

The LAS Insider—Freshmen Edition

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois-Chicago

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Make sure you make it to the first day of class, and on time. Check your schedule in [Web for Student](#) to see if any of your classes have moved to a new classroom. Find your classrooms ahead of time. Some buildings are like mazes and rooms can be hard to find.

What to Expect the First Day of Class

Special points of interest:

- * The first day of class
- * Decoding the course syllabus
- * Preparing for classes
- * Class Attendance
- * Welcome Week

Be prepared and focused for the first class, as a lot of important information is given to you. This is the day you get a general impression of the professor and clues to what the class is like.

Most of the first class will be spent reviewing the course syllabus. The course syllabus will explain the course objectives, content, assignments, and grading system. Pay attention to the review of the syllabus and make notes when the professor elaborates and explains parts of the syllabus.

Some professors will start lecturing on class material the first day. So be prepared to take lecture notes—take your books, notebook, and pens to the first day of class. Generally this first lecture is an overview of the subject though sometimes professors will give a detailed lecture. Buy your books ahead of time and skim the first chapter so you will be prepared to take notes if the professor starts lecturing on the first day of class.

For information on buying books go to <http://www.uicbookstore.org/>.

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Using Blackboard

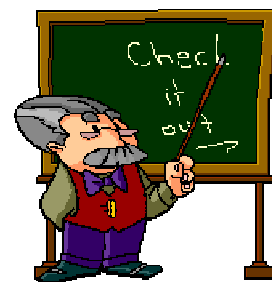
Check out Blackboard to see if your classes have websites where you can review course information. If the syllabus is posted you can start your reading assignments ahead of time.

Blackboard is a web-based tool for distance education. It is accessible via any modern browser, although Internet Explorer 5.x or later is recommended. The server-address is <http://blackboard.uic.edu>.

To actually participate in any course site, you need to have an account on the Blackboard CourseInfo server. Your account name will be your UIC NetID. If you have just gotten your account, your initial password is the last 8 digits of your SSN.

To find our more information about Blackboard please visit the links to the Basics, Student FAQ, and Student Manual sections of this site.

http://www.uic.edu/depts/acc/itl/blackboard/student_support.shtml



Decode the Syllabus



Here are the *top 10 things* for which to be on the lookout.

1. Any information about the structure and organization of the course.
 2. Any explanation of pre-requisites for the course, or background that would be helpful, if not required.
 3. Any tips about what to do before (and during, and after) each lecture.
 4. Any hints about what will count, or what will be asked about, on the papers or exams.
 5. Any suggestions about extra credit, rewrites, or other ways of improving grades.
 6. Any statement of what will – and will not- be done in section or discussion meetings, or in science or language labs (if any).
 7. Any clues about when – and whether- the professor (or TAs) is willing to meet with students to help them do better.
 8. Any hidden course rules or policies, and cases in which exceptions can be made.
 9. Any discussion of the relative importance of optional course activities – such as extra readings, additional class meetings, or departmental colloquia.
- And finally (and most important):*
10. Any hints, no matter how veiled, about just what you can do to get a good grade.

(taken from *Professors' Guide to Getting Good Grades in College* by Lynn Jacobs and Jeremy Hyman)

“Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent.”

Carl Sandburg

Evaluate Your Classes

Look at the content, amount of work, etc and determine if these are appropriate classes and an appropriate course load for you. If you need assistance with adding or dropping classes or have questions about whether to drop a class, please see an academic advisor in LAS. LAS has walk-in advising through the first week of classes.



You can drop through the 2nd week and add during the 1st week using the online registration system. During the 2nd week you need the instructor's permission to add a class using Web for Student.

Start Using Your Academic Planner

Use your syllabi and write in weekly assignments, deadlines for projects, etc.

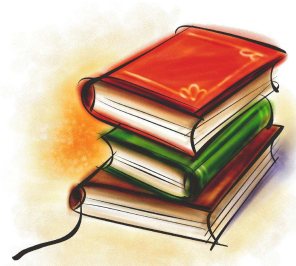
Also write down University deadlines, such as the last day to late drop a class (October 6, 2006) or easily do a University Withdrawal (December 1, 2006).



This will help give you an overview of all of the work you need complete. If you know that you will have a lot of work to do one week, try to get ahead and do some of the work earlier when things aren't so busy.

Academic Preparation—How Much Do You Need to Do?

Preparation is the major part of the learning experience. Professors expect 2 hours of serious preparation for each hour of class. If you are taking 15 credit hours that means 30 hours of studying, reading, and doing assignments.



A managed pace is particularly important in courses that have a ton of reading or a gradual buildup of skills and knowledge over the semester. Don't try to cram in all of the readings before exams. Preparing before the lecture also helps you understand the lecture better and take better lecture notes.

Class Attendance—Yes it is Important!

Yes you should attend all classes and take detailed lecture notes. Sometimes each lecture covers a different topic so when you miss a class you could be missing a whole topic which could appear on the exam or paper assignment.

Don't miss the discussion sections, either. This is the place where lecture material is reviewed and analyzed at a greater depth than in lecture. Sometimes new material is covered that can be on a test.



If you do miss a class,

1. Find a student who moves his or her hand during the entire lecture (writing we mean) and ask to borrow his or her notes.
2. Study the notes carefully, have another look at the reading, and figure out the parts of the notes (if any) you don't understand.
3. Go see the professor (or TA), make a brief excuse for missing the class (the shorter and more polite, the better), then ask specific questions about what in the notes you're not sure of.
4. Fill out the notes with what the professor is saying, because sometimes what the professor tells you one-on-one is even better than what he or she said in the lecture.
5. Resolve not to miss class again. This makeup method is very cumbersome, and the professor will get tired of doing your work for you more than once or twice.

(taken from *Professors' Guide to Getting Good Grades in College* by Lynn Jacobs and Jeremy Hyman)

**“A dream
doesn't become
reality through
magic; it takes
sweat,
determination,
and hard work.”**

Colin Powell

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Illinois-Chicago

LAS Academic Advising Center
3rd floor of University Hall

Phone: 312-996-3366

Appts: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday,
and Friday

Walk-ins: Tuesdays 8:30-11:30, 1-3:30

We're on the Web
www.las.uic.edu

LAS Academic Advisors assist students in the following ways:

- * assist with program planning and course selection
- * provide pre-professional advising
- * discuss the feasibility of various career paths based on a student's interests and academic strengths
- * explain university policies, college rules and graduation requirements
- * refer students to other campus resources when appropriate

Although we recommend that students meet with an LAS advisor once a semester, questions and problems do not always follow a fixed timetable. If you have a question, schedule an appointment even if you have seen an advisor recently. There are no consequences in asking too many questions. There can be consequences if you do not ask questions, if you delay in asking a question, if you guess on how to proceed or what to do, and if you rely on friends and others not qualified as advisors.



Welcome Week

Welcome Week is a collaborative effort of many campus offices to put together programs to welcome new and returning students during the beginning of the Fall semester. Here are two events that you should check out.

Freshman Convocation and Chancellor's New Student Welcome Picnic

Sunday, August 27th at 3pm at the UIC Pavilion. The picnic will be immediately following the Freshmen Convocation at the Student Residence and Commons (SRC) Auto-court.

Fun Fair East

Wednesday, September 6th from 11 AM to 3 PM at the Lecture Center Plaza. Come see what your fellow student leaders are doing and learn about opportunities to get involved in a student organization.

For a complete list of events see the Welcome Week pamphlet.