Midterms: Gentle reminder of how you are performing in your courses...or a major wake up call?

by Elizabeth Crouch, Director Biomedical Science Program

Midterms can be a stressful time of the semester. There are often multiple exams in a week and, in some cases, it is the first major exam of the semester for a course. Furthermore, activities with various clubs and societies are in full swing, and, let’s face it; there is always Fightin’ Texas Aggie Football on the weekends. So, how do you survive this time of year and what exactly do your midterm grades mean?

First, look ahead at least a week to see what assignments and tests are coming up so that you can plan your school, work and leisure schedules accordingly.

Second, plan your schedules in that order. School comes first.

Third, do not wait until the last minute to study. Unlike high school, where an exam might cover one to two chapters, most major exams at Texas A&M will cover multiple chapters, homework assignments and laboratory sessions, perhaps even books. Therefore, begin studying early and continue to read and study a little each day for all of your courses. Furthermore, a good night’s rest will ensure that you stay healthy. Should you get sick on the day of a midterm, please contact the professor immediately to discern the type of documentation required to substantiate your absence. You will also want to inquire about a make-up exam.

If you have questions about what constitutes a university excused absence, please see http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07 for further information.

Then, what happens after all those exams are complete? All students classified as U1 (freshmen) will receive midterm grades. These will be accessible on howdy.tamu.edu and are an indication of how you are doing in a course. Please make sure that you check these. Some professors will enter an “I” (incomplete) or “X” (the professor did not turn in a grade.) Do not worry if you see these; you can ask the professor what your grade is. Also, look in the absence column. Some professors keep roll and will record how many absences you have along with your grades. If your absences seem excessive, meet with your professor about the discrepancy.

Don’t forget, it is imperative that you meet with your professor, as they care about how you perform in their course. Make sure that you take any tests or homework with you so that you can go over what you missed. Also, try asking how you can better study for the work you are misunderstanding. It indicates that you have been studying, but wish to improve. Also, remember that there are several points of help for you on campus. Your academic advisor is available to you! They are wonderful sources of help in that they can give you an indication of what the department expects of you thus far, point you towards the proper tutors, help desks, and supplemental instructors, or refer you to the Student Learning Center (845-2724) or Student Counseling Service (845-4427).

Bottom line: midterm grades are not your final grade! If you have been doing well, keep it up. If you are not performing up to your standards, get help. It is not too late to end the semester strong.

Good luck and Gig ‘em! Elizabeth Crouch, ’91, ’96.
Professors love having students in their classes who are there to actively, learn, participate, and demonstrate their commitment to learning.

And then there are certain behaviors best avoided by students in college. These behaviors drive faculty crazy and will lead to you being seen as less than the ideal student. Some of these activities are disrespectful to the professor -- as well as to your fellow students.

**PET PEEVES**

What are things to avoid? Here's one list:

- Failing to come to class regularly
- Arriving to class late (and especially making a big entrance), and worse, making a habit of it
- Shuffling papers, putting books away, and other “end-of-class” behaviors before the professor has ended class
- Questioning whether some of the homework for the class is just “busy work.”
- Asking if “we’re doing anything important in class” when informing the professor that you may have to miss a class
- Asking about what is happening in class when it is clearly marked on the syllabus
- Allowing your cell phone to ring in class
- Text messaging while in class
- Holding a private discussion with someone during class
- Asking inane or off-topic questions
- Eating a meal in class
- Telling the professor you went to his/her office for help, but that he/she is never there
- Claiming you did not know an exercise was due, that there was a test, or any other class work that is clearly identified on the class calendar
- Not completing the assigned reading before class
- Going to the restroom in the middle of class (unless it’s an emergency)
- Sleeping during class
- Complaining about the workload in class, stating “you know, this isn’t the only class I’m taking”
- Wearing inappropriate clothing (or the lack of it) to class
- Asking to “borrow” a stapler to staple a homework assignment for the class. (Would you ask your boss for a stapler to staple a report?)
- Turning in assignments that do not follow the class procedure (and every professor has different guidelines; know them!)
- Making excuses for missed exams, class assignments. (Especially don’t use the time-worn dead grandparent excuse, or that you have to pick someone up at the airport)

**POSITIVE BEHAVIORS**

Here are the things college professors love:

- Students who take responsibility for their education
- Students who have read the assigned reading and actively participate in class discussion
- Students who complete all assigned work on time
- Students who sit toward the front of the classroom
- Students who visit professors during office hours
- Students who do not make excuses
- Students who ask for help more than a day before a test or an assignment due date
Know the Code!

