



Happy Holidays

Handout:

The ARM Newsletter

November 27, 2012 Vol. 1, Issue 2



ACADEMIC PEER MENTORS— YOUR ARM HAS A *HANDOUT* FOR YOU!

IN THIS ISSUE

Finishing Strong Before the Break

by Samantha Augustine, Litchfield ARM

This is it – the home stretch. You’ve survived midterm exams and papers, and you’ve tasted a sweet morsel of freedom during Thanksgiving break. The winter break is so close, you might feel as if you’ll fall asleep tonight and wake up on December 18th, packed up and ready to move back home for a month. As much as you would love to hibernate for the next few weeks, you also need to be careful not to fall into one of the most common pitfalls of this time of the semester – falling behind when it matters most.



Maybe it happens

because the days are getting shorter and colder, or perhaps there is just something in the water here in Danbury, but around this time of year, everyone experiences an academic depression in some way, shape, or form. You may be an upperclassman who is all too familiar with this mid-semester slump, or you may be a first-year student going out of your mind trying to figure out where your motivation has gone. It starts with something simple – you skip a class to stay snuggled up in bed for an extra

hour beneath the warmth of a mountain of blankets, or you forget to turn in a homework assignment. It’s something that most students do at least once a semester, but for some reason, in the time between the two breaks during the fall semester, it appears to snowball out of control. The next thing you know, you haven’t gone to that class in more than a week, you’re waiting until 6 am to start a term paper that is due right after lunch, and you missed the deadline for an online exam on Blackboard. Straight-A students may very quickly find themselves struggling to even keep their heads above water in a matter of just a few weeks, and worst of all finals are only a few short weeks away.

But don’t sell yourself short too quickly—there are steps that you can take to ensure you don’t fall into this trap! It all starts with your body; if you feel good about yourself, you’re going to feel good about what you’re doing, and it will motivate you to work hard.

(cont. on pg. 6)

- 1 Finishing Strong
- 2 Good Reads
- 2 Taking A Break from Finals
- 3 What’s On the Horizon for Spring?
- 3 Holiday Health
- 4 Keep Calm & Carry On
- 4 Quick Tips
- 4 Exam Preparations
- 5 Healthy Eating
- 5 Important Reminders
- 6 Finish Strong (cont.)



SUCCESS
SPOT

www.wcsu.edu/housing/ARM/armsuccess.html

TRY THESE READS FOR SOME

FUN OVER BREAK

By Sean Keenan, Fairfield ARM

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien is what sparked the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. This book follows Frodo Baggins's father, Bilbo, as he struggles to reclaim the ancestral home of the dwarves from a dragon which drove the dwarves away. Tolkien's book is beautifully written and brings the reader into a world which has been created down to the smallest detail. His writing sparked the fantasy genre and even inspired a college career (Tolkien Historian). With Peter Jackson's new movie coming out soon, now is the perfect time to catch up on this classic.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy tells the story of a boy and his father trying to survive in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. The bulk of the novel is taken up with descriptions of the pair trying to escape from the horrifying atrocities committed by cannibals. However, dispersed throughout these incidents are small occurrences of happy moments shared between the boy and his father. These scarce happenings make the hopeless journey of father and son an understandable and hauntingly beautiful story of trying to remain kind in an otherwise dead world.

World War Z by Max Brooks is written as a collection of recorded recollections of the Zombie Wars. This approach not only gives a unique view of how countries all around the

world were affected, but also shows the skill of Brooks. He is able to seamlessly transition from one character to another, adjusting his writing style to let the characters' personality show through their testimony. Max Brooks' book is a well-developed and intelligent piece that explores the zombie genre in a way never done before.

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut is another story about the end of the world. However, unlike *World War Z* or *The Road*, Kurt Vonnegut's apocalypse is, to an extent, a humorous event. Vonnegut's story follows the events leading to the unleashing of the ultimate weapon, Ice-9. The main character, John, is researching a book when he becomes involved in a family that holds the weapon. After the fall of humanity, John looks increasingly to the religion of Bokononism to help him cope with what is now his reality. Vonnegut's story is a satirical look at society as well as a philosophical treatise on dealing with the problems of the world.

goodreads



GOOD TO KNOW

"No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance."

