

MAKE THE MOST OF THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS - WHAT TO EXPECT

The first day of class is one of the most crucial classes of the course and for most people can create a bit of nervousness and anxiety. To begin the semester stress-free, it helps to know what to expect and how to approach your first day of classes. Get into good habits by getting enough sleep the night before classes, eat something nutritious before you leave for school and allow a little extra time to get to where you need to be.

What to Bring:

1. Remember to bring your class schedule with you as it has the starting date and time and your class location on it.
2. Notebook, planner, pen and pencil.
3. Textbooks – it is best to be prepared. Find out if the book is required or optional. Sometimes, though rarely professors assign textbooks but don't use them extensively. Many students get textbooks before classes begin and bring them the first day. Some students don't get them until classes begin and risk waiting in line at the Bookstore. Used books (cheaper) often sell out first so waiting may limit your choices. You want to make sure you don't fall behind by not having your textbook. It is a good idea to get a jump on the semester, identify textbook options and get a sense of the textbook even before the first class.
4. MxCC has wireless capability; some students bring laptops for classroom use and down-time.

Where to go: Check your class schedule, locate the right building and find your classroom. Get a sense of the building layout - where restrooms, exits, vending machines and study spaces are.

What to Do: Every professor may have a different teaching methodology which includes a plan for how the first day will go but the first class meeting serves several different objectives:

1. To give you an understanding of who is teaching your class.
2. To inform you of course requirements, clarify learning objectives and expectations for performance.
3. To set the tone for the class.
4. To answer questions you might have relative to the course objectives.
5. To inspire interest in the course content.
6. To allow students to meet and learn about one another.

On the first day, both teachers and students want to reduce the anxiety of meeting strangers and desire for connectedness. **Just as the instructor is creating first impressions, you should consider**

how you are introducing yourself to the instructor and classmates. What characteristics do you want to convey if the opportunity for introductions is offered? Some instructors briefly introduce themselves, review the syllabus and send you on your way. Others may conduct an introductory fun and hopefully meaningful icebreaker, engage you in a learning activity and/or start lecturing. It varies. Most students want to know what is in the syllabus, how much and what kind of work is expected and what the instructor's policies on attendance and grading are. Use the first day to determine if the class is a fit for you and to plan what you need to do to succeed in the course. If you are thinking the class may not be the right one for you, (occasionally this happens with Math or English), make sure you talk with the instructor immediately. The college wants to ensure that you are appropriately placed too.

Other first day activities: Visit the library, the Academic Success Center, the Bookstore and the cafeteria. Check out where all the computers are and make sure you can log on. Get your student ID card. Student Activities will already have events planned so you can meet other students. Get familiar with your new environment and find a place to study or hang out that feels comfortable. Remember to keep a positive mindset and relax. Every other new student will feel the excitement and twinges of nervousness similar to you. Take the initiative and say "hi."

Besides meeting other students, review your syllabus and start to use your calendar or day planner. Fill out when assignments are due based on the syllabus. Pencil is best in the event the syllabus changes. Get important dates in your phone if that's what you use to help you organize.

Make sure you know how you will be evaluated in the course. The sooner you know the policies and expectations for participation, grading and additional resources including Blackboard, the better. Remember, if you have any questions, ask them! If you haven't fully reviewed the New Student Orientation content on the NSO website, do it. It is a lot of information but it is for you to know and once you learn it, you will have more confidence.

Lastly, but extremely important: if you have time, get started on or even finish your reading and homework. Staying on top of your work is an undisputed key to success.

At the end of the first couple of days, reflect on how your classes went and if you think you can handle the work load. Evaluate what adjustments you need to make to be successful. Making course changes (adding and dropping) can only occur within certain timeframes and may not only affect refund eligibility but your overall academic performance. Be realistic and honest with yourself. If you need to talk things over with someone, don't wait. Starting out with a good plan and frame of mind will make all the difference.

GOOD LUCK!