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

You have probably heard someone mention this phrase in class or on campus. But, what does this really mean? Breaking the Aggie Code constitutes committing academic misconduct, can result in undesirable consequences, and may lead to expulsion from the university.

Before you start biting your nails and reflecting on your every academic behavior, we have identified and provided examples of what constitutes academic misconduct. Your job is to familiarize yourself with these examples and avoid situations that promote such actions.

According to the Texas A&M University Student Rules, academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the following acts: cheating, fabrication, falsification, multiple submissions, plagiarism, complicity, abuse and misuse of access and unauthorized access, violation of departmental or college rules, violation of university rules on research. However, if you have committed one of these acts in “honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data,” this does not constitute academic dishonesty (http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor/acadmisconduct.htm)

An example of cheating:

- During an examination, looking at another student’s examination or using external aids (for example, books, notes, calculators, conversation with others, or electronic devices) unless specifically allowed in advance by the instructor.

An example of fabrication:

- Using “invented” information in any laboratory experiment, report of results or academic exercise. It would be improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and then “invent” data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses.

An example of falsification:

- Changing the measurements in an experiment in a laboratory exercise so as to obtain results more closely conforming to theoretically expected values.

An example of multiple submissions:

- Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the instructor’s permission.

An example of plagiarism:

- Failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one’s own.

An example of complicity:

- Collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration will not be reported.

Abuse and Misuse of Access and Unauthorized Access

- Students may not abuse of misuse computer access or gain unauthorized access to information in any academic exercise. See student rule 22: http://student-rules.tamu.edu

Violation of Departmental or College Rules

- Students may not violate any announced departmental or college rule relating to academic matters.

University Rules on Research

- Students involved in conducting research and/or scholarly activities at Texas A&M University must also adhere to standards set forth in University Rule 15.99.03.M1 - Responsible Conduct in Research and Scholarship . For additional information please see: http://rules.tamu.edu/urules/100/159903m1.htm

The Aggie Honor Code website has a wealth of information and more examples of academic misconduct. All examples and information taken from: “Know the code”: http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor
You may have seen news stories in recent weeks pertaining to the West Nile Virus. The Texas A&M campus, as well as the cities of College Station and Bryan have recently tested positive for mosquitoes that carry the virus. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to be diligent in protecting themselves.

What Is West Nile Virus?
West Nile Virus (WNV) is a potentially serious illness. Experts believe WNV is established as a seasonal epidemic in North America that flares up in the summer and continues into the fall. This fact sheet contains important information that can help you recognize and prevent West Nile virus.

What Can I Do to Prevent WNV?
- The easiest and best way to avoid WNV is to prevent mosquito bites.
- When you are outdoors, use insect repellent containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or Picaridin (KBR 3023) and follow the directions on the package.
- Many mosquitoes are most active at dusk and dawn. Be sure to use insect repellent and wear long sleeves and pants at these times or consider staying indoors during these hours.
- Make sure you have good screens on your windows and doors to keep mosquitoes out.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying standing water from flower pots, buckets and barrels. Change the water in pet dishes and replace the water in bird baths weekly. Drill holes in tire swings so water drains out. Keep children’s wading pools empty and on their sides when they aren’t being used.

What Are the Symptoms of WNV?
- Serious Symptoms in a Few People. About one in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. The severe symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent.
- Milder Symptoms in Some People. Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.
- No Symptoms in Most People. Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

How Does West Nile Virus Spread?
- Infected Mosquitoes. Most often, WNV is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds. Infected mosquitoes can then spread WNV to humans and other animals when they bite.
- Transfusions, Transplants, and Mother-to-Child. In a very small number of cases, WNV also has been spread through blood transfusions, organ transplants, breastfeeding and even during pregnancy from mother to baby.
- Not through touching. WNV is not spread through casual contact such as touching or kissing a person with the virus.

How Soon Do Infected People Get Sick?
People typically develop symptoms between 3 and 14 days after they are bitten by the infected mosquito.

How Is WNV Infection Treated?
There is no specific treatment for WNV infection. In cases with milder symptoms, people experience symptoms such as fever and aches that pass on their own, although even healthy people have become sick for several weeks. In more severe cases, people usually need to go to the hospital where they can receive supportive treatment including intravenous fluids, help with breathing and nursing care.

What Should I Do if I Think I Have WNV?
Milder WNV illness improves on its own, and people do not necessarily need to seek medical attention for this infection though they may choose to do so. If you develop symptoms of severe WNV illness, such as unusually severe headaches or confusion, seek medical attention immediately. Severe WNV illness usually requires hospitalization. Pregnant women and nursing mothers are encouraged to talk to their doctor if they develop symptoms that could be WNV.

