

# Academic Excellence

The Academic Success  
Center newsletter  
geared toward student  
success

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## You-Tubing for Academic Success

By Susan Sheiner, [ax5983@wayne.edu](mailto:ax5983@wayne.edu)

Looking for something new on You-Tube? Several new videos created for Wayne State University students can be accessed through the You-Tube website. Rebeca Befus, WSU First Year Experience Librarian created the series by using screen casing software. The topics of the short videos include: How to Use the Library Catalogue to find Books, Using Databases to Find Articles and The Differences between Scholarly and Popular Resources. Access them through typing "Wayne State Library" on the You Tube Search, or visiting the direct link: <http://www.youtube.com/wsuint>.

"These are short videos, so they can be watched quickly. The longest one is on finding articles and it is three minutes," Befus said. "The others are under two minutes. I think it is real nice because you can watch them and get the information you need quickly and move on to the rest of your day," she said. Befus is in the process of creating a video which explains how to evaluate resources for a research paper as well as one about avoiding plagiarism.

Creating these online modules is part of Befus' role as the First Year Experience Librarian at WSU. In addition, she is available to students for questions by phone, in person

at the Undergraduate Library, or Science and Engineering Library or by Instant Messaging, through the library website, [www.lib.wayne.edu](http://www.lib.wayne.edu).



"I love getting IMs," she said. "It is better than email, because I can fix the problem right away or refer students to a subject librarian. Sometimes students get frustrated at the research question stage of their paper and may change their focus over and over again when all they have to do is ask a librarian for help."

Befus is developing a link to a "Learning Tool" containing the new videos and will soon be available on the library website. In addition to a First Year Experience Librarian, students can consult the First Year Experience Library website by visiting [www.lib.wayne.edu/sites/fye](http://www.lib.wayne.edu/sites/fye) where they can find helpful information and valuable tools including "Assignment Planner", another tool for writing research papers.

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## Succeeding in an Online Course

By Mercedes Miramontes, [ea1350@wayne.edu](mailto:ea1350@wayne.edu)

Each semester, Wayne State University is increasing its number of online courses. Donna Maniaci, Manager of Registration and Scheduling in the Office of the Registrar, indicates that online classes are now available in most WSU colleges, including Business Administration, Education, and Fine and Performing Arts. With this increased availability, many traditional students are enrolling in online courses for the first time. While taking a class online can be a convenient option, students should be aware that online coursework can be very different from the traditional classroom experience, and there are a few of key points that will help you be successful in online courses.

First and foremost is **self motivation**. Students often expect an online class will be easier, but in reality it typically demands more time and effort than on-campus classes. Online courses do not provide the live interaction that students can get from simply going to class and taking part in discussion. Instead, with an online class students must make an effort to participate. Be willing to commit 12 to 15 hours per week, per course. Students should also be able to work independently and be proactive about completing assignments, watching video lectures, and participating in online discussions.

## SI Midterm Marathon a Success

By Susan Sheiner, [ax5983@wayne.edu](mailto:ax5983@wayne.edu)

The second annual Midterm Marathon on both February 26 and 27 was a major success. The event, hosted by the Academic Success Center (ASC) and the Dean of Students Office, covered a variety of subjects including Accounting, Political Science, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Spanish and French. Sessions were held on the first floor of State Hall. Students were able to get free help preparing for midterm exams.

Some 437 students participated in the two day event. Supplemental Instruction (SI) leaders focused on reviewing materials and exam preparation, said

Theresa Lindsey, Coordinator of Supplemental Instruction, in the ASC.

"We were very pleased to be offering even more subjects this year," she said. "Last year a number of students expressed their appreciation for the Midterm Marathon, and attributed their success on their midterm in part to the instruction they received from SI."

"The Midterm Marathon is a unique opportunity to get extra help in your classes, especially if you can't attend regular SI sessions during the week. SI leaders usually prepare something special for the

Equally important is **time management**. While online courses offer greater flexibility, it is incumbent upon students to determine their schedules and to avoid falling behind. While you can work at your own pace, there are still deadlines you must adhere to. In many classes professors will post all assignments for the course at the beginning of the semester; this makes planning ahead and keeping up on assignments much easier. It is advisable to use a personal calendar to schedule weekly assignments and long term projects. Professors won't accept late assignments because of last minute technological failures.

Additionally, having the right **technical skills** is essential. Students are expected to check e-mail and discussion boards frequently. Being comfortable using a computer and having a reliable Internet connection is vital. Beyond these basics, however, students should also be ready to work with new and unfamiliar software programs.

