

the **arm** newsletter

The Handout

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ACADEMIC RESOURCE MENTORS — YOUR ARM HAS A HANDOUT FOR YOU!

IN THIS ISSUE



How to make this semester better than the last!

by **Jamie Maitland**, Pinney ARM

1. Keep a positive attitude—just because last semester didn't turn out the way that you wanted it to doesn't mean that this semester is going to be a negative experience for you! Learn from your mistakes. Did you go out with your friends every night when you should've been studying? Did you save that twenty page paper until the night before it was due? If so, get rid of those bad habits and focus on your goals.

2. Organize yourself! Get a folder and book/binder for each of your classes. That way you know where the material for each class is without it getting mixed in with your other courses. You can also get a planner. They range in prices but even if you're broke (like most college students are) you can easily print a calendar of each month and write your assignments in it! Not only does that save you money, but it will allow you to stay organized with your assignments and due dates.

3. Go to the gym—It's cold outside but you need to stay active! Go to the gym or for a quick run. You'll thank yourself when it starts to get hotter outside. Don't use the weather as your excuse not to be active because that is not a good excuse. Western has the Colonial Fitness Zone on mid-town, the Westside Cardio room, and many fitness classes like Zumba and yoga.

4. Go to events—Western has many events that you can go to. On the Western homepage they have an "upcoming events" tab. Click it so that you can easily see the activities going on around you. Get out there and meet new people, socialize with the friends you already have, and just have a good time. This spring we have West Fest coming up, so look out for that information!

5. Let go of unnecessary people—everyone does not need to be in your life and that's okay. If you've been friends with someone for multiple years and they engage in negative behavior, it's okay to leave that person in your past. If you want this semester to be better than your last, you have to learn how to let go of people and things that are no longer good for you and start living the great life that you deserve.

6. Have fun—If you studied too much and didn't spend enough time with your friends/loved ones, take the time to do that. Just because you're in school doesn't mean that your life has to stop until May. Let your loved ones know that they are important and spend time with them when you can. It will make you feel good and refresh your mind and they will also be happy to spend time with you.



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SUCCESS SPOT

www.wcsu.edu/housing/arm.asp



Chinese New Year 2017

by Qin Lin
Pinney ARM

I hope everyone has enjoyed the first couple weeks of school so far!

I was born and raised in Fujian Province in China. I moved here when I was eighteen years old. Growing up in China, I have personally experienced the many different Chinese holidays and traditions. By far, one of the most important holidays is Chinese New Year, which is also known as the Spring Festival. Unlike how Western countries celebrate New Year, Chinese New Year is not just one day. It is celebrated from the first day of the lunar month till the fifteenth day of the lunar month. Due to the holiday being determined by the lunar calendar instead of the Georgian calendar, Chinese New Year always falls on a different day each year. The festival emphasizes the importance of family ties. People who work in the cities or away from home all make the journey to travel back to their hometown and celebrate with their families. One of the important traditions for Chinese New Year is having a family gathering dinner on Chinese New Year's Eve. The entire duration of the holiday is to go and visit family and friends to exchange greetings and well wishes for the new year. The holiday is also called "Guonian", which means the passing of the old year into the new one.

The origin of Chinese New Year has many different versions of a story. The most popular story is about a mythical beast known as "Nian", which means "year" in Chinese. Nian always came and preyed on the livestock and people on

the first day of the lunar year. In order to protect themselves, people started preparing and putting food out in front of their doors for Nian. In the myth it is said that Nian got scared and ran away after seeing a child dressed in red clothing. The people concluded that the beast was afraid of the color red. From then on, people would prepare everything in red for the New Year. There would be red clothing, red lanterns, and couplets written on red paper hanging on doors and windows. In order to make sure Nian would not come back, the people also lit firecrackers to scare the beast away.

The story has been passed down from generation to generation. Eventually preparing everything in red became the tradition. This is why people always wear red and have red decorations for Chinese New Year.

The food for the holiday is also very important. Since everyone goes home for the reunion dinner, the biggest dinner of the year, the food that is prepared is very important. Specific dishes are prepared for specific reasons.