What Is the Risk of Getting Sick from WNV?
- People over 50 at higher risk to get severe illness. People over the age of 50 are more likely to develop serious symptoms of WNV if they do get sick and should take special care to avoid mosquito bites.
- Being outside means you’re at risk. The more time you’re outdoors, the more time you could be bitten by an infected mosquito. Pay attention to avoiding mosquito bites if you spend a lot of time outside, either working or playing.
- Risk through medical procedures is very low. All donated blood is checked for WNV before being used. The risk of getting WNV through blood transfusions and organ transplants is very small, and should not prevent people who need surgery from having it. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor.
- Pregnancy and nursing do not increase risk of becoming infected with WNV. The risk that WNV may present to a fetus or an infant infected through breastfeeding is still being evaluated. Talk with your care provider if you have concerns.

What Else Should I Know?
If you find a dead bird: Don’t handle the body with your bare hands. Contact your local health department for instructions on reporting and dispose of the body. They may tell you to dispose of the bird after they log your report.

If you have questions regarding your health, please call TAMU SHS at (979) 458-8345

Retrieved and adapted from the Texas A&M Student Health Services website, located at http://shs.tamu.edu/westnile
$500 Scholarship

Money Wise Aggie is hosting a
FINANCIAL FLICK
Video Contest

We are asking you to put your movie-making skills to work to educate your fellow Aggies...the reward for doing so is the opportunity to win a $500 scholarship!

Videos must be submitted by: October 26, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.

The top 3 videos chosen by the Money Wise Aggie program will be placed on our Facebook Page. The $500 scholarship will go to the video entry that receives the most “likes” on our Facebook Page.

Facebook Voting: November 5, 2012 - November 16, 2012

For the full details and rules visit: moneywise.tamu.edu

Opinion Poll

Congrats to the winners of the Opinion Polls for August and September!

August Winner!
“I have learned that a schedule and a planner help tremendously in staying caught up and organized in my classes. I plan on doing this when I get to Texas A&M. From reviewing my fall schedule, I will have enough time to study and do homework twice a day like I have done during my summer classes. I hope that this plan will help me succeed in college-level academics.”

– Ana Cardona

September Winner!
“About two days ago one of the pedals on my bicycle fell off. While I was trying to fix it and put it back on, five different Aggies came over to help. Some had no idea what to do, but the fact that they were willing to help meant a lot to me. It showed me how Aggies really are truly friendly and are willing to help in any way they can when someone is in need. I am proud to be part of this Aggie family!”

– Luis Gonzalez

Congratulations Ana and Luis! Please email Erin Fisk at erinsfisk@tamu.edu before October 10th to pick up your prize!

What if I get sick?

If you are sick and need medical attention, you should contact Student Health Services (http://shs.tamu.edu/) where, depending on your condition, you may need to make an appointment to see a medical practitioner. Remember, most of the services at Student Health Services are free of charge, those with charges, such as prescription and over-the-counter drugs, are available to students for a minimal charge.

Review your course syllabi for each professor’s policy on missed classes. If you are able to attend class, you should do so, though not if getting to or attending class will cause you to be extremely uncomfortable. If you are unable to attend class, telephone or e-mail your professor as soon as possible to find out how to make up missed work. Make arrangements to get class notes from another student in the class.

If you will be out of class for three or more days due to illness or injury, you may contact the Office of the Dean of Students (845-3111) and request that an absence notification be sent to your professors. This notification does not excuse your absence, it merely explains the absence; your professor might ask for further documentation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>RSO General Meeting</td>
<td>Construction Science Career Fair</td>
<td>ACE Day (Agriculture Career Exposition)</td>
<td>ACE Day (Agriculture Career Exposition)</td>
<td>Hispanic Heritage Month - Noche de Ciencias</td>
<td>Football @ Ole Miss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The High-Latitude Oceans: An Ongoing Challenge for Climate Models</td>
<td>Law School Caravan</td>
<td>Volunteer Opportunities Fair</td>
<td>Hispanic Heritage Month - Mr. &amp; Miss Hispanic Heritage Month Pageant</td>
<td>La Noche Bohemia</td>
<td>The Amazing Spider Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic Heritage Month - Enhancing Diversity Seminar Series</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>2013-2014 Continuing Student Scholarship Application</td>
<td>DebateWatch: Presidential Debate #2</td>
<td>Efficiency and Procrastination</td>
<td>Getting a Great Recommendation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>DebateWatch: Presidential Debate #3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>MSC OPAS Presents...Catch Me If You Can</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>RSO Goes to the Volleyball Game</td>
<td>TAMU Guitar Festival</td>
<td>MSC OPAS Presents...Catch Me If You Can</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>