Confucius

TAKING A **Break** FROM FINALS!

by Emily Freundt, Centennial ARM

Now that you are all stuffed to the brim with turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and other Thanksgiving goodies, it is time to get back into focus and push through finals. The end of the semester is always the hardest and it is important to not "check out" early. You need to finish strong. However, we all know that finishing strong comes along with stress. It is very hard to keep yourself from getting overwhelmed, frustrated, exhausted, and plain old *fried*. With all your studying it is important to still take time for yourself. If you are frustrated and stressed out you cannot make the most of your study time. **You need a break!**

Something as simple as a 20 minute break can make a world of difference. It gives you time to regroup and gather your thoughts. What can you do on your break? Try taking a walk. Fresh air can be very helpful in calming the nerves and regaining focus. Or make yourself a healthy snack. You do not want to study on an empty stomach, but you should also try to stay away from a lot of junk food. Maybe get a cup of coffee with a friend. This allows you to get away from your books and you get a little human interaction before delving back into your cave to study. Without these little breaks you can drive yourself crazy and it makes your study efforts less productive. Lastly, SLEEP!!!! Sometimes pulling an all-nighter is counterproductive. A good night's sleep will help you stay alert during your exam and give you a better chance at not making silly mistakes.

So, take a deep breath, stay positive, and start studying!

PUT DOWN THAT TEXTBOOK. IT'S TIME FOR A

STUDY  BREAK!

What's On the Horizon for Spring?

by Nick Graham, Grasso ARM & Maribeth Griffin, Dir. of Residential Programs & Staff

The “My Road To WestConn” programs that will be offered in the spring semester prove to be a promising change of pace for the ARM sponsored programs, and furthermore, campus events. Speakers will gather from the far corners of every subject to sit and have dinner talks with students, offering promising advice for the present and future through their own experiences. Last year’s events proved to be quite the success and we hope to continue the tradition of gathering professors to talk to both residential and commuter students about the aspects of their careers and personal life that have brought them where they are today.

Some of the confirmed spring My Road To WestConn speakers are:

- Dr. Walter Bernstein, Student Affairs
- Dr. Casey Jordan, JLA
- Dr. Marsha Daria, Education
- Dr. Dennis Dawson, Astronomy
- Dr. Daryle Brown, Nursing
- Mr. Lawrence Marsicano, Biology

The dinners are held in the Midtown student center faculty dining room and the culmination of these events will be in the West Side Campus Center at the end of the semester, with Dr. Walter Bernstein speaking at a dinner with the rest of the key speakers from the aforementioned semester.



We look forward to booming MRTW attendance **and** for the end of the winter semester **Spelling Bee that will be happening December 5th** in the student center theater on midtown.

The spring semester also brings the annual **Academic Recognition Ceremony on March 10th**. Students who receive an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher are invited, along with their parents (or other family or friends) to a recognition ceremony at which they will receive certificates and hear from a few invited guests.



A small reception follows the brief ceremony, held in the Westside Campus Center Ballroom.

Once again, our **Writers In Residence** program will be in place for the spring semester. Staff from the campus Writing Center are in every residence hall at least one night per week to assist students struggling with writing projects. It can't be any easier to get help — all you need to do is walk downstairs in your pjs, and someone is there to help you with your latest writing project!

And, your **ARMs** are always here, too — ready and willing to reach a *Handout* to you!

Handout,
Issue 2—Nov., 2012



Finals are just around the corner, and with their approach you may notice everyone around you getting sick. Avoid the misery of taking finals with a headachy cold by taking these simple steps!

1. SLEEP!!!

The occasional all-nighter won't hurt, but if you make it a habit you will feel exhausted during the day and this will definitely affect your test-taking ability by making it very difficult to concentrate. If you absolutely have to stay up late, get a few hours of sleep and then wake up really early to study. You will feel a lot more rested than if you stay up late and only get an hour or two of sleep before an exam.

2. Eat healthier foods!

Skip the junk food and instead choose foods that are more filling and are full of vitamins that will help you stay healthy.

