [Engineering Center](#)
- [Library Resources Center](#)
- [Life and Study Skills](#)
- [Math Center](#)
- [Technology Skills](#)
- [Writing Center](#)
- [Writing Skills](#)
- [Military & Veterans Resources](#)

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Microsoft Office 365

Don't have Microsoft Word on your computer? Not to worry! As a Grantham student, you have access to Microsoft Office 365, which includes Microsoft Word (for writing papers), Microsoft PowerPoint (for presentations) and much more.

In G-LIFE, scroll down the right hand side of your screen until you see 'Quick Links,' then click on 'Office 365.'

QUICK LINKS

General

 Getting Started - Orientation Videos

 Blackboard Learn

 Book Buy Back

 Microsoft Imagine

 Office 365

 Term List

 Student Tech Support

Microsoft Imagine

You'll also have access to 'Microsoft Imagine' through Quick Links as well.

Microsoft Imagine provides other software needed for some of the courses you may take here. For example, computer science students will need to download special software programs through Microsoft Imagine. Our students studying Project Management go through Microsoft Imagine to obtain the software "MS Project."

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Keyboard Shortcuts

Shortcut keys are a quick way to access or do things from your computer.

Shortcuts are commonly used by pushing one, two, or three buttons on your keyboard at once. This is much quicker than moving your mouse around the screen and right clicking.

Here is a video to show you how to do this on a PC:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g579hBiUVWI>

Here is a video for those who use Apple computers:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLVZr175R_s

Try these keyboard shortcuts:

Ctrl + C (or Ctrl + Insert)	Copy the selected item
Ctrl + X	Cut the selected item
Ctrl + V (or Shift + Insert)	Paste the selected item
Ctrl + Z	Undo an action
Ctrl + S	Save an action
Ctrl + Y	Redo an action
Ctrl + F	Find a word in a document (search bar)
F3	Search for a file or folder

Additional Keyboard Shortcut Links:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/12445/windows-keyboard-shortcuts>

<http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/100-keyboard-shortcuts-windows/>

<https://www.computerhope.com/shortcut.htm>

Hopefully, these shortcuts will save time and energy while you are working on your assignments!

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Terminology

Assignment Extension- if you are not going to be able to meet a deadline for an assignment, you need to reach out to your Instructor to request an extension. Do this before the assignment is late. Then you'll work together on a new due date for the assignment.

Code of Conduct- a set of rules or guidelines for Grantham University students to follow. This includes policies regarding academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, misuse of electronic communication/technology, etc.)

Course Objectives- a set of goals for the course which students have the opportunity to master upon engaging with the course material, the instructor, and fellow students.

Discussion Board- a forum in which you can communicate with your instructors and classmates. In every course, you are required to participate in a weekly discussion forum. Your initial posts are due by Sunday nights, and two follow-up posts (responding to your peers' posts) are due on Tuesdays.

EBSCOhost- Online library. Once you access EBSCOhost (through G-LIFE or Blackboard) you'll be able to search for articles, books, and other resources necessary for researching a topic.

Financial Aid Disbursement vs. Refund- The disbursement refers to when the financial aid funds arrive at Grantham from the government. Once Grantham has received the disbursement of funds, we have 14 business days to issue a refund to the student. The refund refers to the amount of the disbursement less the tuition & fees that Grantham collects. The refund is usually what students mean when they say "my financial aid", and usually use the terms "disbursement" and "refund" interchangeably.

Financial Aid Academic Year (AY)- When a student uses financial aid as a funding source, they are limited to four start dates that comprise their academic year. These start dates are back-to-back terms (or as close to that as the calendar allows). If a student has begun an AY (i.e. successfully made it through the first week of the first term of their AY), then these dates are set. In this case, if a student fails to re-register to start on any of the other three start dates in their AY, they would have to sit out for that term and await the next start date in their AY.

- Example: If the AY starts on 1/10/2018
 - Their start dates would be 1/10, 3/14, 5/9 and 7/11
 - If they were unable to register in time to start the 5/9 term, they would have to wait until 7/11 to continue
 - They would also likely not get as much financial aid since they would likely not be considered a full-time student for that second semester

Incomplete- Short course extension, typically two weeks long. You must reach out to your Instructor, before the course closes, to request an incomplete for a course. You must also have 50% of your course work submitted.

Initial Post- this is your personal post and contribution to the weekly discussion. In each section, there is a main question that every student must answer in the discussion board. Your answer to this main question is your first post - your initial post.

Instructor Page- an area within each Blackboard course where instructors provide information such as email, phone number, and personal information. Some instructors include relevant personal/professional information, or perhaps a late policy for the course as well.

Learning Centers: Writing Center, Math Center, CS Center, Teaching & Learning Center (TLC)- Learning centers help you with your course work. Tutors are available, along with helpful templates and tools to help you increase your understanding in your courses.

Office Hours- Designated times when your instructors will be available every week (see the Instructor Page in each Blackboard course). This is the best time to reach out to your Instructors if you have any questions. You can reach them through email, phone, or Blackboard Collaborate.

Online Registration Agreement (ORA)- This is the registration contract that a continuing student completes to sign up for their next term (8 weeks) or semester (16 weeks). It consists of information such as the course, start date, and funding information. Once the ORA has been prepared by a Student Advisor, you can access the ORA on your G-life home page.

Online Enrollment Agreement (OEA)- This is the enrollment contract that a brand new student (or one who is returning from an inactive period of over 90 days) will use to sign up for their next term or semester. An Admissions Representative will prepare this form, and the student will access it via a link and special credentials provided by the Admissions Representative. The OEA is longer than the ORA due to additional documentation needed from new students.

Plagiarism- is taking someone else's work and claiming it as your own. This includes information from websites or other student's work.

Paraphrasing- expressing the meaning of the message (someone else's work) in your own words.

Rubric- scoring tool for assignments and discussion forums. Set up like a spreadsheet or matrix, it shows how you will be assessed for each aspect of the assignment or discussion forum.

SAP- Satisfactory Academic Progress. These standards include your minimum grade point average (GPA), minimum course completion rate, and maximum time frame (attempted versus completed credits).

Syllabus- A syllabus explains the objectives (goals for the course) and what you'll be learning. Your syllabus may also contain rules, directions, and other important information. It will also give you a layout of the weekly requirements for your online course.

Student Advisor- is your main point of contact. Your advisor is there to answer any questions you have and help you succeed at Grantham.

Substantive Interaction (SI)- Requirement for students to participate regularly and substantively in their course. This includes participating in discussions and submitting assignments. You cannot work ahead (accelerate), nor can you refrain from participating for longer than 14 days. Failure to participate (or interact substantively) will result in an administrative withdrawal, according to University policy.

Withdrawal (voluntary vs. administrative)- a withdrawal occurs when a student drops or is dropped from a course. To withdraw from a course you need to reach out to your student advisor. If a student isn't participating in class (refer to substantive interaction) an instructor can also drop (withdraw) a student from the course.

Surviving College

Lessons of a Lifelong Learner

By Mark Olson, Grantham University

Chapters 1-5: “Your Story”

“Owning our story can be hard, but not nearly as difficult as spending our lives running from it.”

Brené Brown

I am a lifelong learner. My college journey technically began when I was a senior in high school, although it feels as if I had started much earlier.

My dad was a librarian at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire. His job gave me wonderful opportunities. During my boyhood summer vacations, I would ride my bike or the city bus down to the university and spend the day hunting for lost treasure in the pages of those volumes contained on the five floors of the university library.

The university students would look at me with bewildered pity and think, “what is this kid doing at the library ... where are his parents?” Little did they know my dad was right there!

These adventures at the university would continue for years. There are no number of shares of Google stock I would trade for the summer days I would spend down at the university library visiting my personal hero, my dad.

I attended Memorial High School in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The craziest thing about this public school, in a small town, in the middle of frozen farmland, is that we had this incredible music program. It featured a Jazz band that was regularly rated as one of the top ten high school jazz bands in the nation.



I spent two years playing trumpet in that featured jazz band, and thus my entire life became occupied with practicing trumpet. Despite these amazing opportunities in music, I didn't really spend too much

time to discover who I was. When it came time decide what to do about college, I figured I might as well study music - I really didn't know anything else.

My senior year in high school arrived, and I had enough credits to graduate early, but instead decided to take advantage of a program in which my high school would pay for me to take college courses at the university (where my dad worked) to take music theory classes. And those music theory courses are how my college journey officially began ... 15 years ago.

Despite being raised at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, I decided to venture out beyond the frozen tundra when it came to college after high school. I had been awarded a trumpet scholarship to attend Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. Not only was this a culture shock for a yankee from the north, my years at Belmont were nothing less than an adventure. Part of the reason my journey took so long is that I really hadn't figured out what I truly wanted to do. After changing my major seven times over almost six years, I finally got my Bachelor's degree.

Fast forward to present day.

At Grantham University, I teach American Government courses in addition to GU101 and the general education capstone.

The general education capstone has two required textbooks. One textbook is best described as "traditional and scholarly." The second book is entitled, "Pour Your Heart Into It." This is not a traditional textbook by any means. It is written by Howard Schultz, the former CEO of Starbucks. In this book, Schultz just tells his story and the story of Starbucks.

Students gravitate toward the Starbucks book. They really spend time reading it, referring to it in many of their papers. Why do students seem to gravitate away from the scholarly textbook and spend a completely disproportionate amount of time reading the Starbucks book? It's because of story. Through his story, Schultz invites you, the reader, to find your story.



We all have our own story. And your story is so very important.

Our brains actually think, remember, and experience life as a story. Our brains do not think or remember life as a list of facts. That is why this book is not going to be a traditional textbook. Just like Schultz's Starbucks book, I want to tell you a bit about my 15-year adventure as a lifelong learner. While these are my stories, this book really isn't about me. This book is about you and your amazingly important story.

One of the most important tasks in college is learning to ask questions, to challenge ideas, and to seek the truth of claims being made. This is the foundation of critical thinking.

In college, we are also asked to make arguments (take a point of view), which means we need to anticipate questions and support our ideas with evidence.

In the previous paragraph, I claimed that, “Our brains actually think, remember, and experience life as a story.” My claim is supported by researcher Dr. Brené Brown, who writes, “We’re wired for story” (Brown, 2015, p.6). However, I am hoping that you are asking a critical question of my claim: Is this actually true?