For example, fish is a staple dish for the dinner. In Chinese, fish is pronounced as yu, which is the same pronunciation as the Chinese word that signifies surplus. By having fish at the dinner, it is signifying the wish for everyone to have a surplus for the year and not be in need. Dumplings, known as jiaozi, are often served at the dinners because it symbolizes that luck is wrapped inside.

There are also many practices for the Chinese New Year. A few days before the holiday, every corner of the house must be swept and cleaned. This signifies cleaning out or getting rid of the old and evil energy and spirits. Red lanterns and red paper cuttings are hung around the house. Spring couplets, which are short poems expressing good wishes for the family, are written on red paper and hung up on the sides of doors. My favorite tradition is the "hongbao", which

means red packet. Adults and older people give the envelopes containing any amount of money to the kids and juniors. This originally started as symbolizing the warding off or suppression of evil.

During the holidays, you can see dragon and lion dances, where groups of people in huge dragon and lion costumes are dancing everywhere on the streets. The dances are accompanied by loud music and drums. People believe that the faces of dragons and lions and the loud music will scare away the evil spirits.

This year, the first day of the Chinese New Year is on January 28.



2017
HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Settling In to the Semester

By Nadia Orjugo, Centennial ARM

Welcome back to WCSU and Happy New Year everyone! I know some of us may have some trouble with settling in to the new semester so here are some tips on how to unravel!

Arrive to class early: This first tip can make a big difference! Arriving to class early can help to make a good impression on your professor as well as saving the trouble of awkwardly walking in late.

Use your time wisely: Try not to wait until you have exams to study. It is said that for each hour you spend in class, you should spend 2-3 hours studying for that same class. If your class is an hour, study two to three hours, or cut it into a fraction of a time by spreading your study time during the week.

Review your syllabus: Your syllabus is **your life**, as long as you follow it and complete everything that is asked of you, life will be great!

Check your email and Blackboard®: This tip is **VERY** important!!! The main way that professors will communicate with you are through these two sources so you **MUST** frequently check them!

Don't be afraid to ask for help: Don't wait till it's too late to get a tutor. At WCSU we offer free tutoring for most if not all courses available here. The tutoring center is located in the HAAS Library on Midtown on the second floor. There is also a writing center in the library located on the third floor, so don't forget to use your resources!

Know your professor's office hours: Look up the time and locations of your professor's office hours. This is the best way to get more help and talk to your professor about any concerns or questions you may have.

Use a planner: This is an important tool to keep track of due dates, all assignments, and anything that you want to remember! You can also add notes to help keep your memory fresh and stay super organized.

Attend Social Events: WCSU offers many programs and events throughout the semester that allow you to meet new people and helps eliminate stress from your classes. It is key to keep a balance between your social life and schoolwork. This is a great way to unravel from a long week.

With the start of a new semester means that you will have to reorganize your life to adjust to your school schedule. One of the many ways that a teacher informs you of the class expectations is through the inevitable syllabus. The distribution of the syllabus has become so well known that many students refer to the first week of school as "Syllabus Week". This term insinuates that the first week is an easy week that doesn't require much. As much as this idea has become common "knowledge" amongst students, the idea of properly using a syllabus has not. With this in mind, I have come up with tips on how to effectively use your syllabus this semester! First, let's define what a syllabus is and what it includes.

What is a syllabus?

A syllabus is a basic method of providing information that will be covered throughout the course.

What does it include?

Teacher's Information: This will list the teacher's credentials, contact information and their office hours.

Course description: This is a statement of what the course will focus on and how it qualifies to give credit for that particular subject.

Require Text: If you ever wondered whether you need a book or not, this is the section of the syllabus to review. This will include the textbook name, ISBN, edition, author, and even the price of the book at the bookstore. Your teacher will let you know if you will be permitted to use a different edition of the textbook.

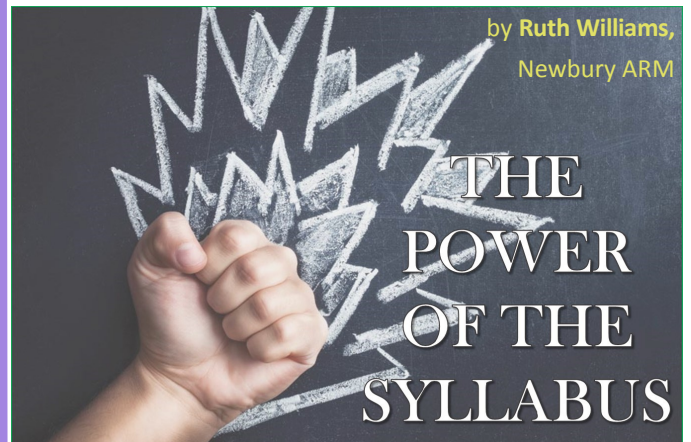
Grading System: This is based on percentages that will calculate to your total grade.

