



Student Handbook 2017-2018

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On-Campus Resource Phone List

Bobcat Bookstore	(209) 228-2665
Calvin E. Bright Success Center	(209) 228-7252
Campus Recreation & Athletics	(209) 228-7732
Center for Career and Professional Advancement (CCPA)	(209) 228-7272
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)	(209) 228-4266
Dining Services	(209) 228-3463
Disability Services	(209) 228 6996
Financial Aid	(209) 228-4243
Graduate Division	(209) 228-4723
Information Technology (IT)	(209) 228-4357
Kolligian Library (KL)	(209) 228-4444
Office of Admissions	(209) 228-6995
Office of Student Life (OSL)	(209) 228-3868
Office of the Registrar	(209) 228-2734
Police Department	(209) 228-8273
School of Engineering (ENG)	(209) 228-4411
School of Social Sciences, Humanities, & Arts (SSHA)	(209) 228-7742
School of Natural Sciences (NS)	(209) 228-4309
Student Health Center	(209) 228-2273
Student Housing Office	(209) 228-4663
Students First Center (SFC)	(209) 228-7178
Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS)	(209) 228-8277
UC Merced Violence Prevention Program	(209) 228-7939

SSHA Majors and Minors

SSHA currently offers 12 undergraduate major disciplines:

- Anthropology
- Cognitive Science (BA or BS)
- Economics
- English
- Global Arts Studies Program
- History
- Management and Business Economics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Spanish

Information on major requirements can be found in the University Catalog. Additional information including planning guides and major and breadth lists can be found at

<http://ssha-advising.ucmerced.edu/student/ssha-majors>

SSHA currently offers 17 undergraduate minor disciplines:

- American Studies
- Anthropology
- Chicano/a Studies
- Cognitive Science
- Community Research and Service
- Economics
- English
- Global Arts Studies Program
- History
- Management and Business Economics
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Public Health
- Sociology
- Spanish
- World Heritage
- Writing

Information on minor requirements can be found in the University Catalog. Additional information including planning guides can be found at <http://ssha-advising.ucmerced.edu/students/ssha-majors>.

Applied Opportunities in SSHA

Research with Faculty in SSHA

Interested in exploring your major or minor discipline in more depth? Talk to your favorite faculty member about directed readings or research. This will help to hone your research, writing, and critical thinking skills, will get you better acquainted with your area of interest, and looks great on graduate school or employment applications.

Academic research is a critical aspect of UC Merced's mission, just as it is with other University of California campuses. The process of discovery provides our students with a deeper understanding of the world and its cultural, social, natural and engineered systems.

The School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts' research is broadly divided among four major areas, with numerous graduate research groups across the school, fostering an environment of interdisciplinary research. These areas are: Cognitive and Information Sciences, Humanities and World Cultures, Psychological Sciences, and Social Sciences and Management.

For more information on how to apply research towards your graduation requirements, contact SSHA Advising at ssha.advising@ucmerced.edu.

Research with Faculty in Natural Sciences and Engineering

Research with faculty is not limited to only those faculty members in your major or minor discipline. If you are a Cognitive Science major, for example, and have a strong interest in the computer science aspect of the major, you might consider doing research with faculty in the School of Engineering. Similarly, an Anthropology major with a strong interest in forensics may be benefited by working with faculty in the School of Natural Sciences. We encourage you to explore your options in all three schools to make your experience at UC Merced as academically diverse and valuable as possible.

For more information on how to apply research towards your graduation requirements, contact SSHA Advising at ssha.advising@ucmerced.edu.

University of California Washington, D.C. Center (UCDC)

The University of California has extended its mission of service, teaching and research to the Nation's capital. The UC Washington Center is a multi-campus residential, instructional and research center that provides students and faculty from the University of California with opportunities to research, work, study and live within rich cultural, political and international heritage of our capital city.

Students from UC Merced and other campuses spend a term in residence at the Center working and studying in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. As interns with Congress, the Federal Government, research and advocacy organizations, the news media and through a host of other opportunities, students gain firsthand exposure to the American political process while attaining valuable work experience.

Students enrolled during the academic year take courses at the Center to fulfill the academic component of each campus program. Many write and present comprehensive research papers based in part on their internship experiences.

For more information on UCDC, please visit their website: <http://ucdc.ucmerced.edu>.

