

# Advice for Succeeding in Class

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**Instructor:** Roy Vanegas

## Read the Syllabus

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You are responsible for everything written in the syllabus, from due dates to material covered, and every word in between. **Make sure you read and understand it *fully, before the second class.***

## Attendance

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Attending lectures is crucial, for obvious reasons. Aside from emergencies, everyone should attend *every* class.

If you are absent for any reason, you are responsible for *all* the material and announcements covered in the session you missed. Please do not ask me for notes, as I do not have any to share. Make one or more note-taking friends in class so you can share notes, and/or post to our common forum asking a classmate to share their notes.

**Note:** Excessive absences will lead to a failing grade, because of the correlation between attendance and classroom success.

## Lateness

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If you come to class late and miss roll call at the beginning of class, I will not interrupt the lecture to update my roster. It is *your* responsibility to come to me during the break or after class to let me know that were late. This *has* to be done *in person* and *on the day you are late*. Otherwise, the absence remains.

Bear in mind that you are responsible for any announcements and/or material you missed before your late arrival.

**Note:** Excessive lateness will be converted to absences, which can lead to failing the course.

## Actively Participate in Your Education

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A ratio of 3:1 is a common formula used to define student success in a course, with three parts assigned to the student and one part to the professor ([read more here](#)). Broken down hourly, it means, that, for every hour you spend in class, you *should* spend about three hours doing research, reading, doing homework, going over your notes, re-writing your notes, and seeking help online, for example. This is a general formula — Some students succeed with less time, others need more. Nonetheless, a successful use of your time might look like the following:

### 1. **【 Take Notes 】**

Unless you have eidetic memory, take notes. Consider the [Cornell Note-Taking System](#), which is simple to follow and has proven very effective in reclaiming knowledge acquired in the classroom.

A smart pen, such as the [LiveScribe pen](#), may also be helpful. It's about \$110, but will prove useful for all your classes while a student. Considering that you will enroll in about 32 classes as an undergraduate, the cost works out to about \$3.40 per class.

Regardless of how you take notes, try sharing notes with others so they can share with you. Multiple perspectives on the same material is always helpful.

### 2. **【 Immediately Re-Write Your Notes 】**

Re-writing or re-typing your notes *immediately* after class reinforces the material from the lecture. (It's required if you use the Cornell Note-Taking System.) The sooner you do this, the more likely it is that you will retain what you learned in class.

### 3. **【 Add Notes to Your Notes 】**

This is made easier if you use the Cornell Note-Taking system, which encourages you to write comments in the left margin. This step encourages you to re-word concepts discussed in class, further reinforcing your understanding of the material.

### 4. **【 Study and Re-Write the Code Written in Class and Shared on GitHub 】**

By going over the code in class and re-writing the examples, you will be making the code your own, in turn, gathering a firm understanding of how code, browsers, and files work in concert to create web pages.

### 5. **【 Search for Terms You Do Not Understand 】**

You are bound to encounter many terms and ideas you do not understand. Highlight them, then search for them on the Internet. Read multiple definitions and take notes.

### 6. **【 Ask Questions in Our Google Group 】**

If you would ask a question in class because it pertains to material that relates to all the students, then it is apt to be asked in the Google Group. Make sure to follow the protocol discussed on the first day of class for asking questions on the Google Group.

### 7. **【 Make an Appointment to Meet With Me 】**

If, after carrying out steps 1–6, you do not understand something, make an appointment to see me, in person or via Skype, as I do not use email to communicate with students. When we meet, have questions prepared.

### 8. **【 Ask Questions in Class 】**

If you have a question, please, please ask it. You are causing yourself a great dis-service by not asking questions in class. The full experience of attending lectures includes the interaction between professors and students.

## Submitting Assignments and Projects

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Unless otherwise stated in your course's syllabus, *every* assignment and project for this course *must* be submitted via GitHub. **There are *no* exceptions.** Your work is only considered "submitted" when a pull request of your assignment is "approved." We'll discuss in class what this means.

## Academic Integrity

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The work you submit must be your own. You are welcome to discuss concepts and ideas with your classmates and anyone else, but you are **not** to share code with anyone. See the **Academic Integrity** section of the syllabus for more, including a link to the college's official document on the matter.

## Computer Backups

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You are responsible for ensuring that your work is backed up continuously. Hard drives and USB flash drives are cheap, and backup methods are simple — especially on a Mac. There is *no* excuse *not* to backup. Use Time Machine if you're on a Mac or File History if you are using Windows. Also consider Backblaze, which is a cloud-based backup utility available for Mac and Windows that costs about \$60 per year.