

My experience in SSS 101: Mastering College Life (Focus on Men)

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When I heard my counselor suggest Mastering College Life- SSS 101, I honestly thought he was joking with me. What could this class possibly teach me? The validity of the course was questionable in my eyes, up until the first week. This course was unique, for it required me to think unlike other classes where you read a textbook with set questions and set answers. The reason I was so attracted to SSS 101 was because there was no textbook and no set answers.

Every week was full of though provoking questions. The answers, however, were of my own understanding and viewpoint, which required a lot of self reflection. It is impossible to be taught how to master college life in only one semester, but with the lessons I learned in the course I feel that I am far more equipped to take on new challenges and deal with existing ones in my life and College. Class discussions revolved around a book entitled *Letters to a Young Brother by Harper Hill*. This was truly a phenomenal piece, written with attention and care. The book aides a young man throughout his many trials in life. As an older brother *Harper Hill*, gives the young man advice on different topics, such as time management, money management, career exploration, relationship issues, and many other themes. The overall theme of the book was to “*manifest your destiny*,” a lesson which still lives with me today.

In addition, we had to read a small instructional booklet entitled “How to Get Good Grades in College.” There were many interesting ideas brought up that I never realized played an important role in my academic success. The booklet explained many ways to manage time effectively. Interestingly enough, one of the points mentioned was to not overextend oneself, that is to say not over working. Take for example those late nights spent writing an assignment that is due the next day. At the end of the night you may feel like you have accomplished a huge task without sacrificing any other chores. The feeling of accomplishment is a false feeling because it fades rapidly following the result of your late night paper. This is an all too familiar feeling for me; however, one way I can extinguish the bad habit of overextension was by planning. Planning ahead and being organized are two themes that I learned in class that assist with managing my time.

We had some interesting assignments. For example, we were asked to complete a time management schedule, based upon identifying everything we do in a given week. I found some very interesting details about my daily routine. I was currently enrolled in 11 credit hours. Dr. Rudder recommended that I find at least 22 hours of study time a week. The truth is that my schedule did not allow me to study for that many hours in one week. I only seem to be able to study for half of that time. After I finish studying, I only had about 10 hours of down time, including the time I set aside to relax and go out. The schedule I made has made me realize that I work exactly twice as much time as I spend in school. I was working 22 hours. This was not a good plan. I was overworked and I felt like I had a heavy load on my shoulders until I revised my daily routine to make a school

a priority in how I managed my time. The class showed me that my hectic schedule definitely called for an overhaul.

As a result, I saw the benefits to being more organized and its impact on success. At the top of any major company is a C.E.O., I thought to myself, what would I see if I were to walk into one of his/her offices? Would I see clutter or important notices disregarded? Not at all, these individuals got where they are by being organized, keeping books up to date, and having a clean place to work. In that regard, keeping a daily planner and writing down due dates will help me stay on top of things I need to get done. Also, having a clean workstation, to do class work on is important because you do not want to be distracted while doing work.

The final tip that I received from the class was the most helpful: note-taking is a must in classes. Taking good notes is a rarity for me. This is perhaps the one major thing that I need to work on. Notes are intended for two purposes. The first is to help you pay attention in the classroom, by following in concert with the instructor's thoughts. Notes will also serve as a method of review; instead of hounding through the textbook the day before a test, you can look through the notes you took in class. Going over my notes is beneficial, for teachers almost always fill the board with information that will be on the test, and to have that same information at your disposal is definitely a plus. A classroom setting can be boring sometimes. I often found myself spacing out during class. After a couple times I noticed that I would fall asleep only in the back of the class, mostly because I felt completely uninvolved. I was able to triumph over my drowsiness by being

on time, and sitting in the front of the class. By doing this I will be able to hear what the teacher has to say and see the board better, so that I may note what it says in an organized fashion. I learned all of this in class.

The end of my semester in SSS 101 was bittersweet, for I got to know everyone in the class on a different level, and share a lot of stories with each of them. I learned that many of us struggle with the same issues. In end, I strongly recommend this class.