University of California Center at Sacramento (UCCS)

The UCCS Academic Program gives undergraduate and graduate students a rare opportunity to learn about California's public policy and journalistic processes firsthand. The program includes rigorous coursework as well as professional experiences built while living, interning and conducting research in the State Capitol. Offered during academic terms and summer, students enroll in classes while working 24-40 hours per week in internship placements.

For more information, please contact:

Center for Career and Professional Advancement
careercenter@ucmerced.edu

Pre-Health Advising

Pre-Health Advising Services offers a variety of services to help you reach your goals, including:

- One-on-One Appointments
- Informational Workshops
- Assistance with Course Selection
- Exploration of Career Options
- Exam Preparation
- Connect with Campus Resources
- Assistance throughout the Application Process



Gaining acceptance into a professional health schools requires a huge commitment from you. You must not only have a strong academic record, but also the meaningful extracurricular activities that develop the personal characteristics you will need to be successful in a professional school program. Health Professions Advising Services can help you make the best decision when choosing a health career path and advising you on how to build a successful application.

For more information, please contact:

Pre-Health Professions Advisor
School of Natural Sciences
prehealth@ucmerced.edu
<http://prehealth.ucmerced.edu>

General Education

What is General Education?

General education (GE) at UC Merced is meant to help you grow as a student and as an individual. John Nichols of St. Joseph's University put it best: "Your major will prepare you to make a living, while general education will equip you with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make a life." General education at UC Merced is designed to prepare well-educated people of the 21st century for the workplace, for advanced education, and for leadership roles in the community.

As an undergraduate student, general education will help you grow intellectually by building your abilities in quantitative reasoning, oral and written communication skills, and will provide exposure to broad domains of knowledge including arts, humanities, social, behavioral and cognitive sciences, natural sciences, technology and engineering methods.

GE requirements vary across schools, and transfer students may be subject to different general education patterns. Please consult your academic advisor for more information.

General Education Requirements*

University Requirements				
Requirement	Course	Term	Units	Grade
Entry Level Writing Requirement				
American History & Institutions				
CORE 1: The World at Home I				
WRI 10: College Reading & Composition				

School Requirements				
Requirement	Course	Term	Units	Grade
Introductory Nat. Sci. or Engineering Course with or without Lab				
Introductory Nat. Sci. or Engineering Course with or without Lab				
Mathematical / Quantitative Reasoning Course				
Humanities, Arts, or Foreign Language Course (Outside Major)				
Social Sciences Course (Outside Major)				
Upper Division General Education Course (Outside Major)				
Upper Division General Education Course (Outside Major)				
Upper Division General Education Course (Outside Major)				
Upper Division General Education Course (Outside Major)				

* Some general education requirements can be fulfilled through other means. Contact your academic advisor for more information.

For updated information on which courses fulfill general education requirements, please visit <http://ssha-advising.ucmerced.edu>.

How to Graduate with a B.A. or B.S. from SSHA

To graduate with a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree from the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts at UC Merced, you must complete at least 120 semester units – 60 of which must be upper division – and fulfill all general education and major requirements. For information on requirements for your specific majors, please consult the university catalog or contact your academic advisor. Often, students complete their general education and major requirements, but do not earn 120 units. This deficit can be filled with elective courses.

Elective courses are courses that do not necessarily meet a requirement, but will count for units. Some examples of elective courses are preparatory courses (ie. WRI 1 and MATH 5), courses meeting the same GE area (i.e. you take both an arts and a history course), courses for your minor, and “fun” courses. Units from Advanced Placement Exams and previous college work (ie. courses taken over the summer at a community college) can also count for elective units. The number of elective units needed to complete a degree will vary from student to student. Please contact your academic advisor if you have questions.

Undergraduate Advising in SSHA

How to Use Advising as a Resource

Advising Mission

In keeping with the university’s mission to serve as a center of higher learning and knowledge, the academic advising program within the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts (SSHA) strives to support students in the attainment of knowledge regarding themselves and the world in which they live. The mission of the academic advising program is to empower students in the use of this knowledge to develop sound educational plans that are consistent with their personal values, goals and career plans and provide a supportive atmosphere that guides students towards becoming self-directed learners and decision-makers.

Why should I see my advisor?