Here is some supporting evidence:

- Scientists have found that our brains are chemically and biologically hooked on stories. Our bodies release certain chemicals that make us feel good when we are engaged in a story (Zak, 2013; Zak, 2014)

Since our memories are so closely tied to story through this powerful mix of brain chemicals, you can use this to your advantage when you study. Instead of trying to remember facts such as names or dates, focus on trying to understand your course material in a story form.

Another way to trigger those brain chemicals is through setting and achieving goals. Break your goals into smaller steps and celebrate even small accomplishments (Nguyen, 2014).

Instead of tackling an abstract algebra problem, turn the problem into a story.

Instead of trying to remember the development of presidential power from Article II of the U.S. Constitution, find the story of the development of presidential power.

Learning and remembering what you are studying as a story works with your brain chemistry rather than working against it. How many times have you read something, reread it, and read it again - only to have no clue what you just read a few seconds after completing the reading?

Again, focus on the story.

Once upon a time...

Joseph Campbell was American scholar who studied stories (mythology). He was most interested in finding out what makes a story a **good** story. We remember good stories. In 1949, he published his findings in a book titled “The Hero with a Thousand Faces,” and the world has never been the same.

Campbell said that throughout human history every good story (which he calls the “monomyth”) is about a main character travelling through the “hero’s journey.” Let’s put this into perspective by analyzing a favorite plot at the box office: the romantic comedy (rom-com).



As the movie opens, we meet the lead characters and step into their normal routines. Then, the two lead characters meet. There is some kind of chemistry – either instant attraction, or intense repulsion. As viewers, we can see what the lead characters cannot see – they were meant to be together. Yet each character faces an obstacle that prevents the romance from blossoming. A supporting character has to intervene to help the main character deal with that obstacle.

While the friend can give advice, the hero/heroine has to find the resources within himself or herself to overcome the ordeal. By going through that experience, the main character is transformed. Life is not the same; the main character has to find a new “normal.” And so, new relationships are formed; old relationships fizzle out. We see the characters in their new state. The movie ends.

This plot template works for any movie, any story. In Star Wars, we first meet Luke Skywalker as a farmer on a desert planet. He stares into an alien sunset yearning for more (cue the John Williams music). Then, sees a video of Princess Leia needing help, and eventually meets Obi-Wan Kenobi. At first, he whines to Obi-Wan Kenobi that he can’t get involved and he has to stay on the farm. But, Obi-Wan Kenobi nudges Luke, giving Luke his dad’s laser sword. During his journey, Luke means Han, Leia, and a Wookiee named Chewbacca.



Darth Vader is very clearly established as the bad guy (it’s the music that gives it away). The battles between Darth Vader and Luke’s gang make for some great cinematic magic. After Darth Vader kills Obi-Wan Kenobi in a horribly awkward laser sword battle, Luke wrestles with who he is, blows up some tie fighters and they escape the Death Star. Luke is a changed man; life cannot go back to

“normal.” He has to figure out a new normal, and live to make several sequels that will continue to smash the box office.

The hero’s journey can be condensed into the following 12 elements (Bronzite, n.d.; Introduction, n.d.; Winkler, 2012).

Step 1: The Hero is Introduced

We meet the hero, and see the “normal” life of the hero.

Step 2: The Hero is Faced with a Sudden Call to Adventure

The hero faces an opportunity.

Step 3: The Hero Initially Resists the Adventure

The hero initially refuses the adventure, preferring the safety that their known world provides.

Step 4: A Little Push from a Mentor

This mentor gives the hero a little extra push to accept the call of adventure.

Step 5: Crossing the Threshold

The hero accepts the call and embarks on the journey.

Step 6: Friends & Enemies

The hero meets and distinguishes between friends and enemies.

Step 7: Innermost Cave

The hero must journey to something unfamiliar or unknown.

Step 8: Ordeal

The hero faces a deep place of inner turmoil.

Step 9: Reward

The hero emerges victorious.

Step 10: Return

After achieving some kind of reward, the hero returns to some version of home or friends, but still may be unsettled when looking back at events.

Step 11: Rebirth

The hero experiences some climactic moment of rebirth – and decides to move forward again.

Step 12: Upgrade

The upgraded hero now begins to live the new life.



You are Now Creating Your Story

College is not just about 18-year old teenagers leaving home for the first time after high school. Adults of all ages, with extensive life and work experience, are enrolled in college. All college students will experience the highs and lows of the adventure – the journey – through college.

You, too, will experience the highs and lows of the adventure that we call college. Here's the thing: you are not just watching a movie. You are the hero. Not only that, you are the author of your own story. So let's figure out how you can write your story so that you will have that happy ending.

Step 1: You are the hero

We are now meeting you, the hero, as you enter Grantham University. What is your “normal” life – your routines, your work, your hobbies, your family and relationships?

Step 2: Call to Adventure

Since you are reading this book, I know that you have heard a call to the college adventure. For many of you, this may have been a challenging or painful call to adventure. Perhaps you have been serving our nation in the military and are facing the unknown of what life is going to be like after your stint in the military. Perhaps you want to increase the quality of life for your family. Maybe your current or future employer is looking for more education on your resume. Perhaps you've lost your job and need to regain employment. Maybe you just have the opportunity to grow and learn for your own personal development and enjoyment. Whether painful, scary, challenging or wonderful, the adventure of college has called you.

Step 3: Refuse the Adventure

Maybe you tried to start college once before, and this is a second – or third – attempt. Or maybe you are still not sure whether this college thing will work out, and you may have some doubts. Whenever we embark on something new, we may feel scared. That is normal. We don't know what this adventure will hold. We also know that every adventure will have its share of pain and challenges. Without pain or challenge, the adventure would not be an adventure. It is okay to be scared. If you refuse the adventure, you will drop out before even completing this course. But, if you are willing to take the plunge, there are great adventures out there!

Step 4: Your mentors

You know who has mentored you in the past...and you will continue to discover new mentors in the future. Rely on them; trust them; cherish them. They will serve you well in your journey.

Step 5: Cross the Threshold

You have already crossed the threshold – because you are here, reading this book!

First five chapters: done.

As you experience the rest of the steps, you will face challenges. You will be faced with tough decisions. You will also experience victories. Your unique and special story is about your journey. It's a story about how you will change. Are you ready for an adventure?

Note: theme music for the soundtrack of your story is optional. I'll let you decide when to cue music!

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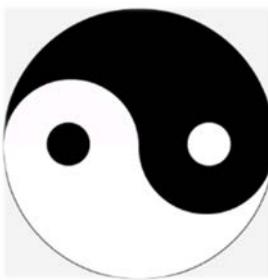
[Chapter 6: “Friends and Enemies”](#)

“Would I rather be feared or loved? Umm...easy, both. I want people to be afraid of how much they love me.”

-Michael Scott, character from the TV show The Office

In high school, two of my friends were polar opposites of each other. Craig was strong, bold, aggressive in his approach to life. He had strong opinions, and was super cocky about how correct his opinions were, to the point that he would not even consider someone else's ideas. Sometimes it was tough to be around him, unless you were willing to just go along with whatever he had in mind.

On the other hand, Andrew was meek and mild-mannered. We all knew that he had super critical parents who were kind of hard on him if he did not live up to their expectations. It seemed like he was kind of afraid to even try anything, for fear of failure...or was it fear of success?



Anyway, more than fifteen years later, you wouldn't believe how each person has changed. Andrew somehow grew out of his meekness and found inner strength. He has a great wife and children, and is enjoying his job as a supervisor in a social services agency.

Craig, who was always so confident, has ended up in a series of short stints in many jobs, unable to find a place where he fits in. According to him, everyone is either an idiot, or they can't appreciate "greatness." He's been fired a few times, but often quits before getting fired. Oh yeah, he's been married and divorced three times already.

It's funny how life turns out.

I would love to hear the story of each of my old friends, to find out more about their innermost caves, ordeals, and progress through the return, rebirth and upgrade. I should say Andrew is the only one who can tell that story right now – Craig still seems to be in his innermost cave.

Friends and Enemies – spoiler alert:

Your friends and enemies are not always human. Hmm. Think about that.

After embarking on any adventure, you (the hero) will meet friends that will help you on your journey as well as enemies that will seek to thwart you. To navigate the journey, gain support from your friends to overcome your enemies.

Your Instructors -- Friends

Some of your key friends in your adventure through college will be your instructors. Your instructors want to help you. Yes, they want to understand you and your goals. They want to help you not only to pass your courses, but also to be successful in achieving your goals.

As with any friendship, the relationship must be formed and strengthened. At the beginning of the course, introduce yourself to your instructor. Tell the instructor a little bit about yourself.

From my experience teaching at Grantham, I have several additional pieces of advice. I will share actual anecdotes from my courses – but obviously will not reveal the identity of the student. I always said I would write a book someday with a collection of these anecdotes – I guess today is that day!

Back to my advice: texting your instructor an hour before an assignment is due with: “*hey wutz up, dont understand, computer not work, wut do i do?*” does not strengthen the relationship between the two of you.

So, what will help?

- Don't wait until the last minute (i.e. a few hours before the assignment is due.) Start working on assignments well in advance of the due date.
- When emailing or contacting your instructor, clearly identify yourself and the course you're in (first and last name, GID, and GU101 section 18012). Remember, the instructor has many students. A first name is not enough.
- State very clearly what you need. For example: “I don't understand the concept of scarcity even after reading the book. Can you offer a different explanation?”
- Read instructions. Instructors often post announcements to reinforce directions.
- Act honestly and with integrity. Do your own work. Study. If you buy a paper, copy, cheat, or turn in someone else's work, it damages your relationship with your instructor. Additionally, you risk failing the course and possibly getting kicked out of college.

To help you communicate effectively with your instructors, I've included the following good examples of quality emails.



Good Example 1

Hi Mr. Olson,

My name is Brett Smith. I am in your American Government 1 course - we are studying week 3, the Executive Branch. My Student ID number is G0123456789. I need help with the Week 3 assignment. I do not understand what the instructions are asking. I would like to set up a time to chat by phone. I am available on Monday and Tuesday evenings after 5 or all day on Friday or Saturday. What time would work well for you? Thank you for all your help.

