

Study Skills Workshop: Class Participation



and Student Resources

*Courage is not the absence of fear
but the ability to carry on with dignity in spite of it.*
– Scott Turow

Career Services/Academic Advising, Student Life
For more information/questions
Place in Email Subject Line: 'Study Smart'
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THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Learning at university requires that you connect yourself with information and materials and actively participate in class.

How well do you participate in class?

In class, are you the person in the corner looking out the window, the person who monopolizes class discussions, or the one with prepared notes and questions, ready to participate?

What are some things you do *in class*?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ask questions | <input type="checkbox"/> check my email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> gossip with my neighbour | <input type="checkbox"/> do the reading from last week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> do the reading for next week | <input type="checkbox"/> take notes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> think about other things | <input type="checkbox"/> use my cell phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> give my opinion during discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> listen when my peers ask ??? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> do homework for another class | <input type="checkbox"/> raise my hand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> focus my attention on the instructor | <input type="checkbox"/> check out my neighbour |

What are some things you do *before class*?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> all of the assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> review the syllabus/course outline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> meet with a fellow student to discuss ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> get a lot of sleep |
| <input type="checkbox"/> run - I'm usually late! | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> prepare discussion questions or points of clarification to ask | |

By discussing, sharing and comparing your ideas and understandings in class, you can deepen your own understanding of what you are learning and learn from other students, as well as from the professor and the textbooks.

Professors appreciate your participation because it helps them to know if you understand what is being taught or if you need further explanation or other help.

How to participate:

- answer questions from the professor
- answer questions from other students
- put questions to the professor and/or to other students
- make comments and give your own opinion
 - about what the professor says, about reading for the class, about comments the other students make
- summarize a discussion or an argument
- report to the whole class on a small-group discussion

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*The best way to sound like you know what you're talking about
is to know what you're talking about.*

– Author Unknown

Grasp the subject, the words will follow. – Cato The Elder

Preparing to Participate:

Before class

Pre-read:

- Ensure that you do the pre-reading early, so that you have time to think about what you have read before the class.

Prepare questions:

- Make a note of anything you are not clear about, and prepare a question to clarify your understanding.

Review notes taken at previous classes:

- Make a note of any ideas which may be useful to you in writing assignments or broadening your reading.

Prepare responses:

- When you read, engage with the ideas critically and actively. Note ideas about which you have strong opinions, positive or negative.

Use visualization:

- Think about the questions and comments you have thought of, and visualize in your mind how the discussion will go. **Imagine yourself taking part:** using people's names, getting their attention, asking questions, and commenting on what you've read and on what other people are saying.

Attend all classes; bring the right material; get enough sleep.

During class

Watch for body language:

- Watch for verbal and physical cues which tell you that a speaker is preparing to finish speaking. This will help you know when to get ready to talk or when to start an interruption.

Use body language:

- Make eye contact with the person managing the discussion; use your hand to let them know you have something to say. Lean forward in your seat as a signal that you wish to speak.

Sit opposite the professor:

- This will make it easier to signal your interest in speaking. Don't sit behind other people or right at the back of the room.

Ways to Participate:

- Signal an intention to say something; interrupt appropriately,
- Comment on, respond to, agree or disagree with a previous speaker,
- Shape the discussion – link it to the readings,
- Acknowledge lack of familiarity, speculate: there is not always a 'right' answer,
- Express confusion – ask for something to be repeated.

Expect to feel nervous!

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*Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.*
– Winston Churchill

Resources to Assist YOU

Academic Advising and Adult Learner Services (1st floor, 489 Portage Avenue)

- problem solving and referrals
- provide information about programs, courses, and university requirements in the Faculties of Arts, Science, Business & Economics, Kinesiology
- assist you in developing your education plans
- provide feedback on your course selection and assist with the registration process
- assist with Appeals: Retro-Active Withdrawal, Incomplete Term Work, Deferral of Exams

Accessibility Services (1A08)

- facilitates and promotes the ongoing development of an accessible learning environment which provides students with disabilities or medical conditions the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of campus life.
- supports and services provided to students with learning, physical and visual disabilities, mental health issues, deaf or hard of hearing, chronic illness as well as both temporary and recurring medical conditions
- *Accessibility Services will be moving to 1M29 and 1M33 (tentative date March/April 2016). For more information, contact Accessibility Services directly.*

Counselling Centre (1st floor, Duckworth Centre)

- free personal counselling
- If you are ever 'weighed down' about something, you are welcome to meet with a UW counselor to address any personal difficulty, dilemma, or opportunity.
- counselling is a confidential, collaborative, conversational process that makes a practical, positive difference!

The Tutoring Centre (3G10 & 3G11)

- Provides free tutoring in Applied Computer Science, Chemistry, Math, Physics, Statistics, and Writing.
- Math & Science Tutoring offered one-to-one and in small groups, is provided by professional and peer tutors and focuses primarily on first year Math & Science courses.
- Writing tutoring is provided by trained peer tutors through the Department of Rhetoric, Writing and Communications, is offered both one-on-one and online, and is available for students at any university level
- For more information, visit the Tutoring Centre website at <http://tutoringcentre.uwinnipeg.ca>. Book an appointment 786-9129
- For information visit tutoringcentre.uwinnipeg.ca
- Best success:
 - Come early and often.
 - Peer tutors can help you at any stage of learning, not just at deadlines.
 - Bring the course assignment with you to an appointment.
 - Peer tutors are there to *supplement* instruction.
- What not to do:
 - Think you'll receive proofreading, editing, "checking," or polishing work.
 - Show up a day or two before your papers are due (or within hours).
 - You need time to think about, act on, and integrate the substantive help you will receive.

Mentor Program (1st floor, Sparling Hall)

- support for new first time students to make the transition to a new school or new city
- building community on campus
- *the Mentor Program is moving to 475 Portage Avenue (tentative date February 2016).
For more information, contact the Mentor Program directly.*