College 101 Crash Course

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What's In My Bag?

Essentials to get you through the first week
Backpack Essentials

- You need a strong, durable backpack. One with lots of pockets.
- Depending on what kind of notetaker you are, you should carry a notebook or your electronic device.
- Definitely carry your laptop so that you can work on homework during any gap.
- Pens, pencils, highlighters, hand sanitizer, headphones, umbrella, chargers for electronics.
Textbooks

- Only buy books from the university bookstore when you need the access code or if it is a university specific text like a lab manual or professor lecture notes.
- Use Amazon, Textbook Solutions, or Chegg instead.
- Ask professors if older versions of the book are okay. These tend to be cheaper.
- Rent where you can
- Tip from a Prof: Buy the APA Manual, most of your essays are going to be written with this structure
Tackling the Registration Monster

Which classes should you pick/ classroom etiquette
In college you get to pick your own schedule, but class availability can be scarce for freshmen.

Ratemyprofessor.com is a good resource when choosing a prof. Read student reviews because these tell you the prof’s teaching style.

In terms of prerequisites, these depend on the class and your major. Most colleges will make you take placement tests for subjects like math or English to determine which levels you need.
The Do’s and Don’ts of Registration

- If you are not a morning person, do not get an 8 AM.
- Get a 9:30 or 10 AM class instead to start off your day
- Don’t schedule your classes back to back
- Leave at least an hour and a half during the day for a lunch break

- A good rule of thumb is to take 12-15 hours per semester.
- In your first two years, 2-3 of these classes should be core classes (beginner math, history, govt) and 1-2 should be major specific classes per semester.
- Have your class name and section written down and ready for when it’s your time to register.
I Got The Class, Now What?

- Check your school portal for syllabi updates in the days leading up to your first day of class. READ YOUR SYLLABUS
- Once you get the syllabus from all your professors, pull out all the important dates like exams/homework/quiz due dates and write them down where you know you’ll see it.
- On your first week of school, take a screenshot of your schedule and set it as your lock screen so that you have easier access and it is faster to memorize.
- Time how long it takes you to get to each class
- Do NOT forget your note taking device
Talking to Professors

- The best form of communication with professors is email.
- To go to your professor’s office hours, shoot them an email scheduling a time.
- You can ask for help on any concepts you didn’t understand in class.
- Most students do not go to office hours and miss out on an important resource.
- Helps profs remember your face.
How Do I Make Friends?

Where my introverts at?
The Different Places to Find Them

Join an Org
Think about your interests, go on your university’s activity page & find one that lines up. One professional, one special interest

Social Media
Add people from your university on social media.
Keep in touch with your high school friends.

Network in Class
The easiest way to make friends in class is to ask your classmates to study before a test.
Where Do I Get Food?

Nutrition is very important
If you will be living on campus in a college dorm, you will not have 24/7 access to a kitchen, so you have to get creative.

Most dorms let you have a mini fridge and/or microwave so meals that can be heated up are key. This means ramen noodles, mac n cheese, hot pockets, etc.

If you can, get a meal plan. This gives you access to the dining halls, which are usually buffet style and let you get as much food as possible.
How Do I Take Care of Myself?

You’re technically an adult now
Being Independent

- Up to this point, parents have told you what to do for the most part.
- But now, you have to have self discipline, become independent.
- Being in college can be scary, you’re responsible for most of your decisions now.
- Make sure you have scheduled free time where you don’t do any type of school work, so you won’t get burnt out.
- If you find comfort in exercise, schedule time to get a work out in!
How to Balance Work + Study

- **Plan Ahead**: Write down your tasks/make a to do list. Keep track of assignments and plan when you will complete them.
- **Be Aware of Your Limits**: Committing to more work than you are able is common. Ask yourself “How much can I cope with?” and prioritize what you need to do first.
- **Use Time Wisely**: Remember that school is your main focus, spend lots of time studying. Study in short periods with breaks to avoid burnout.
- **Communicate with Employer**: Make sure you are straightforward about your availability and abilities to your employer.
- **Prioritize Health**: You can’t do anything if you are feeling ill. Remain mentally and physically healthy.
# Self Care