Good Example 2

Hi Instructor Olson,

My name is Sally Sue. I am in your American Government 1 course - we have just wrapped up the midterm. My Student ID number is 9876543210. I have reviewed your grading feedback on my midterm, and I need help understanding why points were deducted on Question 5 of the midterm exam. I thought the three branches of government were the Republican party, the States, and the Supreme Court. If this is not correct, could you explain what the correct three branches of government are? Thank you for all your help!



What makes these two examples effective? In both cases, the students have told me clearly who they are, what class they are in, and what they need. The emails are direct, clear, and constructive.

It is important to start good, professional communication habits now. This is personal image management – branding, if you will. When you communicate in an informal way (using “text” language and shortcuts) you will not be taken as seriously as when you use standard conventional written English. Pay attention to typos, grammar, spelling errors. Be respectful rather than casual.

Everything you write is projecting who you are. People will form opinions and impressions based on your written communication. Do you want them to perceive you to be professional and well-educated? Will it bother you if they “write you off” or dismiss you because they perceive you to be unprofessional and uneducated?

The Syllabus -- Friend

The first thing you need to do in any college class is read your syllabus. The syllabus is like the constitution of your course (remember, I teach American Government?!).

As soon as you get your syllabus - read it carefully. Find out when things are due, what you need to do each week, and start planning your next few weeks of your course.

Your syllabus will tell you how things are graded and weighted. The syllabus contains the ground rules for the class. When you get to the end of the course, you should not be surprised you have a term paper or a final exam due because all of this information is in the syllabus.

If you don't understand something in the syllabus, ask your instructor right away.

Textbooks -- Friends

Your syllabus will also tell you about the required reading and textbooks for your course. Get your textbooks before your class starts. Telling your instructor that you haven't gotten your textbooks yet is not an excuse to not turn in work. If you do not know what books you need, contact the university bookstore, a student advisor, or even your instructor.

The Library & Other Campus Resources – More Friends

There are several other important allies that will aid you in your college adventure. The first is the library. Now certainly I am quite biased towards libraries. As I described earlier, my dad was a university librarian. I grew up in a library. However, in this digital day and age, your library will contain a major online component.



Become familiar with the resources available to you via the online library you will gain access to through your university. At many universities, this online library is some version of EBSCOhost. EBSCOhost contains journals, articles, books, reviews, and many reports. If you don't know how to use it, don't worry. There are online librarians in these online libraries. The librarian is there to help you find the information you need to be successful in completing your course work.

To further assist with research and paper writing, at Grantham University, we provide students with academic help via something called the Teaching and Learning Center. When you first get to college, find out more about these resources via the library, your instructor, an advisor, or even the university's catalog. These resources are there to help you succeed - do not be afraid to use them!

Speaking of the university catalog, find it and review it. The University Catalog is more-or-less your contract with the university from your initial enrollment until you graduate. It lays out all of the requirements and policies you are responsible for as a student. Again, if you have questions about the catalog, contact your instructor or student advising.



Time – Friend or Enemy?

College is a ton of work. The reality is that you will have to sacrifice some of your free time to study.

The general rule of thumb is that you should plan to spend three hours of work/study per week for every credit hour you are enrolled in. Let's say that you are currently enrolled in two college courses as an undergraduate student. Each of those courses is likely a three-credit hour course which means that you are enrolled in 6-credit hours.

Since we are budgeting three hours of work/study per week for each credit hour (6 multiplied by 3), this means that you should set aside at least 18 hours of time outside of class for work and study. Eighteen hours is a lot of time in one week especially if you are working a full-time job and if you have a family.



Family – Friends or Enemies?

I love my family. But honestly, when I was in college, they drove me crazy. They did not understand that I was too busy to spend as much time with them as I had before. A lot of the little things that we used to do together – family game nights, birthday dinners, Sunday morning waffles – I skipped out on because I had to read or write a paper for a class.

I know, it sounds horrible to say that I was too busy to be with my family – I did feel a lot of shame and guilt about that. And they sure did lay a guilt trip on me...ouch!

In my family, when it's your birthday, you get to pick the restaurant, and we all get together for a great meal. We get a kick out of making the wait staff sing 'happy birthday' while we try to embarrass the birthday boy/girl.

Well, I missed my sister's birthday when I was taking a really difficult philosophy course. I had to read a lot of material, and it was not easy reading.

She just did not understand why I would miss her birthday for a "stupid class" (her words, not mine). She didn't speak to me for several weeks. Even today, I think she holds a grudge.

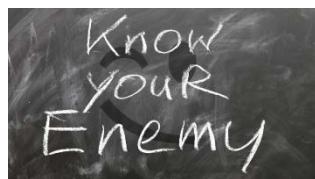
I guess the only redemption is that making those sacrifices allowed me to accomplish my goal of earning my undergraduate degree. And, I have kept going – I am a lifelong learner, so I am still taking classes (working on another master's degree right now!) I even plan to earn a Ph.D. after I finish this degree. (What can I say – higher education runs in my blood).

To aid in this transition of having less free time and needing more time to study, you need to communicate your needs to your family. Often these needs include quiet time to work on papers and study. When you communicate clearly, you allow your family to support you in the way you need to be supported.

Every hero on an adventure faces an enemy. In your college adventure, you will face one particularly insidious enemy – negative feelings.

One such enemy is shame. Shame will bubble up from inside and will manifest itself as fear.

Another enemy is fear. We experience fear when we allow ourselves to imagine the worst-case scenario: pain, danger, or a threat to our safety. An interesting twist on this is the fear of failure (and even the fear of success). I may sound like an armchair psychologist, but I have found merit in the insights gained from guided introspection.



Students often face a degree of fear when it comes to their college instructors. I see it in many of my students. Some students perceive instructors as unknown figures who hand out various rewards or punishments via a grade. A grade, however, is not punishment. A grade -- and accompanying feedback -- are really invitations to learn and grow.

Students can feel afraid to be wrong or "look stupid" in the presence of the instructor. Consider this: Every time you don't ask a question, fear (the enemy) wins.

Every time you avoid office hours because you don't want the instructor to think you are stupid, shame (another enemy) wins.

Shame

Fear

I can't say it enough, your instructors genuinely want you to be successful. Form relationships with them, ask them questions, and allow them to be a source of support along your journey.

What exactly is shame? Simply, "Shame is a fear of being unworthy" (Brown, 2010, p. 40). We often experience shame as a tirade of words and accusations within our own minds conveying the general message of not being good enough.

Our inner speak takes the form of "should've ...," "would've ...," and "could've ..." statements. These blistering words will attach themselves to all sorts of internal accusations related to your school work, your interactions with people, your physical appearance, how you handle money, and your decisions.

Brown (2010) argues that the primary source of shame is when we live, behave, and act to impress others. When others are not impressed, we feel rejection.

Shame is your enemy because it gets in the way of receiving feedback in the way it was meant to be received. For example, when you see a lower grade than you anticipated, it is easy to see that as a rejection from the instructor. If you allow yourself to feel shame from rejection, you are unlikely to take that grade and the feedback as an opportunity for growth.



How To Beat The Enemy

Every time you doubt that you can do this, you are facing the enemy.

In order to win against any enemy, you have to understand it. College can be perceived as a system of performance, and some students are very concerned about their performance being “good enough” to pass and graduate.

Sometimes students think they have been out of school for too long to be successful. Others are hesitant because they have never used an online library or the technology. Still others wonder how they will juggle a career, school, and family. They begin to doubt themselves.

In times of self-doubt, these students can perceive themselves as imposters as if the Admissions Department somehow made a mistake when they were accepted into the university. As imposters, these students feel the need to perform as well as the “real” college students. In other words, they believe they must live up to the image of being good enough to succeed.

“Shame is a fear of being unworthy,” and we all wrestle with it (Brown, 2010, p. 40). You have incredible gifts and talents, yet shame prevents you from seeing those (Brown, 2010, p. 112).

Living up to this image means that a mistake will reinforce their fear of being an imposter; consequently, some students are afraid of turning in work with wrong answers. These students know their instructor is an expert, and they do not want to feel rejection associated with scores that are less than stellar because, to them, it validates their belief that they are not good enough to be in college.

Beating shame then begins with beating impostership. There was no mistake in the Admissions Department. You are here because you are capable of being successful. You will have wrong answers, but that does not mean anything other than you have an opportunity to grow and learn.

There is no shame in making mistakes.

To beat impostership and shame, you have to understand that college is not about regurgitating a correct answer. If you are treating your assignments or exams like trivia contests, you are not approaching your work correctly.

College is about developing communication and critical thinking skills while enhancing your knowledge of your chosen discipline.

If you are feeling anxiety or fear about your work in college, use your resources. Instead of trying to find a magical correct answer for a question on a test or assignment, follow these steps:

- Breathe.
- Read the question. Restate it in your own words to make sure you understand it.
- Find and read the relevant material. Formulate your answer.
- Read the question again.
- Answer the question.
- Check your response to make sure that you are answering fully all aspects of the question asked.
- Check to make sure all parts of your text are adequately supported with examples, citations, and evidence.
- Cite your sources of all material you used.

- If you are still panicked - take a break and reach out to one of your friends on this college adventure.

It's ok not to be perfect.



Striving for absolute perfection can be dangerous because nothing other than 100% will be good enough. In my first few semesters of college, I met some amazing instructors. One of my favorites was my English 101 instructor. Every day she posted an announcement that included the mantra, "B's are good, in college, B's are good."

It was weird at first, but my English 101 instructor also had a great point. Most students arrive at college from a public school experience in which A's are considered to be quality and expected work. However, new college students need to reorient themselves to a new set of expectations. In college B's are wonderfully and perfectly acceptable grades.

I'm not saying don't work hard. But college is tough, and assuming you gave it your best, a B is a completely acceptable score. I did not have a 4.0 in high school, undergraduate college, or even graduate school - and I turned out just fine (I think). In fact, not once in any job interview has anyone asked me about my GPA or what ranking I had in school.



Beating shame and seeing yourself for who you are beyond your grades is very important.