Don't forget to eat! It's easy to lose track of time and skip meals when you are cramming for a test. You will eventually crash, and you don't want that to happen during an exam. The morning of an exam, eat something light. You don't want to take an exam on an empty stomach. If you don't have time for breakfast, stash some healthy granola bars in your backpack for quick snacks on the go. And drink lots of water because being dehydrated can cause you to feel tired.



3. Sanitize!

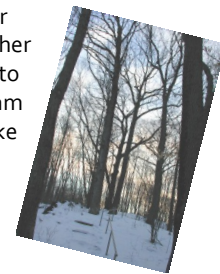
Protect yourself from those cold-causing germs often by cleaning and sanitizing your room, car, and especially your hands! Clean your room more often, taking the time to vacuum any rugs, sweep up any dust, and wipe down any frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, counters, phones, and TV remotes. An easy way to do this is to buy some antibacterial wipes and keep them in easy to reach places in your room. The simplest way to break the chain of infection is to wash your hands with soap and water, especially after using the restroom and before eating.

4. Dress Prepared!

Check the weather in the morning and be prepared! Dress in layers so that you can adjust your apparel depending on if you are indoors or out, or if it is hot or cold. Keep a small umbrella in your school bag so that you're not caught in the rain unexpectedly or even forced to wear those wet clothes for the rest of the day. Keep your feet warm too! Wear comfortable and warm shoes that are weather appropriate so that your feet stay dry.

5. De-stress!

Studying for finals can really stress you out, making you more susceptible to getting sick. Find a few minutes each day to relax and do something you enjoy. A great way to de-stress is to workout — it releases endorphins and really helps raise your mood. And a light workout can be just what it takes to help you sleep if you're having trouble doing so. Can't get to the gym? Take a walk around campus and get some sun. Fresh air never hurts! And get together with your friends! It's easy to hole up in your room to cram for that exam, so try to take a break and maybe do something with your friends, even if it's as simple as getting together to eat dinner.



Keep Calm &

Carry On:

Ways to Handle Holiday Pressure and Not Stress Out!

by Adaobi Ogbenta, Pinney ARM



Winter Holidays are upon us, and what do the end of the semester and the holidays have in common? STRESS! While 'tis the season to be merry, for many of us, it's also a season for stress, anxiety and angst, which leads us to behave in ways we're sure to regret later. During this time of year, people often resort to bad habits — they may cave in to sugar cravings, overdraft their bank accounts and not spend enough time relaxing like they should.

To help you have a happy season, here are:

7 Tips to Relieve Holiday Stress

1. Set Aside Time For Yourself

- * Make sure that you are giving yourself ample time to rest and recuperate to avoid holiday stress. Whether it's watching some television, a day at the spa, or even if it's just to sip some tea, take at least 30 minutes out of your day for yourself.

2. Get Moving

- * Perhaps one of the best ways to overcome stress during the holidays or any other time is to exercise regularly. Despite the many demands on your time, this is not the season to stop exercising.

3. Be Generous

- * One of the best ways to stay calm, content and cheerful at this time of the year is to give back. Whether it's volunteering at a soup kitchen or visiting people in nursing homes, doing something to help others can reduce stress.

4. Don't Overspend

- * By planning accordingly and shopping early, you can avoid a lot of frustration and overspending that accompanies the holidays. Prioritize gift giving based on a budget and stick to it. Remember that the holidays are about being with loved ones, not giving the best gifts.

5. Move Forward

- * Remember we can't control other people but we can choose our response. Face setbacks with style and grace and you will enjoy yourself more and stress less. Respond rather than react.

6. Know Your Limits

- * Know when to say less and when to say no. Agree to only what you can realistically manage. That includes taking on more hours than you can handle.

7. Laugh More

- * It triggers positive biochemical changes in the body and mind. It lowers blood pressure, increases and oxygenates blood flow. And it's contagious, and when people are laughing with you, who can be stressed?



Prepare now with a positive outlook and a flexible attitude!

So don't be a Scrooge this holiday season.

Happy Holidays to You!