Class Participation: This is the effort and engagement use during the class time. The more interactive you are, the higher the participation points will earn.

Quizzes/ Exams: Exams and quizzes are usually the heaviest weighing part of your grade (15-25% of grade). The format will be included (short-answer, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, etc)

Group Assignments: As much as students dislike group projects, they are almost always given in a course. The earlier you pick and start your group, the better.

Continued on page 4





Black History Month

A Look Into Danbury's History

by **Samantha Feliciano**, Fairfield ARM

Black History Month, also known as National African American History Month, is the annual celebration for recognizing African Americans who make up large parts of U.S. history. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.

1915 begins the story of how this began as

it is about half a century after the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in the United States. That September, historian Carter G.

Woodson and others dedicated themselves to researching and promoting achievements by black Americans and other peoples of African descent. Known today as

the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), the group sponsored a national Negro History week in 1926, choosing the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The event inspired schools and communities nationwide to organize local celebrations, establish history clubs and host performances and lectures.

These celebrations continue to bring people together today as we are able to see right here in Danbury. This February, each week on Western's campuses will feature a film that is a part of the 13th annual African Film Festival of Black History Month. Day and evening screenings will be free and open to the public. Professor of Anthropology Dr. Robert Whittemore will lead an open discussion following each screening. More information about the events and each film can be found on Western's website.

In our home of Danbury, one of the great early classical vocalists has a special con-

nection. Contralto Marian Anderson (February 27, 1897 – April 8, 1993) kept a home in Danbury for the last 50 years of her life and spent much of that time at Marianna Farms. She was known as an advocate for struggling black artists to overcome racial prejudice in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. In 1939, the Daughters of the American Revolution prohibited Anderson from singing to an integrated audience in Constitution Hall

due to her skin color.

Much of the public was appalled by this, and it reached the ear of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband Franklin D. Roosevelt. Marian Anderson performed an open-air concert on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. 75,000 plus people went to watch her

and millions listened on the radio. Beyond this, she continued to break barriers for black artists in the United States, becoming the first black person, American or otherwise, to perform at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City on January 7, 1955.



Marion Anderson Home, Danbury Museum

Did You Know? Facts About Black History

The NAACP was founded on February 12, 1909, the centennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

February 23, 1868:

W. E. B. DuBois, important civil rights leader and co-founder of the NAACP, was born.

February 3, 1870:

The 15th Amendment was passed, granting blacks the right to vote.

February 25, 1870:

The first black U.S. senator, Hiram R. Revels (1822-1901), took his oath of office.

February 12, 1909:

The National Association for the Advancement of

The Power of the Syllabus (cont. from pg. 3)

Papers: This is usually due as a midterm or final term paper. Some instructors may want a paper every week but it may be 1 to 2 pages instead of the 10-15 pages papers that may be required for as the term paper.

3 Tips on how to use the syllabus effectively!

Tip #1

READ IT! Yes all of it!

Reading all of what you will be responsible for in this class is important! A syllabus is like a tool and manual for passing the class. Using it effectively can get you the grade you really want.

Tip #2

Put it in a Planner!

Each syllabus has a calendar of what is due and when it's due. Transfer all that information to your planner or on your phone. This will ensure that you won't forget and will allow you to get ahead on assignments.

Tip #3

Use it and don't lose it!

Having a syllabus and using it will inhibit the chance of you losing your mind throughout the semester. It will keep you organized so that by mid semester you will have peace of mind!

Hopefully this information was helpful and you will be able to use your syllabus to your advantage! I wish you the best this semester. Strive on!

Colored People (NAACP) was founded by a group of concerned black and white citizens in New York City.

February 1, 1960:

In what would become a civil-rights movement milestone, a group of black Greensboro, N.C., college students began a sit-in at a segregated Woolworth's lunch counter.