Remember, you are more than your grades. If you get a bad grade, treat it as a learning opportunity. Feel free to ask specific questions of your instructor. Many instructors even let you redo work because we learn best when we make mistakes and fix those mistakes.

Your friends on this adventure will help you beat shame and fear. Your friends will help you see your gifts and talents. Remember this as you face down a challenge, and when you enter that innermost cave.

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Chapter 7: “The Innermost Cave”

“You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take.”

-Wayne Gretzky, hockey player

Remember when I told you about my high school jazz band – and how I loved playing the trumpet? It was my ticket to college; I had been awarded a trumpet scholarship to attend Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. I wound up playing trumpet for five different ensembles at the school; took two weekly trumpet lessons, and two weekly trumpet seminars, and I even played a bit in a rock band.



One evening just before beginning my second year in college, I was eating dinner with my parents at a restaurant. I was munching on a delicious cobb salad with honey mustard dressing when I suddenly felt a painful snag in my right jaw joint. It was odd, but the pain quickly subsided. A few weeks later something similar happened while eating, and I began to notice a distinct popping in my jaw.

Classes began, the pain in my jaw continued to be ever present until one morning I woke up and the entire right side of my face was swollen.

It felt like a rock was lodged in my right jaw when I tried to bite down. When I played trumpet, I would get blurry vision and an irritating ringing in my ear. I saw a doctor in Nashville and a doctor back home in Wisconsin. Each looked at the giant black hole on the x-ray of my jaw and said, “You’re done playing the trumpet.”

I was in crisis. Without trumpet, without music, what exactly was I going to do with my life? How was I going to get through college? I was desperate for a friend.

I sought out the most honest instructor I knew ... Dr. May. Dr. May was my American Government instructor. He stood above the rest: he was an amazing, engaging, and challenging instructor. His “colorful honesty” certainly appealed to my inner (and probably repressed) wild self.

We set a time to meet and Dr. May listened as, more than anything else, I just needed to vent. And then Dr. May changed my life when he offered the following counsel: “You know you’re pretty good at politics, how about political science?”



Into the Cave

It is usually an enemy that causes us to go into the cave. The innermost cave is something that is challenging and/or unknown. In some cases, the cave is overcoming a medical emergency, or finding a new major. In other cases, the cave is switching jobs to a lower-paying one but which is better aligned with your interests.

When you are in the cave, it is time to reach out to your friends. Remember, your friends are not always human. Just as negative mindsets (shame and fear) are two of your worst enemies, you will find that some of your most reliable friends are positive mindsets.

Grit

One of the latest buzzwords is “grit.” This comes from the research of psychologist Angela Duckworth who argues that success and overcoming failure, especially in the classroom, is about “grit.” Duckworth specifically argues that the ability to persist and even overcome failure has nothing to do with IQ or talent (2013).

Duckworth (2013) defines grit as passion plus perseverance in order to accomplish long-term goals. This is a key definition to consider carefully as you start your college adventure. College is not a short-term goal. Completing at least 120 credit hours is going to take years. Tackling long-term goals takes an understanding that, “Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint” (Duckworth, 2013).

It is important to dig a bit further into the meaning of both passion and perseverance as they relate to accomplishing long-term goals.



First, **passion**. Are you truly passionate about what it is you are setting out to accomplish in college?

I struggled with this as an undergraduate student, which is why I changed majors seven times throughout my undergraduate years. I wasn't sure what I was passionate about. I had started college studying music because I got a scholarship and I really didn't know much about myself. College was just this thing that was expected of me. I was good at everything I did, but not exceptional at any one thing.

If you are not passionate about what you are studying in college, you most likely will not have the resolve to complete college.

This is not a bad thing. It is not bad to decide that college isn't a fit for who you are and what your passions are **right now**. It is not failure to try college and decide, "Hey, this just isn't fitting with who I am, what makes me tick, and what my goals are."

Maybe you need to deal with a family crisis right now. Maybe you need to settle down in your job right now. Maybe you need to pay off some debt right now. College will always be here – is this the right time for you to be in college?

Second, **perseverance**. Sticking to it. Tenacity. Don't quit. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. Perseverance is reckoning with the full cost of the adventure you are taking on. Perseverance requires that you are not disillusioned about the challenges you will face in any way. Perseverance means that you hang on through the tough times, and ride out the challenges. Things will get better. You can do it.

I am trying to be completely honest with you: College is tough. College is hard work. College has a tangible cost in time, money, and effort. College also has an emotional cost. You will have to face fear, shame, and wrestle with who you are and what you are about.

There are huge rewards for this struggle, but you have to work to get to that reward.

Grit is often understood as the ability to press through when things get tough. Brown (2010) refers to this as the “dig-deep button.” The dig-deep button is a “secret level of pushing through when we’re exhausted and overwhelmed, and when there’s too much to do and too little time for self-care” (Brown, 2010, p. 3).

The problem is that the dig deep button can eventually wear out it. When this happens, we feel burned out.



It's hard to engage in school work when we feel burned out or when we simply need a break.

I got to that point when I was in school. While working on my first master's degree, I was also holding down a full-time job. One day near the end of the term, I came home from work and knew that I still had schoolwork to do. It would have only taken about 2 hours. It was 6:00. OK, I thought, I can finish by 8:00 if I start now. But I didn't.

I found myself piddling around on social media, checking Facebook and viewing YouTube videos. I love the ones where they show real-live medical things, like unpacking the bandages after nasal surgery. I spent hours grossing myself out with those videos. Around 4 a.m., I made a run to the Gas-N-Go for a bunch of candy bars, and a huge mocha latte, and forced myself to go home and get down to business.

I rushed through the work, and of course, did not do a quality job. Then I started berating myself. *"Why didn't I just do the work when I got home? Why did I screw around?"* Instead of resorting to sugar, caffeine, and sheer willpower, I needed to step away and figure out what would have helped me feel refreshed.

When you feel like procrastinating or if you feel the need to force yourself to press on - stop.

- Are you hungry? Take the time to get some favorite healthy foods (consuming quality protein is especially helpful).
- Are you tired? Take a power nap.
- Is your brain on overload? Distract yourself with friends, or an hour of TV.
- Are you bored? Find a way to challenge your brain.



What do you need to maintain your mental and physical health? If you need social media, that's fine - just be intentional about it.

Move from reactionary living to living intentionally. Don't just coast on autopilot. Turn your routine "go to" habits around, and figure out how to interpret the signals your brain and body are sending you.

You may not be feeling burnout at all right now because this is the beginning of your journey. Most every adventure is fun and exciting when it first begins. But, somewhere between the beginning and

the end of the adventure will be a complicated, challenging mess. There will be detours, road construction, and speed traps.

When we accept this, and remind ourselves that the challenge in the journey is temporary, it helps us overcome it.



Take a good look at how things are going periodically. It's a good idea to pause and take your pulse or check other vital signs.

If you feel everything is slipping away, this may not be the right time to pursue your college journey.

If you feel your relationships are in jeopardy, you may need to take just one course at a time instead of two courses at a time.

When you learn to read the signals your brain and body are sending you, and you know what resources are available to help you, then you will enjoy a smooth(er) ride through your college adventure.



As your story continues, you, the hero, will change. Change is good! You are supposed to be transformed by your college experience. If you started and ended this journey with the same knowledge, skills, and mindsets, something would be terribly wrong.

I remember one of my first classes as a college student. On the first day of class, I read the directions for the major project that was due at the end of the term. Immediately, I thought, "I have no idea what any of these concepts are! I can't do this!" I allowed the message of doom and gloom to grow in my mind.

I had no perspective. I did not entertain the notion that I wasn't supposed to know those concepts at the beginning of the course – I mean, that was the whole point of being in school. I was supposed to learn those things as the term progressed!

I experienced a lot of fear that term. But because I stuck with it, I learned what I was supposed to learn. Each term, I gained that perspective, and calmed myself down when I felt overwhelmed. I told myself, "You can do this. You will learn this. Just take it one step at a time."

What I know now is that when I was calming myself down, I was coaching myself in the growth mindset.

Psychologist Dr. Carol Dweck from Stanford University introduced the concept of two mindsets -- growth and fixed. People with a growth mindset believe that their intelligence or ability to learn is dynamic, flexible and capable of expanding. They believe that with the proper effort, they can overcome obstacles and experience victory.

On the other hand, those with a fixed mindset believe that they are just born stupid (or born smart) and there is nothing they can do to change that. They don't see any point in applying effort, because they think it won't pay off. They are kind of stuck in a rut.

Dr. Dweck outlines four steps toward adopting this growth mindset.

1. First, identify words of shame when you hear them in your head or when you hear them in the words of others (Brown, 2010; Dweck, 2010).
2. Second, recognize you have a choice as to whether or not you listen and respond to those words (Dweck, 2010).
3. Third, actively challenge this inner voice of shame and any mindset of failure (Dweck, 2010).
4. Finally, take action (Brown, 2010; Dweck, 2010).

Actions can take many forms. They could be to gather additional feedback from your instructor. They also could be taking advantage of the resources available to you like those offered at the tutoring center. Make the effort to grow and improve.

Sure, it was not my fault; however, I was leaving music, which was something that I pursued for almost a decade of my young life. Now that it was all over, I didn't have much to show for it.

In college, my innermost cave was not just about the decision to no longer study music. My innermost cave was the beginning of a long wrestling match with who I was and what I was going to be about. It felt like a colossal failure. I didn't know myself any better than I had in high school. I felt adrift at sea, in the middle of a storm, and I wasn't even sure where I was trying to get anyway.

While spending time in this innermost cave, you are preparing for the upcoming ordeal. Even though ordeals are difficult, they are often the most interesting part of our stories. They are the defining points of our lives. I mean, what kind of a movie would *The Hunger Games* have been if there hadn't been the ordeal?

Chapter 8: “Ordeal”

“There's always a flaw in the system”

--Beetee, character from the movie *The Hunger Games*

I finally figured out how to really do well in college during my last semester of graduate school (which means it took me about eight years of college to figure out how to be a good student).

Before that, I had always been a major procrastinator. I would delay working on assignments until I absolutely could not wait any longer. I hid under the illusion that I always been one who performed better while under pressure. When it did come time to hunker down and write a paper, I also would have to consume a sufficient amount of fuel: gummy worms, soda, M&Ms, and coffee with significant amounts of cream and sugar.