Finally, do not be afraid to **ask questions**. If you are struggling with a topic the professor will never know unless you actively seek help. Discussion boards are an excellent way not only to show what you know, but also to work through issues with the help of classmates and the professor.

Online courses do require a different approach than traditional campus-based classes. By following the tips outlined above, most students will find their online course experiences to be rewarding and successful.

day so it ends up being a lot of fun!" remarked SI leader Sarah Michienzi.

Supplemental Instruction is also offered throughout the semester at regularly scheduled times. SI is free and open to students enrolled in the courses. These sessions supplement the course lecture and give students a chance to learn material in different ways. They are group study sessions, where students collaborate and go over lecture material in a relaxed environment.

"In SI, you will find answers to your questions, and learn techniques to master difficult material," Lindsey said.

## Advisor's Corner: Choose Your Courses Carefully

By Kate Bernas, ab9599@wayne.edu

One of the most common advising requests students have each term is for help with selecting courses. Even students with a clear understanding of their degree requirements still take the time to confer with an advisor regarding the many factors involved in planning a successful semester. From the advisor standpoint, the most important of these factors are credit load, prerequisite planning, and content balance.

Determining how many credits to carry each semester involves more than just deciding whether you are a full or part time student. For many students there is a credit hour "comfort zone" they hold to in order to maintain outside responsibilities and still be academically successful. In addition, students trying to stay on-track for a projected graduation date or professional school admission need to plan out their courses long-term to make sure they can achieve their goal.

Prerequisite planning is another essential consideration for all students, but especially important for



those planning admission to a professional program with firm deadlines. For these students, course planning must take into account individual placement results in areas such as math and chemistry, as well as the number of terms available to complete all requirements. A student may be surprised by how few choices he or she really has for a given term when working toward such a deadline.

A student's major will also affect the need for planning. Major advisors within the departments are the best resource for this kind of planning since they know how the department plans to offer its courses in future terms as well as the common mistakes to avoid with their courses. For this reason, students are strongly

encouraged to meet with their departmental advisor on a regular basis.

A final consideration has to do with picking a well-balanced set of classes. This means encouraging a mix in the types of courses (i.e. combining more quantitative courses requiring daily homework with courses requiring heavier reading and longer papers) as well as the kinds of challenges they provide (a major course you've been looking forward to along with a general education course in an area that is completely new to you). Typically, courses requiring different demands and a variety of skills make for the best combination.

Ultimately, successful course planning is about taking the right number and combination of courses in the right sequence. Advising facilitates this process but only with the student's help. Knowing your limitations, providing insight to your advisor, and being willing to adjust your expectations when discussing academic goals can go a long way in maximizing your advising experience and securing your success.

## Three Habits of Highly Ineffective Students

By Angela Zanardelli, au1072@wayne.edu

First things first, this is not a friendly, crowd-pleasing article on becoming an effective student. It will not provide you with over-used, one-size-fits-all tips on how to manage your time or how to organize your tasks. This is the real deal. I am not going to focus on what you should do, I will inform you about what *not* to do. There are three major things that you need to stop immediately in order to reach your semester goals. If you successfully cease each of these actions, it is to be expected that you will notice a positive change in your grades. Let us take a closer look at behavior that can keep you from your dream GPA.

**STOP** wasting your time being inattentive during lecture and attempting to convince yourself that you'll learn the material from the textbook at home. Prepare for lecture so that you can be active during the discussion. It takes 15 minutes to scan a chapter and see what material will be covered during class. That 15 minutes will be a major investment in your future study time considering you'll master most of the material during lecture and be able to properly review (not relearn) after class.

**STOP** ignoring material that you've already learned, assuming that it is no longer pertinent. You must do short, frequent reviews in order to remember something effectively enough to be able to apply it on the exam. For example, you meet someone once in the student center and you run into them again three weeks later on campus. Your first thought is "I know that person but I just can't remember where I know them from". If you would have met the same person four times a week for 15 minutes each time, it's not likely that you'll forget who they are a few weeks later. The same applies for course material; frequent and short reviews are highly effective for exam preparation.

**STOP** deceiving yourself. Most likely, self-deception is not your intention but subconsciously students use it as a way to continue their negative habits. So with that said, try being brutally honest with yourself. If you know that you cannot effectively comprehend material in a study group, don't study in a group. If you know that you lose focus in lecture because you don't eat breakfast beforehand, don't skip breakfast.