- Find out about interesting new programs
- Decide what classes I should take for my major
- Get information about Education Abroad Program
- Get the name of a professor who specializes in my area of study
- Declare my major or minor
- Identify strategies for raising my GPA
- Get connected to campus resources
- Update your advisor about personal or academic situations that may be affecting your ability to be successful
- Learn about free tutoring services for students and test taking skills
- Get information on internships and research opportunities
- Discuss ways to bulk up my graduate school and job applications
- Graduate on time!

Tips for Contacting SSHA Advising

SSHA Advising tries to respond to all emails within two to three business days. In order to expedite response time, here are some tips on what to include in your communications with SSHA Advising:

- **Plan ahead.** For example, if you know you need to have something signed by the dean by the second or third week of instruction, contact your advisor during the first week of instruction. All requests are subject to a minimum of a two-business day response time, and some requests may take up to a week to process.
- **Choose one contact method and stick with it.** If we receive multiple emails and / or voicemails from you, response time may be prolonged. Send one message and wait for a response. If you do not hear back from your advisor within three business days, please follow up at that time.
- **UC Merced email.** Email from your UC Merced email account, not your personal email account
- **Be sure to include your full name, student ID number, major, and class standing** whenever contacting your academic advisor.
- **If inquiring about a specific class, include the course name, number, and section number** (if applicable) - do not include the CRN, as we cannot identify courses based on CRN.

Communication with SSHA Staff

When emailing your advisor always include the following in your message:

The screenshot shows an email client window titled "Untitled - Message (HTML)". The email is addressed to ssha.advising@ucmerced.edu. The subject line is "Academic standing". The body of the email reads:

Good morning SSHA advising,

My name is Rufus Bobcat (100200300) and I am a Psychology major. I can't register for PSY 1 because it conflicts with WRI 1, is there an alternative? I hope to speak to you soon, thank you.

Sincerely,

Rufus Bobcat
rbobcat@ucmerced.edu
Student ID: 100200300

Four callout boxes provide additional instructions:

- "Include a subject" points to the subject line.
- "Include your full name, student ID number, and currently declared major" points to the first paragraph of the body.
- "Make sure to email us from your official ucmerced.edu email account" points to the signature.
- "Include a detailed message. If inquiring about a specific course, include course number" points to the body text.

Walk-In Advising

The SSHA Advising staff strives to provide superior service for students, faculty and administration as we work to forward the School and University missions.

In order to best assist students and their advising needs, advisors are available on a walk-in basis only (no appointments). Walk-in Hours are always updated on the SSHA Advising website (<http://ssha-advising.ucmerced.edu>). Every effort is made to allow students to meet with their specific major academic advisor. However, all advisors have been cross trained in each of the SSHA majors and can assist students in any major.

To see an advisor or peer mentor or drop off paperwork during or outside walk-in hours, students should check in at the SSHA Advising Reception Area, COB 204.

Tips when visiting SSHA Advising office:

- Be courteous and respectful. Our student assistants may be your peers but they should be treated with the upmost respect
- An emergency on your part does not constitute an emergency on our part so make sure to plan ahead!
- Come prepared with all necessary documents and information
- Look up walk-in hours updated weekly on our SSHA website
- Adhere to deadlines

Responsibilities in Advising

Advisor Responsibilities

- Clarify university and school policies, regulations, programs and procedures.
- Notify students of significant changes to university or school policies.
- Be available to meet with students each semester to discuss class registration and degree progression, given that the students promptly respond to invitations for appointments.
- Assist students facing difficulties that affect their education.
- Help students explore interests, abilities and goals and how these translate into an academic major.
- Offer advice for course selection and satisfaction of degree requirements.
- Discuss academic performance and implications of students' performance on undergraduate program and degree completion.
- Facilitate appropriate referrals to faculty members within the students' area of interest.
- Refer students to appropriate university support services as needed.

Student Responsibilities

- Follow through with actions identified during advising visit and accept final responsibility for all decisions.
- Alert the advisor to any life changes, extenuating circumstances, etc. that may affect academic needs, class attendance or ability to focus on your education.
- Prepare for academic advising appointments by clarifying personal goals and needs and reviewing the 2014 university catalog.
- Keep advisor informed about changes in academic progress, course selection and academic or career goals.
- Become familiar with major requirements, course prerequisites and other such information that affects course scheduling and class sequencing.
- Participate fully in courses by carefully reviewing course syllabi, completing assignments and attending class.
- Follow university procedures for registration and adjustments to class schedules.
- Observe all academic deadlines.
- Read and understand all UC Merced Academic Policies and Procedures found in the university catalog.