I really should have learned my lesson in my senior year, while working on a major paper for Eastern European Politics. The paper was due the second to last Friday of the course. The paper had to be at least 20 pages in length. I decided to skip class on the Wednesday before the paper was due in order to give me a bit extra time to get this paper polished off. (Yes, I was attending a brick and mortar institution; classes were held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for sixteen weeks.)

Thankfully I had managed to procure Wednesday and Thursday off from both my jobs. I was preparing for the long haul – two straight days of writing that paper. The plan was to turn it in on Friday, and in my mind, it would be totally awesome – the best work I had ever produced!

Instead of going to class on that fateful Wednesday, I went to the library and printed off a few peer reviewed journal articles that I found on EBSCOhost. At home and armed with my materials, I went into my makeshift office and booted up my eMac apple computer (yes the big one with the CRT monitor). I set out my Peanut M&Ms and four 2-liter bottles of Cranberry Sierra Mist and started work.

I had this convoluted system of paper writing. I would scour every single page of every book and every journal article I found that was relevant to my paper topic. I would note that item, factoid, or quote on a notecard. Each notecard would include a code for the source of the information. I would then spread my notecards out over the floor and then sort and rearrange each fact until I achieved some sort of order for my paper.

I would then tape each card together to form a super long chain, from which I could write my paper, one note card at a time. The problem with this process – I now realize -- is that it was insanely time consuming and produced fairly unoriginal work. My papers were just a collage of quotes and ideas from other people. My papers did not demonstrate much original thinking or critical analysis of the topic. Basically, my papers were book reports; and in college, instructors don't want book reports.

Despite starting on Wednesday at 9 am, I didn't start typing the final draft of my paper until Thursday night at about 10 pm. Eleven hours to go. The paper was due Friday at 9 a.m. I was not panicked. I worked best under pressure, and I just kept consuming more sugar.

I was doing great until 2 a.m. Friday morning. I had about sixty percent of my paper typed. I figured at this pace, I'd finish in time to get about 3 hours of sleep.

And then I heard screeching tires outside my apartment.

And then I heard a huge crash.

And then the power in my apartment went out.

A drunk driver had hit a power pole just down the street, the transformer blew up, and the entire neighborhood was out of power.

This was when I started to panic, especially when I realized it had been several hours since I had last hit "save" on my Word document, which meant my unsaved paper had reverted back to only being about thirty percent completed.

I went to the kitchen and started lighting candles. I grabbed a blank yellow legal pad, my pile of taped together notes, and started writing by hand the rest of my paper from where I thought I had left off.

At 5:45 a.m. the power came back on. I feverishly turned my computer back on and started typing away from my handwritten draft of a paper. I finished the last entry in my reference list, and completed my paper at 8:40 am.

Never mind time to edit. I just needed to get this paper in and get a passing grade, even if it was C. I had enough time to make the 15-minute drive to campus, with five minutes to spare.

I clicked "print" and walked over to my inkjet printer. The text that was printing was barely visible. My printer was out of ink!

Seriously?!!

I emailed my paper to myself and drove the 15 minutes to campus. I pulled into campus at 8:55 am. I had five minutes to get my paper printed in the computer lab and get into my seat before the instructor arrived.

I was in survival mode.

I did not even look for a parking spot because I knew I was not going to find one at this time of day. I therefore willfully and knowingly parked in the handicap spot right next to the building in which my class was held. (I knew the ticket was \$25, and frankly, I just needed to get this paper in, no matter the price tag).

I got into the computer lab. I may or may not have shoved another student out of the way to get the last available computer. I logged in. The clock was ticking. 8:58 am – I clicked "print." I hurried to the printer. No paper. The student employee monitoring the lab slowly filled the paper. The minute hand was getting closer and closer to my 9 am deadline. My paper printed. I grabbed the pages and headed to my class on the second floor of Scofield Hall.

I got into my seat at 9:02 am. The instructor was running a few minutes late. I tried to collect myself. I had not slept in over 48 hours. I smelled funny, and the sugar rush was turning into a massive headache and sugar crash. I looked around at my peers in my class, and curiously none of them looked like they had been up for the last two days writing their papers.

My instructor walked in the classroom and started his lecture. I found this to be a bit strange because he always said term papers would be collected at the beginning of class on the day they were due. I was a bit delirious from the lack of sleep. 45 minutes later the instructor wrapped up his lecture and announced, “So you all have something to turn in today!”

I grabbed my paper. Everyone else looked a little upset and panicked. The instructor laughed and continued, “I’m just kidding! As you will remember from Wednesday’s class, I decided I’d give you an extension on the original due date so that you guys could have the weekend to work on your paper.”

Everyone filed out of the room. I just sat in my chair – too tired to cry or laugh or move. The instructor had changed the due date during the Wednesday meeting of the class – the day I had decided to skip.

I share this story to highlight the many things I was doing wrong. Despite my 3.81 GPA, I was doing college the wrong way. I procrastinated. I didn’t plan ahead. I didn’t break my project down into small pieces and do them over time. I didn’t prepare a Plan B. I wasn’t even approaching paper writing the right way. To “do college well” you have to have a Plan B. If your computer breaks, how are you going to get access to another computer? If your power goes out, where can you go? If your Wi-Fi is out, where can you go?

Sometimes you think you have planned things out. Even then, you can still experience an epic fail.



For the final exam of a physics course, we were asked to bring in an empty two-liter bottle of soda. For the first hour of the extended final period, we were to apply the principles we had learned in the course to build a water and air pressure powered rocket from our empty soda bottle. We would then launch these rockets, and our grades would be based on our success (or lack thereof) at launch.

Well, it wasn’t good enough for me to build a measly single-stage water-powered bottle rocket. No, I needed to win the entire activity. My heart was set on building a multistage mammoth rocket that would be propelled at least 2 miles into the air. It was the moon or bust for me.

I spent the days before this physics final drinking five 2 liter bottles of Cranberry Sierra Mist. I packed the tip of the rocket with pennies and washers to achieve the perfect weight at the top of the rocket. I then meticulously cut, balanced, and duct-taped together my five empty bottles into one giant rocket. Unbeknownst to me, the tape was also the major flaw in my design. In my zeal, I forgot that standard duct tape does not hold up well with water, and this rocket was powered by water and air pressure.

Unaware of my major oversight, I proudly marched into class with my goliath rocket. I was grinning ear to ear. The instructor and my peers probably thought I needed a life. I wasn't trying to show anyone up; I just wanted to achieve the best and most amazing rocket ever for the sake of doing something awesome.

Finally, launch hour drew nigh. The class went outside. I loaded my behemoth onto the wooden launch pad, and the instructor turned on the attached air compressor. The excitement was building as the pressure built within my epic creation. The duct tape lost its seal... and... BOOM!

My rocket exploded on the launch pad. The pennies and washers I had secretly loaded in the top of the rocket went flying in every direction. My creation inadvertently ended up being a water-and-air charged bomb. I was grateful no one got hit by these projectiles. However, my instructor that had been hovering next to the launch pad was soaked with the water that had been in my rocket. I earned a C on that final. Sometimes things in life just do not go according to plan.

I was so sure it would be a success. I was a little cocky. Too confident. Couldn't imagine failure.

Ordeals are essentially the battle between you and your enemies. I already mentioned a few chapters ago that **you** are not only your own best friend, but also your own worst enemy. Shame and fear are enemies, but so are pride, conceit, and a myopic attitude. These enemies may be the result of your own actions (or lack of action), but they can also be the result of the actions of others (even others who are supposed to be your friends).

I have to confess that as an instructor at Grantham University, I see myself as the student's "friend." But I know full well that there are times when I put students through ordeals; and I know full well that during those times, students see me as an "enemy."

A few years ago, I had a bright young soldier – let's call him Mike - enrolled in my General Education Capstone course. One of the assignments required students to write about a controversial social topic. Mike wrote about gays in the military. To be honest, the paper read like a rant rather than an academic approach to a controversial topic.

It is not my intention to quarrel with his personal viewpoints, but it is my job to make sure he knows how to communicate an argument (which is a point of view, not a verbal fight). It is my job to make sure he provides evidence to back up his argument – and that he cites evidence according to the APA style guide. (You will learn more about this when you get into your English composition courses.)

When grading his paper, I provided feedback and challenged him to find evidence and to cite his sources. He did not like this, and thought that I was attacking his point of view. Honestly, I was not attacking him – I was asking him to engage in critical thinking and to undertake additional research to strengthen his argument. I did not say anything about his emotional claims – I was referring to his logical claims. Because this topic provoked such strong feelings within him, he had difficulty seeing my feedback as an attempt to be helpful and to teach him.

We went back and forth for about two weeks. And then, it happened. At some point he was able to cool off and to see what I was trying to tell him. He got it! It was as if the lightbulb suddenly popped up above his head – just like in the cartoons. I was so proud of him for persisting; even though he was challenging me, he was learning and growing through this ordeal.

It was only an ordeal because of his own mindset. Once he adjusted his mindset, things got a lot better.

I will tell you one other thing: as an instructor, it is sometimes frustrating to go through these ordeals with students. It is disheartening to think that students perceive me as an enemy instead of as a friend. So here's my tip to you: when you think an instructor is giving you a hard time, pause and step back for a minute.

Remind yourself that you can choose a growth mindset over a fixed mindset.

Remind yourself that instructors want you to be successful. This does not mean we will make it easy for you. It means we will challenge you when you need to be challenged in order to grow and move to the next level.

And when you do "get it" – when that lightbulb appears over your head – please go back and tell your instructor that you achieved your victory over this ordeal. We will be so grateful to hear it!

Ordeal → Reward

Being an online student means that you have to be prepared for technological emergencies. If your internet goes out, what are the hours of the library nearest you? How long can you use their computers?

It is essential that you not only have a Plan B, but that you communicate Plan B with the people who will need to know about it. For example, ask your friend now if you can use his/her computer if yours breaks.

You will have ordeals. You will have battles. You will take no prisoners, and feel the cold grip of fear strangling your chest cavity. But by being prepared, you can equip yourself to minimize major ordeals and turn them into victories on your journey.