February 21, 1965:

Malcolm X, the militant leader who promoted Black Nationalism, was shot to death by three Black Muslims.

Haney, Elissa. "Cite The History of Black History." Infoplease. Infoplease, n.d. Web. 24 Jan. 2017.



What to do on a Snow Day

by **Melanie Jones**, Centennial ARM

The college snow day is nothing like the snow days we had as kids back at home. Everything we need is right here. We're surrounded by hundreds of college kids, not our annoying siblings and our pets while our parents are at work. Regardless of age, snow days are cherished gems because it is a golden ticket out of responsibilities. What can we even do on a snow day at Westconn?

- **The obvious one: Sleep..sleep... SLEEP!**

We all know, as soon as we got that notification from the school saying that classes are canceled, we go back to bed. If there's one thing we all need here is more sleep. Take this time to sleep for as long as you want!



- **Catch up on late assignments...**

Remember that homework assignment that was due 2 weeks ago that you said you'd turn in 1 week and 6 days ago? Do it NOW! Seriously. Better late than never. (Unless, of course, your professor does not accept late work, then maybe do something else. Check the syllabus!) Don't forget to do any homework that would have been due on the snow day, it'll probably be due next class! Pro tip: if you have an online class or an assignment due online, it might still be due during the snow day, check that out before you get a zero on an assignment.



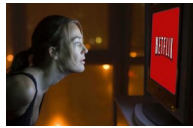
- **Catch up on future assignments!**

Be a little studious and get stuff done before hand! If you have an online

class, it won't hurt to read ahead and complete some assignments if they are available to you. If you have a huge essay due later in the semester, don't hesitate to start finding sources and doing whatever readings are necessary.

- **Binge watch Netflix more than you already do**

When you're done sleeping and catching up on all of that homework, catch up on whatever series you've been wanting to watch. *House of Cards*, *Stranger Things*, and *Black Mirror* are all good options. There are also a ton of great movies that were just released on Netflix for 2017. Why not start watching *The Walking Dead*? Centennial RA Luis and I are hosting a *The Walking Dead* viewing party for the mid-season premiere on February 12th at 9pm! Did I mention there will be free food and giveaways...?



- **Be nostalgic and play in the snow!**

This one is an obvious solution as well! Go outside and build a snowman, and make snow angels. Not many people would have a sled in their room, but if you do, go sledding down the hills on Westside. (The tops of your plastic storage bins can be used as makeshift sleds as well!)

- **Take an artsy photo of the campus**

As much as we might hate to admit it, both Midtown and Westside look pretty beautiful in the snow. Wait for all of those likes you'll get on Instagram. You can thank me later.



There are tons of things to do on campus during a snow day. Take this time to relax! Invite some friends over and have a movie marathon, make some popcorn and hot chocolate, and play some board games or cards. As college students, we don't have much free time to just enjoy ourselves between class, homework, jobs, internships, sports, clubs, and just life itself. Appreciate snow days and take full advantage of them!



by **John Locke**, Grasso ARM

Let's be honest, being bored sucks. And we're bored. A LOT. We college goers often find ourselves spending hours on Youtube®, Facebook®, Tumblr®, Instagram®, Snapchat®... the list goes on and on. Unfortunately this gets boring after the first five hours and we (usually) don't feel like sleeping (although that IS a very important part of life). We need something to break the monotony. Lucky for us, there's a TON that actually goes on around campus. Let's start with sports.

For the month of February, the WCSU sports teams have events on the 8th, 11th, 15th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 25th, and 26th. If you're feeling basket-bally, then the 8th through the 18th are for you. After that, things get watery with the women's diving team competing on the 17th, 18th and 19th. The only lacrosse event is on the 25th and then there's a final conglomeration on the 26th of baseball, tennis and basketball.

But lets say sports aren't your thing. Maybe you're looking for easy, fun, and quick entertainment. This is where the Program Activities Council excels. On the 8th of Feb. PAC is holding their fluffy "Build A Bear" program in the Midtown Student Lobby from 11:00-1:00. Two days later they have their traditional Bad@\$ Bingo at 2 on Westside in the Campus center ballroom followed by the movie "Moana" at the midtown Student Center Theater.

