

COLLEGE STUDY SKILLS FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

TIME MANAGEMENT

Remember that being a successful college student takes just as much time as having a job. Being a student is your “job” during your college years.

This means you must plan time for reading, test preparation, classes, and writing. Put study time, classes, and due dates on your calendar. Spend hours at it every – or almost every -- day.

If you have children and a job, you can still be an excellent student. You just have to be more focused and more organized. You may have to study after your kids to go bed at night or in the morning before they wake up – or both.

Some other suggestions for doing well in school when you are a parent are:

- Just plan to be somewhat sleep deprived during weekdays. Plan time each weekend to sleep in a bit. But don't get so sleep deprived that you can't function well.
- Being a full-time student and a parent is hard work. Expect that.
- Combine time with your children with other activities. For a few examples:
 - ride bicycles or take walks with your kids and combine kid time with exercise.
 - have your children help you make meals.
 - help them pick up their toys and clothes.
 - if you live where there's a library, take them to the library and study while they read, take part in a library activity, or watch videos.
 - take them with you to visit the elders in your life.
- Teach your children to do household tasks. Older kids can do more, of course. But remember that your kids need free time, too.

Ask for your friends' support in reaching your goals when you can't talk for an hour or watch a movie until 10:00.

If necessary to finish studying, don't answer the phone. Let texts and e-mails pile up and respond just a couple times a day, rather than having constant distractions.

You'll have to minimize your social activities during the school year. This includes time on social media. If you don't already have one, develop a circle of support – people who support you in going to college. Spend your social time with these people.

READING

Finish the reading a day before class meets. This is proven to allow information to “sink in.”

Choose a quiet place that has adequate lighting. If this is not available at home, read in the OLC library or another good location. Another option is to adjust your hours and read when others in the household are asleep.

Skim the material before you start reading. Look at headings, photos and captions, maps, and study questions. This gives you a “feel” for the material.

Underline, highlight, or take reading notes as you go. You won't understand the material by just reading it through once.

Look at the definitions of terms that are provided in the textbook. Keep a dictionary or www.dictionary.com handy for words that are not defined in the textbook. Understanding the words in a reading is necessary to understanding the reading.

Think about the question “What are the main points of the reading?”

Review your notes or underlining just before class.

CLASS TIME

Come to class prepared, as described above.

Take notes in class, including notes on videos and discussions.

Participate in class and group discussions.

Check your notes right after class to be sure they’re complete. Fill in any gaps while the information is fresh in your mind.

STUDYING FOR TESTS

If you study well in a group, form a study group about a week before the test.

Start studying for an exam at least three days ahead of time. Don’t “cram,” as this is not an effective way to learn material.

Review your reading notes or underlining, definitions, and classroom notes.

Write out key definitions. Use flash cards, if you want.

Write out a short summary of the material that will be covered on the test – from memory, as much as you can. Go back over your notes and see if your summary is complete. Fill in any gaps. Writing information down helps to cement it in your brain.

Reserve a half hour before the test for a last-minute review of your summary, notes, and definitions.