SSHA Academic Policies

General Education

Lower Division General Education Requirements

- Students must complete all lower-division general education requirements with a D- or better.

Upper Division General Education Requirements

- Students must complete all upper-division general education requirements with a D- or better.

Major Coursework

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

- Students must complete all major pre-requisites with a C- or better.
- Students must complete all major requirements with a C- or better and maintain a 2.0 GPA in all major coursework.

Major Coursework Requirements

- Students must complete all major pre-requisites with a letter grade option.

Minor Coursework Requirements

Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirements

- Students must complete all minor requirements with a C- or better and must maintain a 2.0 GPA in all minor coursework. Global Arts Studies Program minors must maintain a 2.7 GPA in all upper division minor coursework.

Minor Coursework Requirements

- Students must complete all minor courses with a letter grade option
- At least three (3) of the courses for the minor must be taken at UC Merced.
- At least four of the courses for the minor must be upper division.
- If designated as fulfilling general education, courses in the minor may satisfy general education requirements.
- Only one (1) course may be used to satisfy both a minor and a major requirement.
- Only one (1) course may be used to satisfy two minor programs' requirements.

Coursework at Other Institutions

Course Approvals

- Students must obtain pre-approval through the SSHA Advising Office for all courses completed at institutions other than UC Merced.
- All courses completed at institutions other than UC Merced must be worth at least 3 semester units to fulfill major, minor, or general education requirements at UC Merced.

Tips for the First Year of College

How College is Different than High School

Consider this your heads up: college is very different from high school. Here are just a few differences you'll notice during your time at UC Merced; read them over and be prepared for the most exciting time of your life!

<i>In high school...</i>	<i>In college...</i>
Your class schedule is usually planned for you.	You arrange your own class schedule, and are responsible for all courses you enroll in.
Your counselor tells you what courses to take in order to graduate.	You are responsible for knowing the complex graduation requirements and meeting them. Your academic advisor can work with you to plan out the courses you'll need to graduate.
Classes are usually no larger than 35 students.	Classes can have hundreds of students.
You have parents and teachers to remind you of assignments and deadlines.	You have to be self-reliant. You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due and for making sure they're turned in on time.
You rarely have to read something more than once because attending class is usually enough.	You have to review lecture notes and text material regularly in order to participate in and fully understand what is discussed in class.
You are given short reading assignments.	You are assigned large amounts of reading.
Class material and textbook material are usually the same.	Professors often lecture on material not in the textbook, and you are expected to learn and retain material from both sources.
You are in class for about 35 hours a week and you rarely have to study more than two hours a week.	You are in class for 12-17 hours a week, but for every hour in a lecture, you are expected to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class.
Teachers approach students if they think they need assistance.	Professors are willing to help students, but students have to initiate contact most of the time.
Teachers are usually available before, during or after class to talk.	Most professors expect students to come to their office hours to talk.
Teachers provide students with the information they missed if they were sick.	Professors expect students to get any missed information from classmates or other sources.
Tests usually cover small amounts of material and are frequently given.	Tests are less frequent and cover large amounts of material. Some courses have only two or three tests per term.
Tests are usually on a single chapter of information.	Tests can be on multiple chapters and are often cumulative (covering all information from the start of the term)
Make up tests are usually available.	Professors each have their own policy for make-up test, but generally, make-up tests are rarely given.
Mastery of a subject is being able to reproduce what you've been taught in the same form it was taught to you.	Mastery of a subject is having the ability to apply what you've learned to new problems and solve them.
Grades on homework significantly affect your final grade.	Grades on tests and papers usually comprise most of your grade.
Pluses and minuses in your grade usually don't count towards your GPA	Pluses and minuses count towards your GPA. (For example, an A- is only worth 3.7 grade points, not 4.0 grade points.)
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your first tests. These are usually wake-up calls to let you know what is expected, but they also count for a substantial part of your course results.
Efforts count. Teachers often have "good faith" rewards where your effort may help your grade.	Results count. Although professors appreciate effort made and your efforts may positively affect a professor's willingness to help you, efforts do not substitute for results.
If you have passed all of your classes with a D, you can graduate.	A GPA of 2.0 or higher is needed to graduate.