When written out, these examples sound like basic logic but students are professional excuse creators. Unfortunately, the excuses and continued negative habits are keeping you from your full academic potential.

By Latesha Bigford, bb4716@wayne.edu

To get the most out of their education, students need both academic courses and real-world experiences. In a service-learning experience, students learn not only about social issues, but also how to apply the new knowledge to action that addresses real problems in their own communities. The following are just some of the service-learning opportunities for WSU Students.

**Alternative Spring Break Detroit (ASBD)-** During ASBD, a variety of experiences are used to help students better understand and enjoy their own backyard. Though volunteering is the essential backbone of ASBD, students will also be provided with the opportunity to learn about Detroit, dine at ethnic restaurants, visit cultural hot spots, as well as get to know how Detroit's movers and shakers are playing a starring role in city revitalization.

<http://www.doso.wayne.edu/asbd2010/pages/details.html>

**Confucius Institute: Summer Service Learning Program in Rural China-** By traveling to China's poorest regions and providing K-12 students with opportunities to learn and practice English, volunteers have inspired rural Chinese students to study English and other subjects for the national college entrance exam. Volunteers spend approximately two weeks at their respective sites and three days in Beijing or Wuhan before and after their journey to the countryside. Students are encouraged to conduct research and may receive up to three credits for their experience.

<http://www.clas.wayne.edu/unit-inner.asp?WebPageID=2416>

**Pro Health in Belize: An International Health Care Experience-** Wayne State University students will collaborate with ProBelize and the community hosts of ProWorld Service Corps for a short term service learning program. The primary project focus will be on health outreach campaigns, health education, research, and additional projects selected by the community. After this experience, students will be able to think better globally, and to perceive their own lives from an introspective angle, eventually learning how they can help make a change.

<http://studyabroad.wayne.edu/program/program.php?id=2>

**Arts & Architecture in Paris-** Arts & Architecture in Paris provides a fabulous opportunity to learn while you experience some of the most famous art, architecture, food, and history in the world. Apply your experiences through service by engaging area secondary students in conversations about the people and places of Paris.

<http://studyabroad.wayne.edu/program/program.php?id=7&section=overview>

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**Detroit Fellows Tutoring Project (HON 4990 / HON 3000)-** Students can earn 2 to 4 Honors credits while teaching reading skills to Detroit Public School children in kindergarten through second grade. The schedule is based on student availability and the number of credits for which they sign up. Tutors work during regularly scheduled school hours: 7:30am to 3:30pm <http://honors.wayne.edu/detroitfellows.php>

**Detroit City Government, Citizenship and Service (HON 4990)-** Students will learn about Detroit city government from retiring City Councilwoman, Sheila Cockrel. Students plan and carry out a voter education service project that will enhance Detroiters' civic participation and students' own citizenship.

**Learning About Community through Research (CBS 3710)-** A blend of participatory, in-service, and classroom work to enhance undergraduate research skills by linking social science theories and concepts to hands-on community-based learning opportunities.

**Understanding Human Society (SOC 2000)-** Through an analysis of basic sociological concepts and principles, this specific course section gives students an understanding of the perspective that sociology brings to the study of human society. This course meets the HON 3000 service-learning requirement but does not count towards the total of 36 credits in Honors courses.

**Writing and Community (ENG 3020)-** In this special section of Intermediate Writing, students complete reading and writing assignments tied to community service projects. Students in this section choose a 20 hour service project at an urban senior learning center or at one of two Detroit public elementary schools (one with a primarily Spanish-speaking Latino population and one with a primarily African-American population).

**Art History: Topics in Art in Community (AH 4240/ HON 4240)-** Students will examine the role and function of art and the visual artist in contemporary society. Students will have the opportunity to devote 25 hours over ten weeks to a community-based service learning project at one of the community partners; including, Michigan Children's Hospital, Heidelberg Project, and Capuchin Soup Kitchen After-School Arts Program.

For more information about when courses are offered and prerequisites visit [www.classschedule.wayne.edu](http://www.classschedule.wayne.edu).

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Comerica Academic Success Center is for all Wayne State University undergraduate students to become self-determined, motivated, and independent learners. To support students' success in the University environment, the Academic Success Center provides individualized services and the tools to develop effective learning skills.

### Free services of the Academic Success Center include:

- Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction
- Individual Support with a Learning Specialist
- Study Skills Enhancing Workshops

### Thank you to our editorial board:

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