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Chapter 9: "Reward"

"It is a sad fate for a man to die too well known to everybody else, and still unknown to himself."

- Sir Francis Bacon, English philosopher, statesman, and father of Empiricism

I love to argue and debate things. Heck, I'll just argue for the sake of arguing. I get things done, and I will scheme to get what I want. But the kicker is that what I want to accomplish is never out of selfish personal ambition. I believe I am genuinely fighting on behalf of truth, justice, and the American way.

I am charming, witty, and charismatic. I am a natural leader who always gravitates toward being the leader, which often makes others feel a bit threatened. I see the big picture, but I do not deal well with details (which is why I often don't read emails all the way through). Sometimes I struggle with bulldozing over people and their feelings.

I do not toe the party line, and I will buck your system. Despite the messes I make along the way, the end product of my work is excellent. In the workplace, bosses that try to micromanage me cause me to shut down. If I don't agree with a decision that is made, I will fight back, especially when I think a decision is unjust.

As you can see, I am not perfect. I value my strengths while accepting my weaknesses as opportunities for growth. But this self-awareness helps me be successful in relationships. It helps me communicate effectively with those who are closest to me.

For example, I am a "thinker." I tend to ask people what they think of something. My wife is a "feeler." When I ask her something like, "What do you think we should do for dinner," it doesn't connect. Not long ago I started to ask my wife how she feels about something rather than asking what she thinks about something. When I ask her, "What do you feel like having for dinner?" I get a completely different (and better) reaction.

Since I tend to dismiss the feelings of others in favor of pure logic, I have to work hard on slowing down and valuing the feelings of others. This doesn't mean logic is bad or that I am a jerk. Based on my strengths and weaknesses, I am learning that I need to proactively work at valuing what people feel.

It took me a long time to gain this self-awareness. It came from many ordeals, much conflict, and a lot of confusion (on my part) and hurt feelings (on the part of others). But now, I feel like I can handle things much more effectively. This is my reward. I am happier. My wife is happier. Life is better.

In our high-tech social media world with so many people desperate to win the approval and praise of others, many are hungry to fully know themselves. Unfortunately, so many of us lose ourselves as we spend so much time and energy to be known and praised by others.

You may think the reward is your degree, because that is what you are seeking. But there is so much more to it! This book has stressed how you will change during your college journey. The reward is living a better life because of the ordeals and the victories. The reward is getting to know yourself. The reward is being the author of your own story, and writing your own happy ending.

Many people may think they know themselves, but there is always room for more insight. Do you ever wonder why your social media is inundated with people sharing quizzes: "Which character from The Office are you most like;" or "Which Disney Princess is most like your personality;" or "What color says about what you're going to have for breakfast tomorrow."

Do we know ourselves well enough to know how to get what we want?

The goal of this chapter is to introduce you to a few of the common categories by which personality is analyzed. The intent is not to provide you with a complete or comprehensive breakdown of your personality, but instead give you a chance to begin to explore who you are and what makes you tick.

As you find out a little bit more about your personality, these discoveries will give you some ideas of things to do and things to not do as a student based on your personality. It is important to note that what is discussed is just tendencies and generalities. We do change slightly in different circumstances and seasons of life; however, exploring personality traits is an important tool to help you identify strengths and weaknesses in your career, in relationships, and as you approach school.

Once upon a time, in 1921, there was a guy from Switzerland named Carl Gustav Jung. Jung was a psychologist who theorized that each individual's personality could be boiled down to a few key characteristics (Our Framework, n.d.) or **types**. Since Jung first published his ideas on **typology**, there have been countless variations on his research.



Some of these variations are better than others. One of the most common variations, yet also the most debated, is the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). This inventory was invented in 1942 by a mother-daughter team who had studied Jung's theories. The MBTI remains a popular tool for those who seek self-understanding. Many businesses administer the inventory to their employees in an effort to promote teamwork.

Here's the scoop: there are four pairs of traits (see below). Apparently, our personalities are comprised of all these traits, yet we tend to rely on preferred traits at different times (i.e. under stress, making important decisions, or during regular life)



Category 1: Extravert (E) or Introvert (I)

This pair of traits actually refers to how you energize yourself – extroverts are energized by people while introverts are energized by time alone. When you need to unwind and relax do you prefer to be with others or do you prefer to be alone? If you're facing a challenge or feel stressed, do you reach out to others or do you get away by yourself (Our Framework, n.d.)?

Don't confuse this pair of traits with being outgoing or shy. It is important to note that being an introvert does not mean you are shy. In fact, extroverts can be even shyer than introverts. Similarly, not all individuals that are extroverts thrive in loud, rambunctious environments.

Introverts will tend to isolate themselves while extroverts will more easily tend to reach out to others. However, extroverts may tend to struggle more with perfectionism as they are more likely to evaluate themselves externally and based on the reactions of others. As students, extroverts are more likely to thrive in a physical classroom and see the online environment as a challenge. Introverts will not usually enjoy group activities.

Extroverts and introverts each have their strengths and weaknesses; one is not better than the other. Gaining an understanding of your own introversion/extroversion can help you position yourself for success in class, at work, and with your family. It can help you take appropriate action when you are feeling stressed – you know whether to retreat into privacy, or go out and party!

Category 2: Intuitive (N) or Sensing (S)

This pair of traits focuses on how we make decisions. Individuals who are intuitive tend to make decisions and evaluations based on intuition or a “gut feeling.” In contrast, individuals who are categorized as “sensing” make decisions based on input via their five senses - in other words, they make decisions on sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste (Our Framework, n.d.).

Sensing individuals tend to have routines and habits and live in the present moment. Intuitive individuals tend to be more curious and imaginative. They quickly connect the dots, find hidden meanings, and tend to live in the future (Our Framework, n.d.).

Intuitive individuals tend to be more impulsive and may overlook details. Intuitive individuals will not thrive with fine, detailed, and repetitive work; however, intuitive individuals provide excellent long-term and visionary thinking that pushes businesses and organizations forward. They can rock the boat and have their heads in the clouds. In contrast, sensors will faithfully maintain the status quo of systems and tradition (Our Framework, n.d.).

As students, intuitives may not read directions fully and just jump into their work. In contrast, sensors will be more prone to “paralysis by analysis” as they tend to want all the facts before starting. If you are a sensor, don’t allow yourself to get bogged down in the details of assignments and required readings. Sensors tend to have good study routines and habits while intuitives often make things up as they go along.

Intuitives quickly make broader and more abstract connections; while studying, they will easily connect the dots and understand the broader lessons and themes within a course. In contrast, sensors can be prone to miss the forest amongst the trees. Sensors can be more prone to treating assignments and exams as trivia contests in search of a specific magical right answer. Therefore, sensors are more likely to succeed in STEM fields such as science or engineering; while intuitives find themselves more energized by broad fields such as the social sciences.

Category 3: Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)

Thinkers favor logic over emotions while feelers experience their worlds through emotion. Thinkers tend to bulldoze and discount feelers, while feelers tend to see thinkers as cold, calculating, and inhuman, Machiavellian machines.

Our entire western education system is biased toward thinkers - much of our society and economy is biased toward thinkers and discounts emotions. Thinkers may struggle with respecting diversity, especially as it relates to diversity of experience. They tend to believe that given the same set of facts, everyone will arrive at the same conclusions. Thinkers tend to reject notions of subjective fairness or perception.

In contrast, feelers will process information through the lens of feeling and experience. Feelers show concern for others, and they work to keep the peace in group situations. The conflict between feelers and thinkers will drive many of the conflicts that occur within online threaded discussions or group projects.

Category 4: Judging (J) or Prospecting/Perceiving (P)

Judgers tend to be more decisive in their decision making, while perceivers (also labeled prospectors) desire to keep their options open. Judgers are more prone to believe that life is black and white while perceivers are more prone to live in a world of limitless possibilities (Our Framework, n.d.). Judgers struggle to see outside the box, or even just other possibilities, beyond what they have decided is right.

Judgers are very organized students; as such, they need structure and rules. They tend to deal better with multiple choice tests than essays. They do not like open-ended questions that are found many college courses. Judgers are more inclined toward STEM or medical fields where there is a hard science supporting a right or wrong answer.

In contrast, perceivers are more likely to welcome the possibilities of soft sciences. They will struggle with true-false and multiple choice questions, which means they may struggle early in their college careers. However, perceivers will thrive in advanced college courses that feature essays and open-ended assignments. Perceivers love to take risks and keep options open, which means they may struggle to say no. Perceivers, therefore, are more likely to overcommit themselves.

Perceivers also love questioning and bucking the status quo. Thus, perceivers make excellent critical thinkers as they love to challenge ideas. In contrast, judges may be more inclined to simply regurgitate material (to the point that they may be more prone even struggle with plagiarism).

Perceivers relish possibilities; they will come up with some of the most off-the-wall, outside-the-box creative solutions to huge problems. They may also be the ones that cure cancer one day. The perceiver's motto is, "go big or go home." In contrast, judges are consistent, organized, dependable, and reliable.



Why Is This Important

As stated before, these ideas are not only important as you understand yourself, but they are also important because you will encounter many people in your journey. We all communicate and experience life differently. Because of difference, we often talk past each other in conversations (just look at our politics). We have different ideas, values, feelings, perceptions, and personalities. Interacting with your classmates may result in an ordeal.

Psychology and behavioral science have shown us that we are prone to biases and logical fallacies in our thinking. One of the most common is the **false consensus effect**. Simply, the false consensus effect is when we assume that everyone thinks exactly the same way we do. We assume that everyone experiences life the way we do. (Just check out all the political posts on Facebook to see the false consensus effect in full action).

These assumptions are not true; we don't think like everyone else. We don't experience the same events in the same way, and we draw different conclusions from our different experiences.

As you interact with more people, and a greater variety of people (from different backgrounds, countries, cultures, religions, etc.) you will start to see how easy it is to disagree with others. I challenge you to adopt a growth mindset – make the effort to see things through the other persons' eyes. Look past the differences, and seek the commonalities. At the very least, acknowledge the differences, and be willing to live with them.

The reward? Personal growth. Career success. Enlightenment. Finding new friends. Living more fully. Experiencing the world in a whole new way.



Another benefit of surviving your ordeals is the reward of developing new skills and strategies. You are arming yourself with new tools for success.