Grateful acknowledgement for the above information is given to Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center at Southern Methodist University.

Adjusting to College Life

College is a big change for most people. While the change seems to happen overnight, the adjustment period can take all four or five years. Below are some tips to help you adjust to college.

Talk with older students (in their second and third years) about the best ways to manage your time. Chances are they'll have a lot to say. Who better to give advice than someone who's been there?

Size up your courses, professors and exams. Examine how they operate and how you can best deal with them.

Bad grades do not mean you are a failure. They mean you have some adjusting to do. Study skills learned in high school might not be effective in college and it takes time to develop new study skills.

Pay attention to your mid-semester grades; they can help you identify courses you may need to put extra effort into.

Be proactive with your grades. Re-evaluate your study habits (time spent studying, what you studied, where you studied). Re-evaluate if you need more help; attend your professor's office hours, get tutoring or see your academic advisor.

Avoid comparing yourself to others. Everyone learns at a different pace and with a different style. Comparisons lead to lower self-confidence levels and maybe even poorer performance.

Be self-reliant. Being self-reliant means you are responsible for everything you do and don't do.

Feeling lonely? Consider getting a part time job or joining a campus organization. You can meet new people and some students say that such involvement helps them with their time management skills. It motivates them to get other chores done sooner like studying, doing laundry, etc. Just be careful not to let your work take priority over your studies.

Have confidence in yourself and your ability to be a college student. Whether you are a D student or an A student everyone is here to learn.

Take care of yourself mentally and physically. Exercise, socialize with friends and make sure you are getting enough sleep.

Have a support system. Family, friends, and even academic advisors should all be a part of your support system. These should be people you can talk to about your accomplishments and your struggles in college.

Selecting Your Perfect Study Environment

For people who like to study in quiet places, the library is perfect. The UC Merced library is completely wireless!

For people who can't stand deafening silence of a library, coffee shops, empty classrooms, and study hall areas are great.

In general, your bedroom is a poor environment to study in because of the numerous distractions: bed, phone, television and roommates. Even with the best laid plans and most cooperative roommates, studying in your room can be all too tempting ...

Sample Scenario #1:

In the middle of studying Jason realized his favorite show was on and figured he could come back to his books later. After his show was over he faithfully started to study again but it took him 30 minutes just to figure out what he was studying before.

Sample Scenario #2:

Jennifer had two midterms the next day and she was exhausted. She looked over at her cozy bed and decided to take a power nap before studying some more. Her power nap turned into a four-hour deep sleep and before she knew, it was 2am. She couldn't wake herself up enough to study. Consequently she was well rested for her midterms but she bombed both of them.

Music can be a distraction. Researchers have found studying with music on can be distracting and cause you to pay less attention to the information you are studying. Without attention information is less likely to be stored in your memory. However, some researchers argue slow, less upbeat music can help you focus on what you are studying. Pay attention to what works best for you (music, no music, certain environments, etc.) and stick with it each time you study.

Don't leave home without a pen or pencil, paper, books from classes, notes from class, course syllabus, flashcards, laptop, planner and highlighters. These all seem obvious, but the walk back down to your dorm is a long one if you forget something.

Planning for Success

Get a planner! Even though classes are scheduled at the same time every week, assignments and the amount of time needed to study for each class can change daily. Students often find making “to do” lists in their planner helpful.

Prioritize your activities! Figure out what is most important for you to be working on at a particular time and adjust your day as needed.

Be proactive! Procrastination is often the result of being overwhelmed by a project. Be proactive and do a little of the project at a time. If you’re stuck, see your professor in his/her office hours.

Set goals! Make specific study goals that are measurable, realistic and flexible help to get things done during a study session. (ie. Read 15 pages of history and summarize what’s important.)

Set boundaries! Be upfront with your friends and family. When you need to study, tell them so. True friends will understand that school needs to come first.

Take breaks - not only between study sessions, but also throughout the semester. Take a break from studying get some exercise, stretch, listen to music or have a snack. Burn out, especially during exams, is common. To avoid burn out, make sure you have scheduled some guilt-free days of rest throughout the semester.