Exam Preparation

Quick Tips

by Nicole Swenson, Newbury ARM

Be prepared!

- ◆ Remove junk food from your room
- ◆ Make a list of simple meals or snacks, and keep your eyes open for those items when shopping!
- ◆ Buy small (100 calorie packs)
- ◆ Avoid caffeine
- ◆ Make sure you're hungry — try drinking a glass of water, waiting 10 minutes, and checking to see if you're really hungry
- ◆ Work out a bit — it will help spur your metabolism and keep your mind off junk food... and it can take your mind off your tests
- ◆ Study hard
- ◆ Try your best

Good luck on your finals!!

Preparing for in-class exams:

- Use study tools:
 - Flash cards — portable, easy to test and mix ideas
 - Mind maps — show relationships
 - Summary sheets — include the most important and most difficult concepts
 - Essay questions
 - Old exams
- Understand the difference between understanding something and reciting it in your own words — get to the point of recitation — you know material when you could teach it to someone else
- Don't cram until the last possible second — give yourself at least 10 minutes before starting the exam to breathe and relax
- Try a "brain dump" at the beginning of the exam — on a piece of scratch paper, write down everything you can remember



And for essay tests, try these hints:

- Understand the assignment in great detail — recite it back to yourself in your own words
- Set yourself time limits and achievement goals — "I will finish my first draft of 4 pages in 3 hours" — then reward yourself
- Prepare ahead of time — read your sources, take notes, have conversations
- Make an outline or mind map to organize your ideas
- Use multiple drafts
- Use writing center tutors

Healthy Eating

by Anna Bank, ARM

The end of the semester is creeping up fast, deadlines are getting closer, and final exams seem only days away. When stress and tests begin to hit, proper, healthy eating can become sacrificed, and that is one of the worst things you can do! One of the most important things to keep in mind is the benefit of healthy eating (especially at the end of the semester!)

Unfortunately, stress can cause "Stress Eating" which usually involves unhealthy, quick meals or fast food. If a busy schedule and constant studying is keeping you on the go, try packing healthy snacks. Packing a baggie of fruits, vegetables and nuts is a great snack that you can munch on between exams or when you're hitting the books in the library.

Kicking off a busy test day also requires a good meal. Everyone has heard the expression, "breakfast is the most important meal of the day," and this is quite true. Eating a healthy breakfast of oatmeal, eggs or fruit boosts your metabolism and can help you to focus and concentrate more. If you're skipping meals and only fueling up on convenient, but unhealthy, foods, you are going to crash. Try getting in a breakfast of oatmeal, eggs, fruit, or a bagel with peanut butter in order to feel full and fuel your mind properly. Avoid the Pop-Tarts or candy-bar breakfasts; they're all sugar with little-to-no nutritional value!

In order to keep your body functioning and staying healthy, you should be snacking properly throughout the day. If you limit your food throughout the day or only pack in meals of pizza and junk food, you're going to weaken your immune system. During test time, I know that getting sick is everyone's worst fear. So, be healthy! The top foods that can be used as snacks are: nuts, fruit, popcorn (light on the butter, though), Greek Yogurt, Granola bars, etc.

Yes, it may seem easy to just call for delivery pizza or Chinese food at midnight when you're studying, but being prepared with healthy foods is just as easy. Stock up on whole-wheat pastas and sauces; meals that you can have pre-made to heat up when you're cramming away. Snacks such as granola, trail mix, or just plain nuts can easily be stored in baggies for on-the-go snacks.

Trust me, if you eat right you feel better. Eating well has been proven to relieve stress and improve memory as well as concentration.

If worse comes to worst and you just CANNOT avoid the fast food chains, make smart selections! McDonald's oatmeal breakfast is surprisingly healthy, filling, and cheap! If you're going for chicken, choose grilled over fried. This way you'll be giving yourself smart protein, rather than making yourself crash. Your body and mind function together; if you want to do well on your finals, you need a clear, focused mind. If you're putting the proper fuel into your system, you're looking at success.

