

# How *Not* to Be a Successful College Student

Consistently arrive late for class. Make a big disruption when you come in--slam the door, climb over people to get a remote seat, drop your backpack loudly, shuffle books and papers around, and pop open a soda can.

Then, slouch in your seat, flirt with other students, stare at the ceiling, put your feet up on the seat in front of you, and snap gum. Never look the professor in the eye or bother to take notes. Better still, sit with a friend so you can chat and giggle during the lecture. Eat lunch--preferably something crunchy and something with a strong odor. Yawn loudly. Fall asleep. Do work for other classes. Begin packing up your things before class is over. Get up and leave while the professor is still talking.

During lectures, women should check their hair and paint their nails. Men should wear sunglasses or baseball caps to hide their eyes, lounge in their seats with arms and legs spread widely, act bored, and *never* appear to have any interest in the lecture material. The most important thing is to look cool.

Never ask questions or offer answers to the professor's questions.

Waste class time by asking lots of irrelevant questions, using personal anecdotes and rambling digressions whenever possible.

Chronically argue with the professor. Try to point out every possible gap or weakness in the lecture material to demonstrate how infinitely clever you are. Be unwilling to concede the validity of other viewpoints and be intolerant of people whose opinions differ from your own. Never try to understand a topic from different perspectives, and never question your own assumptions.

Don't bother opening the textbook. If you're really determined not to be successful, don't bother *buying* the textbook. Alternatively, you can buy the textbook and bring it with you to every class, but never open it for any reason. This way, it will be in pristine condition when you try to sell it back to the bookstore as a used book.

Under no circumstance should you *ever* read *anything* a second time!

Wait until the day before an exam to approach the professor for help. Insist on being seen immediately, without an appointment. They love it when students who never come to class suddenly show up at their office before the exam and expect a private tutoring session that summarizes all the lecture material since the start of the semester.

Wait until the day before an assignment is due to work on it. If you can't finish in time, just approach the professor and whine about unfair deadlines, your busy schedule, and your distracting roommate. Always expect to be given special treatment.

Never take any initiative. Don't turn to your textbooks or supplementary readings for answers or clarifications. It is unthinkable for you to go to the library and find additional sources of information to clarify difficult or confusing material.

"Suggested reading" should be completely ignored. "Required reading" is optional. If it's important, the professor will mention it in class. Since you won't be going to class much, find the biggest nerd there and arrange to borrow his or her notes.

Never take notes of your own. Expect to be able to borrow other people's notes, or look for note-taking services that will sell you a copy of the lecture notes. Failing that, have the balls to ask the professor or teaching assistant to show you their own notes.

Be a classroom attorney. Try to negotiate the course requirements, bend the rules, and find loopholes. Try to squeeze out special treatment for yourself. Find weak excuses for having to take exams at different times from the rest of the class.

Any disability, unfortunate incident, personal problem, minority status, or disadvantage gives you *carte blanche* to miss all deadlines and expect lengthy extensions.

Even though you knew since the first day of class that a term paper was due on the last day, ask for an extension because (insert weak excuse here--see above).

Miss class, then ask the professor if "anything important" was covered. Expect a full summary of the lecture to be provided on demand.

When you don't understand something, first ask if it will be on the exam. If it won't be, you just saved yourself a lot of trouble.

Act as if you are attending college against your will, and consider it a big inconvenience. Think of classes as an unpleasant obligation, not a service that you requested and paid for.

Complain about the workload. Expect to get acceptable grades with minimal work. Don't be tricked into thinking that getting good grades requires any effort on your part.

Make athletic activities your first priority. Expect that your professors will agree that athletic obligations take precedence over academic ones.

Choose classes based on the convenience of their meeting time. Never take a class that meets before 11am or after 1pm.

Turn in papers filled with misspelled words, grammatical errors, and unstandard format. Argue that the content is what matters, not the style. As long as the facts are right, who cares if it's incomprehensible writing? Never take the time or trouble to look up a spelling, grammar, or style question.

Turn in your papers unstapled. Loose pages are fine, especially when they aren't numbered in any way.

Only write your last name on exams, especially on those computer-scanned answer sheets. It's such a bother to fill in all those bubbles, and what's the chance that there's another student named Smith in the class, anyway?

The only thing you should care about is getting acceptable grades with minimal work. Never do work that won't affect your grade. Find shortcuts to assignments. Only read the chapter summaries in your textbook. Try to resubmit papers from old classes for new assignments. Study only the material that will be on the test.

When you write a paper, find out the minimum acceptable length and write no more than that. Find out the minimum acceptable number of references, and use no more than that. Use only the most convenient references possible. For example, the course textbook should always be one of those references, since you already have to read it anyway. Your daily newspaper or *People* magazine may have articles that are indirectly related to your paper topic--cite them, and that can be a reference. Don't bother going to the library--just browse the Web and use whatever comes up from a Lycos search as reference material.

Remember that your part-time job is more important than study time. Nobody ever got paid for studying.

Above all else, do whatever you can to cheat the system. After all, you've already handed over tens of thousands of dollars to your college. What more do they want from you?