Study for shorter amounts of time. Your brain stores and retains more information if you study for shorter periods of time and take breaks between study sessions. You are more likely to remember the first part (primacy effect) and last part (recency effect) of what you learned than the middle. Studies show that if you study in two 45-minute sessions, you’ll retain 40 minutes of study, whereas if you study for 1.5 hours straight, you’ll retain only 20 minutes of study.

Be flexible! It is important to have flexibility in your goals. Something you thought was highest priority might not stay so. Things come up and your plans may change.

Reward yourself! Plan some rewards for meeting your goals. Plan a day at Yosemite, or go catch a movie with a friend.

Go to Class!

Attend lecture! Relying on a friend to give you the notes can be a disaster. What if they showed up late? What if they fell asleep and missed a third of the lecture? The only way to ensure you get the information you need is to go yourself.

Go to class alert. Get a good night of sleep before class. Drinking caffeine at night can disrupt sleeping patterns and make you less alert in class. Avoid caffeine after dinner.

Be prepared. Bring your notes, syllabus and textbook. Complete the assigned reading before lecture.

Know your weaknesses and control them. Laptops are great for taking notes during lecture, but they can also offer several distractions: games, chatting, etc. If you find talking to your friends on Facebook Messenger or watching videos on YouTube more interesting than your lecture, you may want to think twice about bringing your computer to class.

Pay attention. One of the ways to retain information is by paying attention to it. Writing and rewriting information is passive learning. Be an active learner by paying attention in class, reflecting, analyzing what you're learning, asking questions, etc.

Take notes. After a few weeks of class, your note taking skills should improve and you should be able to decipher what is important to write down. Follow these helpful tips:

- Take notes on definitions and concepts.
- Take notes in outline form.
- Use arrows to connect ideas, and write with different colors.
- Abbreviate, omit words, or invent abbreviations.
- Pay attention to your professor and any voice changes, repetition, and gestures. These acts could be a signal that the information is important.
- Write questions down in your notes either on information you want to look up, or to quiz yourself later.
- Take note of things that confused you and ask the professor for clarification in office hours.
- Determine your professor's teaching method. Keep it in mind when taking notes.

Participate in lecture. Don't be shy - ask questions! Chances are if you're confused, half of the class is, too. Show your professor that you have a desire to participate.

Review concepts. When possible, review your notes after class. Look up the terms, key concepts, formulas, etc. and try to explain them to yourself. Fill in any holes in your notes. Quiz yourself on how the concepts are important to the rest of what you are studying. Then try to explain everything you learned to a friend. The more you do these concept reviews, the more likely the information will be stored in your memory.

Meet Your Professors

“Office Hours” are times set aside by professors during which they spend time talking to students and helping them with questions regarding course material. Below are some tips on how to maximize your time with faculty during office hours, and how best to use these meetings to your advantage.

Don’t be intimidated. Professors don’t bite! It is their job to help you understand material and you should feel comfortable asking them questions.

Be proactive. Get help at the first sign of trouble - don’t wait until you’re in too deep. If you can’t attend set office hours, email your professor and request a meeting at a time that suits both of your schedules.

Be polite. Request, don’t demand, a meeting with your professor. Face-to-face help from a faculty member is a privilege, not a right. When asking for help, use proper grammar in your emails. Professors and TAs don’t want to read emails that are written like text messages. Unless your professor has told you that you can call them by their first name, always refer to them as “Dr. [Last Name]” or “Professor [Last Name].”

Avoid placing blame. Blaming your professor or friends for your bad grade doesn’t get you very far. Instead, approach a bad grade with the attitude of “What went wrong?” For example, a student might approach a professor in the following manner:

“Hi Dr. Ross, I wanted to talk to you about my exam. I studied for a long time, reviewed the material with friends and still received a bad grade. What can I do next time to improve my grade?”

This approach shows that you care about your performance and are willing to work hard to improve it.

Be organized. When emailing your professor, identify yourself by providing your full name and the class you are enrolled in. When requesting a meeting, identify what you need help with so they can be prepared when you arrive and know how much time to set aside for the meeting. Bring all assignments, papers, exams, books, etc. pertaining to your question to the meeting. Make the most of your session by providing as much information as possible.

Be prepared. Your meeting will probably only last, at most, 10 to 15 minutes. Be sure that the material you want to cover can reasonably fit into that time frame, and come equipped with specific questions that will most effectively address your issue.