The Handout is a publication of the Department of Housing & Residence Life at Western Connecticut State University. It will be published several times each semester, and distributed via email, on the HRL website (www.wcsu.edu), and via the departmental Facebook page. (WCSU Housing & Residence Life).

IMPORTANT HOUSING REMINDERS



Room Selection

If you paid your deposit on time, registered for Spring classes, turned in an Intent form on time, and you wish to switch rooms:

- Within your building—
December 3rd from 7—9 pm in your building
- To another building—
December 4th from 10 am—3 pm in the HRL office in Newbury.

SEMESTER BREAK



Grasso and Centennial Halls are open (at an additional cost) for the semester break. Please see your information desk for applications. If you do not live in one of these buildings, you must find a friend or acquaintance who will, with all their roommates, sign to allow you to live in their suite during the break. See our website for more info.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?



What do you think? Have something you'd like to share about this newsletter or other housing issues? Want to give a suggestion for a topic you're interested in knowing more about? Let us know. Drop us a line at housing@wcsu.edu

Finishing Strong Before the Break

(cont.)



Having just come back from Thanksgiving, it can be difficult to gain control of your eating habits again, but try to keep in mind that healthier foods are not only better for your body, but for healthy brain activity – instead of reaching for a box of cookies during study sessions, try a snack like carrots or grapes. Double team your body by taking multivitamins that will not only boost your immune system, but will help your memory (dietary supplements such as fish oil and vitamin B12 have been shown to specifically do this).

Once you have taken care of your body, take a look around at the place where you typically study. Create a room conducive to studying by keeping a neat and tidy work space to prevent distractions. If you have a roommate who listens to loud music or talks on the phone when you're trying to study, or you feel like you just can't resist flipping on your TV or logging onto Facebook, try going to the library or one of the lounges in your residence hall or the science building (quiet study lounges are the top choice because the walls are sound-proofed and drown out excess noise).

One of the hardest things about the slump is actually getting up to go to class. Try to motivate yourself to actually get out of bed by placing your alarm clock somewhere far away from your bed so that you can't just reach your hand over and hit snooze. If you have a roommate who gets up at the same time, ask them to wake you up in the morning while they're going through their primping routine. Make sure that you are keeping a planner with all of the due dates for projects, papers, or homework and an exam schedule – keeping a larger calendar in your room can also serve as a good reminder. Keeping an hourly schedule can also be very effective at this time as well – you can plan everything from study time to free time with your friends to the hours that you sleep (this will not only ensure that you are getting enough sleep, which is critical for retaining information that you've just studied, but also that you will have some time away from your studies to unwind and have some fun).

Don't think that it's too late. You still have plenty of resources available to you once you fall behind – speak to your professor to see if they offer any extra credit, visit one of the various tutoring centers in Berkshire Hall (e.g. TRC, Writing Lab, Math Clinic), or stop by at your ARM's office hours to see what they can do to help you or if they can at least refer you to someone. No one else is going to be able to pull you out of this slump if you don't first realize that it is up to you to make the first move and ask for help. The most important things to take away from this in order to avoid this end of the semester slump are to eat healthy, stay organized, and ask for help – no one is going to know what you need unless you let them know!



WCSU Music Department Events in December

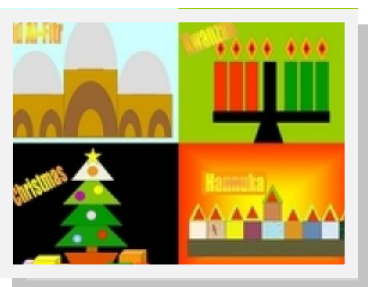
- Dec. 2 3 pm Symphonic Band & Wind Ensemble
- Dec. 3 8 pm Percussion Ensemble & Chamber
- Dec. 4 7 pm Frankensax & Jazz
- Dec. 7 7:30 pm Amahl & the Night & 8 2:00 pm Visitors
- Dec. 9 6:30 pm WCSU Holiday Jazz



SCENES FROM THE WOUNDED WARRIOR CARNIVAL

SEPTEMBER 29

Some fun from the fall's Wounded Warrior Project fundraiser. Your donations raised over \$1300!



Season's Greetings!
Best of luck on your finals!