Having a broad spectrum of tools is necessary if you plan to succeed in your journey. You may find that some of the strategies you used last time in school do not work as well in college, and you may need to modify how you study. As you figure out how to "do college well," one thing that helps is knowing how you learn best.

Just as we all do not communicate the same way, and just as we all do not have the same personality, not everyone learns best in the same way. There are three basic learning styles: kinesthetic, auditory, and visual. While we can all learn using each of these three styles, everyone has a *preferred* learning style. The preferred style is not the only way you learn, it is just the way you make the strongest connection with material.

Kinesthetic

Kinesthetic learners do best by doing and moving. They like to touch things and move pieces around while learning. They draw diagrams, write, and create models. As children, they may have learned to

spell correctly by repeatedly writing out the word. They may have learned definitions by writing them out five times. They may have recopied their notes as a way of studying.

Kinesthetic learners make flashcards so they can manipulate them when learning. Because they learn best when moving, they may find themselves tapping their foot or pencil while reading. They may play music and move to the beat while reviewing flashcards. For kinesthetic learners, it's all about connecting movement to learning.

Auditory

Auditory learners learn best by hearing information. As children, auditory learners may have retained more by reading out loud than by reading silently. They were the ones in math class who were talking themselves through the problem “six-plus-nine-is-fifteen-put-down-the-five- carry-the-one...” They needed to hear something to best connect with the material.

Do you enjoy listening to podcasts? Do you enjoy listening to sporting events on the radio? If you've been a student before, did you learn best through the course lectures? If you say yes to any of these, you may be an auditory learner. If you are an auditory learner, read instructions and material out loud. You may benefit from an auditory lecture or audiobook. It is also helpful to have a conversation or phone call with your instructor to get any questions answered. It will help to hear the instructor's answer.

Visual

Visual learners need to see the material they are learning. It is often suggested that reading is a key way that visual learners learn and retain information. If you are a visual learner, you learn well by organizing material into a table and studying the table. If you're a visual learner working on something abstract like a math concept, draw out what you are doing. Finally, if you are a visual learner, YouTube is amazing. Never forget that finding videos on YouTube that cover the material you need to learn is always a great option to explore.

Your battle through the ordeals required you to develop some new tools that you can use to continue your journey.

Understanding yourself is the reward you earn from surviving your ordeals.

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Chapter 10: “Return”

“The best laid schemes of mice and men, Go often askew ...”

- Robert Burns

I graduated with my BS in Political Science in December of 2008 ... right in the middle of the great American economic collapse. This meant that jobs were nearly impossible to find. Plus I had made several bad decisions in college, such as credit card debt, which caught up with me. This meant that everything I owned fit in two boxes and I moved back home and lived in my parents' basement.

I was on my third job in just as many months. I ended up selling memberships at a gym. As part of my duties, I put on the mascot costume (foam muscle suit, purple spandex), and stood outside on the street corner waving a sign soliciting memberships. My first night outside, in standard Wisconsin form, it rained ... then the sky released sleet, and then little ice pellets, and then slush, and then full on snow. There I was, dressed in a muscle man costume, standing in eight inches of slush, with a BS degree in Political Science wondering where I had gone wrong in life.

That's right, I was one of those people. A college graduate that was working a minimum wage job living in his parents' basement. Now I love my parents, they were so gracious and helpful and understanding. But I felt humiliated.

Just as Campbell described in the hero's journey, there is discontentment when you return after the ordeal. The hero has changed; he can't go back to his previous life. I could not go back to my parents' home and expect to be as happy as I was when I was younger. I had survived the ordeal of college – I was ready for a new normal.

Sometimes you just need to go big, or go home ... or leave home. After a rather lackluster end to my undergraduate adventure, and nine months of living in my parents' basement, I decided to move to Kansas City, Missouri. My goal was to attend graduate school to earn a master's degree in political science. I can't say enough, my parents were terrific and gracious. But sometimes you just gotta take a gamble.

In grad school, things started clicking for me academically. I read almost every book that was assigned; I earned great grades. I wrote some dang good papers. I learned important life lessons: it's all about setting priorities. When you only have so much time, you learn to maximize that time.

I really was proud of my effort and work in graduate school. Interestingly, my political views and affiliations had changed significantly from when I was working on my bachelor's degree. Toward the end of graduate school, I had been asked to consult for a political interest group. Unfortunately, I had a big kerfuffle with a major interest group that was affiliated with the opposite political party.

After this consulting project blew up, I could not get a job interview to save my life, and I was going to need to pay off those student loans that were soon coming due. Beyond this chaos on the surface, there was something deeper I was wrestling with.

"I ... uh ... think I ... uh ... I might be struggling with depression," I muttered to the doctor as I sat in the freezing office at my annual physical.

"Those are very hard words to say," my doctor reassured me. Those were some of the hardest and scariest words I have ever had to speak. We went through a whole basket of questions, and yes, I was definitely struggling with depression. He gave me a prescription, which was a tough pill to swallow (pun intended). For someone like me who has always taken pride in my intellect, my abilities, and my enthusiasm for life, I felt an incredible amount of shame.

My weight had crossed 215 pounds (and I'm only 5 foot, 8 inches). The days of just wanting to stay in bed outnumbered the days of wanting to get out of bed. I'd flip through Netflix yet nothing held my interest. Despite my academic accomplishments, I just wasn't sure about too much beyond grad school. Along with taking these pills my doctor prescribed me, I had started to see a counselor.

Working with my counselor, I started to unpack a lot of things ranging from bad choices I had made (such as the amount of sugar I was consuming) to crappy things that had happened to me and how to grieve and forgive. I started to break off unhealthy relationships with several people and organizations.

One day as I was confronting another unhealthy person in my life, I blew up. I shouted at them, "I am worth more than being treated the way that you treat me." A few days later I began to apologetically explain to my counselor, "So I think I have an anger problem now, I don't know what has gotten into me ... I just told this person off and told them I wasn't worth being treated like crap."

My counselor started laughing. For the first time, I started seeing my own self-worth and started enforcing my own boundaries simply because I was worth it. I didn't have an anger problem - I was just starting to live. I checked with my doctor to make sure I could just stop taking the meds, and he, too, chuckled a bit and said, "Sounds like everything worked the way it was supposed to." Oh, and in the midst of all this I had started working out with a retired marine, and began eating almost entirely vegetarian. I dropped 50 pounds.

Return.

It's been said you can't go home again. You can, but things will be different.

It's been said you can't dip your toe in the same river twice. That is definitely true – whether or not you have changed, the river keeps rushing. The river itself changes constantly.

Sometimes your "return" is simply trying to find yourself again, in light of all the changes you've been through.

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Chapter 11: "Rebirth"

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

- Helen Keller

So, I faced my ordeal with depression; I emerged from my innermost cave. You may be wondering why I offered that story, when I had already described the "ordeal" element earlier in the book. True, it occurred when I returned home. But it is also true that your journey will not consist of just one ordeal. You will continue to face ordeals throughout life. Hopefully, what you learn about yourself will

sustain you through those unexpected ordeals. You will continue to battle, to conquer, to learn, to grow, just as I did.

I don't want to paint this unrealistically perfect picture - there are still hard days in which I wake up depressed. I also don't want to diminish anyone who may have faced trauma beyond anything I have ever had to deal with in my fairly comfortable and, dare I say, privileged middle class bubble.

For those who struggle with depression, I know your experiences will be different from mine. Everyone's journey is different. But in my battle, the breakthrough came as I learned this one lesson that far surpassed anything else I had learned in college: I have worth simply because I exist. I am worth more than my grades, my degrees, or my job. I have worth because I was me.

This is rebirth. It actually requires reflection and introspection. It also requires faith and hope; you must believe that things do get better. You must believe that you can make choices that will improve your life.

And so, in that spirit, I offer my reflections upon my journey through college. As parents across the generations have learned, it may be a futile effort to ask those behind us to learn from our mistakes. I know you have to make your own mistakes in order to learn your lessons. But if you will at least read what I have learned, I hope that your mistakes will be minimal, and your path less rocky.

Your Instructor Cannot Read Your Mind

When you write, you need to give context and explain what you mean clearly. As a general rule of thumb, this means writing in complete sentences. Your reader is coming from a completely different point of view – you need to help the reader to see your point of view.

For example, in the American Government class I teach, students are asked to explain what the words “liberty” and “freedom” mean to them. The point of this assignment is to show students that not everyone defines the words liberty and freedom the same way. Remember, someone who reads your words can only discern what is written; they cannot possibly read your mind. Thus, your written communication must be clear, well-organized, and well executed.

Be direct with your answers and papers. You do not need to be fancy. You don't need impressive vocabulary to survive college.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Critical thinking and basic problem solving skills are perhaps the most important lessons you learn in college. The fundamental challenge behind every problem, question, assignment, or prompt you face in college consists of the following questions:

- 1.) Can you figure out what you being asked to do?
- 2.) Can you figure out what you already know as it relates to what you are being asked to do?
- 3.) Can you figure out what you need to find out in order to do what you are being asked?
- 4.) Can you figure out quality places to find that information you need to do what you are being asked?
- 5.) Finally, can you apply all of that information (both what you know and what you don't know) appropriately in order to accomplish what you are being asked to do.

Focus on One Thing at a Time

There is no such thing as multitasking. Your brain really can only focus on one thing at a time. Psychologists have found that when you think you are multitasking, your brain is just switching back and forth between different tasks (Taylor 2011). Some people are faster at switching between multiple tasks, but some people (like me) are not. I am a bit like those old floppy disc computers in which you have to wait fifteen minutes for the disc to load between levels of playing Space Invaders. The key takeaway: if you are doing too many things at one time, you will eventually drop something. You cannot multitask. Instead, be intentional by picking priorities and setting small and achievable goals for your school work.

Getting Organized

College is about figuring out what you need to accomplish, in what particular order, and then taking the appropriate action. This starts on Day One of each of your courses. Read the syllabus. Figure out, and write down, exactly what you need to complete to finish the course. Also look at how much each item of work is worth toward your final grade and set priorities accordingly.