- Self care is more than just taking an hour out of the day to focus on yourself. Here’s some tips
- **Physical Self Care:**
  - Get 7-8 hours of sleep each night
  - Drink enough water
  - Wake up and go to bed at the same time every day
  - Take naps
  - Go on walks around campus
  - Practice good hygiene (shower every day)
- **Mental/Emotional Self Care:**
  - Make time for hobbies
  - Study slowly over periods of time—don’t cram
  - Clean up your room every other day
  - Say “no” if a request is too taxing
  - Help someone
Tackling Homesickness

- You got to college: Awesome!
  But now you miss your family and are concerned about missing out on family events.
- Feeling homesick is temporary and normal: everyone feels it.
- Create new traditions that make your campus feel like home.
- Establish routines that help get through the day.
- Schedule a Facetime or Zoom with family members.
- Have something that reminds you of family members (photos, sweaters, etc).
- Find opportunities through orgs or religious communities.
How To Be a Good Roommate

Because you’ll be living together for a while
Establishing Ground Rules

- When you were at home, your family members told you to pick up your stuff
- Suddenly you get to college, have a roommate and have to pick up after yourself
- Make sure you set ground rules!
- What you can do and what you can’t
  - You can use my coffee maker but don’t let strangers sit on my bed
  - Please don’t cook stinky food at 2AM
- Rules protect space
- Schedules for bathroom duty, trash duty, etc.
Living with a Roommate

- Get to know them
  - Find out if you share any common interests or hobbies and go from there! Your roommate may not be your best friend, but they’re someone you’ll be around alot

- Communicate
  - Tell your roommate anything they should know about you. If something is bothering you, let them know before it turns into a larger conflict

- Become familiar with their schedule
  - This is SO important. Especially regarding sleep schedules. Your roommate will not be your biggest fan if they go to bed at 9 and you stay up till 3 am.

- Keep an open mind
  - People come from different backgrounds and were raised differently. Understand your roommate’s habits will not be like yours, so you must find some common ground.

- Wear headphones
- Give them some space
Keep Your Belongings Safe

- Have a specific box or container for your valuables and keep it locked.
- Do NOT get a combination lock, you will forget the combination.
- Get a key lock instead and always keep it on your keychain with your room key.
- If you share a bathroom, get a shower caddy to keep all your bathroom products separate and safe.
- Invest in shower shoes to keep your feet safe.
A Few Words from a Current College Freshman

Meet Grecia, a first gen freshman at U Chicago
“Since I went from a public school to a Top 10 institution, the education level does not match.

You have to learn to catch up efficiently & you cannot be afraid to ask for help.”

These differences definitely take a toll when you first start college BUT with the proper tools, you slowly learn to adjust.
Living with Other People + the Registration System

On learning to live with other people:
“I live in a suite so there’s two rooms and 4 people. My roommate is an international student from China & our schedules are a bit different. She is also an only child while I have a sister. I do my best to adjust however it is a bit hard not living to your liking”

On the registration system:
“I know for sure some of my peers struggled significantly with meeting registration deadlines, especially those of us who are first gen & low income”
Diversity + Life in the City

Adjusting to life in the city:

“Unless you live in actual Dallas and not a suburb, you don’t truly understand ‘city life’, it is very fast paced and one must be on alert when going anywhere”

Diversity:

“The southern suburbs are a bit segregated in Dallas and in Chicago as well i’ve noticed, however at the university, diversity is high. I really suggest keeping an open mind, so that one can enjoy the experience rather than being close minded and keeping yourself in a bubble”
Thanks for Listening!

Do you have any questions?

Ask them now or shoot me an email at cayala@ymcadallas.org