Be on time. A faculty member’s time, just like your time, is precious. If you are going to be late or unable to make a meeting, call them or email them to let them know prior to the meeting time.

Participate actively. Ask questions, clarify points, and take notes during the meeting. By doing this, you are more likely to remember and understand what was covered during your visit.

Plan ahead. Use the last few minutes of your meeting to talk with your professor about what you can do to improve your quality of work in the class.

Be appreciative. After meeting with your professor, take the time to send them a quick email thanking them for the time they spent helping you.

If you're still having trouble understanding the material, try one of the following solutions:

Set up small study groups. Select people you know understand the material and don't stay in an unproductive study group.

Get tutoring if you need help. Tutoring at UC Merced is free! Go to <http://learning.ucmerced.edu> or visit the Student Advising and Learning Center located on the first floor of the Gold Wing of the Kolligian Library in Room 172.

See your academic advisor for tips and advice, or for referrals to other programs that may benefit you.

Successful Reading

Motivation: Be motivated. Some people start reading with the attitude of “I don’t read well or I never remember what I read.” With this attitude, learning is more difficult. It is easier to remember things if you want or need to remember them.

Purpose: Look at the chapter outline or assignment guidelines to get an idea of what the big picture or purpose of the reading is. This “big picture” will help you put things into perspective when you read them.

Visualization and Association: Visualizing what you read helps create a vivid memory that is more easily remembered versus something you didn’t visualize. For example: the word “plethora” means “plenty of.” If you visualize a large amount of pillows you can then say “there was a plethora of pillows,” and you’ve just helped your brain remember that term.

Concentration: Concentration is focusing your attention on something and only that thing. If you are concentrating the first time you read something, you are less likely to need a re-read of that information. Visualizing and having a purpose will help you concentrate.

Repetition: Repeating details out loud can help keep information in your memory. It is even more likely to stay in your memory if you try to explain the information to others (also known as rehearsing the information).

Interrogate: Question what you read. Is the information accurate, meaningful, etc.? By doing this you are forcing yourself to concentrate on the information and you may even come across questions for the professor.

In short, successful readers:

- Look at the outline of the chapter for the big picture of how concepts are related.
- Read the chapter one time through without highlighting or outlining the information.
- Re-read the chapter (skim read) highlighting main concepts, examples, and definitions.
- Compare lecture notes to textbook information. Highlight important concepts that were covered in lecture in your textbook. Some students like to put the page number of the textbook next to the concepts in their lecture notes.
- Put asterisks by main points or main ideas.
- Write questions, summary phrase or commentary in the margins.
- Practice explaining what you have read to friends.
- Remember to take breaks and to study for shorter but more frequent sessions.

Keep in mind: Not every word in your textbook is important, so becoming a picky highlighter is wise. Try to decipher what is important and what isn’t. However, when in doubt, highlight - you never know if it will be on your next exam. Eventually you’ll have less doubt and more certainty that what you are highlighting is important.

Preparing for Exams

Studying for Exams

- Budget your time appropriately. Plan in advance how much time you want to study for an exam. Be flexible and give yourself plenty of time to study in the weeks prior to the night before the exam.
- Check your attitude. Procrastination in studying for exams is usually due to the daunting idea of taking a big exam or a bad attitude towards it. Check your attitude towards the exam. If you find you're dreading studying for the exam you should tackle it head on before your dread turns into procrastination.
- Get help early. If you know you have a big exam coming up and you don't understand something, visit your professor as soon as possible. Don't wait until the professor's last office hours before the exam. Chances are, that last office hour will be packed with other students who also waited until the last minute. You might not get a chance to ask your questions.

Multiple Choice Questions

- Read through all of the options. You could find a good answer but there may be a better answer in the other options.
- Cross-out the answers you know are wrong. Then choose the best answer left.
- Do not wait until you've finished all of the questions to mark your answers on your scantron or test book. Enter the answers as you go.

Essay Questions

- Practice outlining responses to hypothetical questions before the exam day.
- Practice writing an essay while timing yourself so you can pinpoint problems you may encounter.
- During the exam, before writing the essay, read the entire essay prompt, underline key points, and create an outline. However, keep in mind that a thorough outline will not replace a complete essay!

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