Making Sacrifices Wisely

One of your biggest challenges in college will be about figuring out how to balance school, work, family, and hobbies. Crazy things that will happen like hurricanes, snowstorms, and other unplanned emergencies. With so many competing demands on your time, you need to give each of your required assignments a basic risk-reward assessment. One B or C is not going to kill you. When things get chaotic (and they will) - set priorities.

For example, in my American Government course, the final exam is worth ten percentage points of the final grade, while one of the weekly assignments is only worth five percent. It is stunning to me how many students will turn in the week 8 assignment (worth five percentage points) but not complete the final exam (worth 10 percentage points). If pressed for time, students in my class should finish the exam first and then see if they have time to take care of the last weekly assignment.

Read Directions

Read instructions very carefully. I am going to say it again. Read instructions very carefully. Often, the instructions for your assignments or discussion forums will consist of multiple steps. The challenge for students is to make sure that they answer each part of the question within a set of instructions. You need be able to break down complicated directions into bite sized pieces and take it one piece at a time, in order. Learning to read and follow instructions will help you with doing your own taxes.

When first tackling an assignment or exam question, some students tend to panic and just start putting things down on the page. Students then find themselves turning in work that never actually follows the instructions, or miss answering large chunks of the question.

Analysis vs. Arranging Quotes (Plagiarism)

When I was in school, I'd physically go to the library, pull a book or a physical journal off the shelf to read it. Research was a delightful and time consuming treasure hunt. At the same time, I wouldn't think of copying words from the book into my text ... honestly, it was just too slow, time consuming,

and painful. Then cheap computers were invented. Then someone invented copy and paste. And then someone (maybe Al Gore) invented the internet. And then plagiarism blew up.

Your instructor is interested in your ideas. Not the ideas of others. (Especially if the source of those other ideas is the dictionary. For the love of everything, do not cite or include dictionary definitions in any college work. Please, please, please do not include dictionary definitions in any of your work in college.)

Due to our addiction to standardized test and quantitative metrics, we've adopted a trivia contest approach to education in this nation. Because of this we assume that there is one single, golden, magical answer for every question asked in college. Students fall into the trap of thinking that in any assignment or exam they have to find the magical right answer after hunting in the mysterious land of Google.

College is not a trivia contest. College is about evaluating, analyzing, and questioning. If you're doing college right, you will end up with more questions than answers. It is about experiencing all sorts of new ideas. This will make you very uncomfortable. College is not a vending machine. You don't put money in and get a degree out. But when students forget this, they then tend to fall into the plagiarism trap.

I want to cover the following points about plagiarism:

[Intentional and Malicious Cheating](#)

If you are buying a paper from a website or turning in the work a friend gave you, you will get caught. You will be kicked out of college. Do not do this.

[Unintentional Plagiarism](#)

Stop being afraid of getting the wrong answer. The number one reason why students plagiarize is that they are afraid to get the wrong answer. I, along with most college instructors, primarily grade on how you support and argue for your answer - not whether or not you were right or wrong. Sure, if you tell me that Thomas Jefferson dropped the atomic bomb to end World War 1 (this was really turned in) you are going to lose a few points. But you are going to get an F (or worse) on an assignment if you just turn in text you copied and pasted from Wikipedia.

We can work with wrong answers. The assignments and exams help the instructor to diagnose what students are learning, and what they are not learning. If students are getting something wrong, then I have to figure out how to be a better teacher. But if a student is just turning in something found on Google, then no one is doing any learning.

[Correctly Using Quotes](#)

Quotes should only be used as evidence to support your arguments. Quotes should not be turned in as answers in and of themselves. As a general rule of thumb, if you have a quote that is more than a sentence, something is probably going terribly wrong. Merely putting quotes and a citation in your paper doesn't give you permission to just turn in the words of another as your own.

[Paraphrasing Tools](#)

I once saw a YouTube video that claimed in its title: "Here's how to beat plagiarism in college." Mildly intrigued, I watched the video. In the video, I was shown how I could take a Wikipedia article, run it through a magical paraphrasing tool online, and then turn in the output text and not get in trouble for plagiarism.

The YouTube video lied.

To prove my point I am going to actually try this paraphrasing tool right here before your eyes.

Let's try the Gettysburg Address. You and I know it. Here's the first half, by Abraham Lincoln (1863):

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this."

I am going to run that text through a real online paraphrasing tool. Here is what I got:

"Four number and seven years back our dads delivered on this mainland, another country, imagined in Liberty, and devoted to the recommendation that all men are made equivalent. Presently we are occupied with an incredible common war, testing whether that mainland, or any mainland so considered thus committed, can long persevere. We are met on an incredible combat zone of that war. We have come to devote a part of that field, as a last resting place for the individuals who here gave their lives that that mainland may live. It is out and out fitting and appropriate that we ought."

Is that suddenly a new speech? No, that is still the Gettysburg Address. It is still by Lincoln. And if I turn that in, or try to read it out loud, it may not get flagged by the plagiarism detection software, but I sound like a complete moron.

Some Final Thoughts on Plagiarism

Providing citations (in-text and end of text) is not just about permission, copyright, and avoiding plagiarism. Providing references and citations is about supporting your arguments and ideas. It communicates to your reader that you have done your due diligence in researching the material you are addressing in your work. When you provide a citation for an idea from someone else (who is preferably an expert) that you have incorporating in your writing you are telling the reader that your ideas are credible and not just made up opinions.

Finally, with all of your work in college, approach it as if you were trying to explain and teach the material to your friends or family - if you can teach it, then you know it.

Finding Good Sources

After the circus that was the 2016 election we are all sick of talking about fake news. It is important to base our work and learning on good quality sources of information. In college, many of your instructors will probably prohibit you from using Wikipedia. Wikipedia has its place, but since it can be edited by just about anyone at any given time, it may actually not be providing you with accurate information.

It is easy to see that Jim Bob's conspiracy theory blog is probably not the most accurate source of information for your college work. So, what makes a good source of information? Simply, good sources of information have some system of accountability toward producing good information. For example, peer reviewed journals (which most of your professors will require you to access as your primary source of information) have a system of review that relies on experts in a particular field to review information before it is published.

News outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal* or *The New York Times* have journalists who are bound to adhere to journalistic ethics and editorial review boards that ensure a certain level of quality information is published. Jim Bob's conspiracy theory blog is not required to adhere to journalistic ethics and does not have an editorial board providing accountability. Instead, Jim Bob's conspiracy theory blog derives its revenue from banner advertising. (My personal rule of thumb is, the more ads a website has on it, the more unreliable the source.)

This does not mean that peer reviewed journal articles and top notch news outlets always provide perfectly accurate information. However, these sources are better than others because the peer-review system provides a method for catching and correcting errors.

Please always remain somewhat skeptical, and question the information you are reading. Be a critical thinker – don't just accept everything at face value.

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Chapter 12: "Upgrade"

Carpe diem. Seize the day, boys. Make your lives extraordinary.

- Dead Poet's Society

One of my favorite movies is *Good Will Hunting* (I secretly think that *Good Will Hunting* is the prequel to the Jason Bourne movies ... but that is a story for another time). Will (played by Matt Damon) is this genius bent on self-destruction. He starts seeing a counselor played by Robin Williams (spoiler alert! but it's okay because my brief description cannot capture the fullness of the movie). Will's moment of breakthrough finally comes when his counselor helps him realize that the horrible things Will has experienced are not Will's fault. Will finally realizes that his worth is no longer attached to the horrific things he has experienced or his subsequent bad decisions.

You are worth more than your past. Your worth is not defined by your past. You have choices to make, and you sometimes make smart choices – sometimes you make bad choices. We all do. The secret is to learn from those mistakes, those ordeals, and experience that rebirth. Make the upgrade to a new, better you.

The upgrade is that new state of living that comes from reflecting on your journey.

Brown calls this living from a place of knowing your worth as wholehearted living.

"Wholehearted living is about engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness ... no matter what gets done and how much is left undone, I am enough ... Yes, I am imperfect and vulnerable and sometimes afraid, but that doesn't change the truth that I am also brave and worthy of love and belonging." (Brown, 2010, p. 1)

Now feeling my worth, I started to live. I started drawing healthy boundaries with people. I was enjoying the upgrade. And then I met the woman of my dreams and got married after seven years of not being able to get a date.

Now that's a funny story...

I had been driving a 1999 Saturn throughout my entire college career (and by college career, I mean starting at Belmont, finishing my bachelor's in the frozen tundra that is the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, and completing my master's at the University of Missouri, Kansas City). I put 250,000 total miles on that 1999 Saturn. But that Saturn was a tank - I had been rear ended three times in that car and the original bumper was still attached to the car. It was the car that would not die. I even learned how to do my own repairs on that car.

Many of my friends told me that I would never get a date as long as I drove around such a pile of crap. (Note: my friends also criticized my use of a flip phone...that's right I still use a flip phone). Despite my friends' predictions, I did meet a wonderful woman while I was still driving that Saturn. When I decided I wanted to marry her, I first asked her dad for his blessing. I was so nervous I almost threw up as we drove in my crappy Saturn to an Applebee's for lunch.

Once my wife and I were happily married, I asked my father-in-law how he knew I was an okay guy to marry his daughter. He said, "Any guy who drives pile of junk like that Saturn and still uses a flip phone clearly knows how to manage his money and is frugal enough to be a great husband to my daughter." That is right, my junky car and flip phone won my father-in-law's blessing. It turned out that my father-in-law has a nearly identical flip phone.

I was worth it. I am worth it.

So, fifteen years after starting my college journey, I have a story to tell. I emerged from my innermost cave, I battled my enemies, and found loyalty among my friends. I am still authoring my story – there will be many more battles yet to come. A lot more to learn. And I am eagerly anticipating each step of the road.

Now let's talk about you.

You are at the starting point of your college journey. Sure, you have a story to tell. This is a new chapter in your story. You will have choices to make as you encounter new friends and enemies. I just hope that all we have given you in GU101 will prepare you for those battles and for life beyond college.

Yes, it will be difficult and challenging, and there will be times when you feel like quitting. Just remember, five years will come and go whether you decide to stay in college or leave. If this is the right time for you to stick around, have faith that the reward will be worth the battles. The victory will be worth the defeats. The joy will be worth the sacrifices.

And most importantly – YOU are worth it.

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