For the musically inclined in our population there are several musical events that are open to students. Every Thursday night there is a Coffeehouse program hosted in the Colonial Corner in the Midtown Student Center. Each week there is an open mic for the first hour of the program and then a feature act that comes in for the second half. On Friday the 10th, there will be jazz combos in the VPAC at 8. Come see your fellow students play live music and applaud them on!

FREE FOOD! This gets our attention pretty fast. What's even better than free food at an event is an event all about Free Food! The Newman Center puts on a bi-weekly **FREE for WCSU Students** dinner every other Wednesday. The next dinner they hosted was on the 8th. Stay on the lookout for the next dinner. All students are welcome to come from 5 to 7pm. Bring a friend!

Cont., pg.6



A Word on Note-Taking

by Maribeth Griffin
Housing & Residence Life

We all know that it's important to take notes in class—it's how you reinforce what's being said and start to remember important points. But what you do with those notes after class is also important! If you're like me, it's a task to just decipher what you wrote. But, it also helps to go over your notes so that, when it's time to study, you are looking at notes that make sense!

In her book, *The Everything Guide to Study Skills*, Cynthia Clumeck Michnick suggests these 7 tips for refining your notes after class.

#1: Read over your notes. Sounds simple, doesn't it? But it has two very helpful side effects: It helps you clarify anything that was confusing and it helps you become more familiar with the information. Build some time into your day to look over your notes outside of class.

#2: Make a rough outline. Use it to pull out and group important terms. Figure out the main topic and sub-topics of the lecture. If the professor has said something that doesn't "fit" in the structure of the lecture, make sure to make note of it anyway. There's probably a reason they talked about it. Use the outline to try to make connections.

#3: Ask yourself questions. Yes—ask yourself if things make sense. Ask what things mean, or how ideas and topics are related. Try to figure out what the big picture is and how the ideas discussed fit into that big picture.

#4: Take notes on your notes. Most tips about note-taking suggest you leave some space beside your notes to write down thoughts, questions, and links that you think about as you're taking the notes or as you're looking them over later. Make use of this space to do that as you're reviewing. It all helps you to build connections with the materials.

#5: Go to other sources. Talk with your friends about their notes and see if they think the same things are important. See what your text has to say. Ask your professor for clarification. Check out other sources in the library for info.

#6: Fill in additional information. When you're looking at those additional sources, if there's info that seems to help you, make sure to jot it down in your notes. That way, it will be handy when you're studying later.

#7: Rewrite your notes. Again, if you're like me, your notes get a little sloppy as you're trying to keep up with all the information you're scribbling. Rewriting your notes, although a bit tedious, will make things much easier to review later as you prepare for your tests.

That's it—a few simple tricks that will help your notes help you!

(Muchnick, Cynthia Clumeck. *The everything guide to study skills*. Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2011. Print.)

Housing Announcements:



The Fall 2017 room selection process is beginning, with deposits for the 2017-18

academic year currently being accepted. In order to select a room for the fall, you MUST have paid your housing deposit no later than March 20th. Deposits are \$250 for the year, and are non-refundable.

Information about room selection will be coming to you via your campus (you001@connect.wcsu.edu) email, as well as available to you in your buildings on posters, via your RAs and RD, on the Housing website, or by stopping in and asking questions in the Housing & Residence Life offices in Newbury.

Meetings will be held in your buildings to discuss the whole room selection process. Please try to get to a meeting so you know everything that YOU have to do in order to secure a room for the fall. Meetings will be:

Mon., March 6—Grasso and Newbury

Tues., March 7—Pinney

Wed., March 8—Centennial

Thurs., March 9—Fairfield

Spring Break: do you need to be on campus for Spring Break? All buildings will remain open, but you will have to pre-register in order to be permitted to stay during break. Check for forms at your desk in early March.



Who Wants to be Bored? (Cont. from pg. 5)

If none of this appeal to you then maybe we should start looking outside of campus. For a small price you can purchase tickets to PAC trips or spend a day with the Adventure Club skiing at Butternut on the 25th.

One of the opportunistic events that comes to WestConn is an organization called PeaceJam. This foundation is centered on Nobel Peace Prize laureates who travel around the US and give speeches, presentations, and workshops about their work in the world. Coming to CT this year is Leymah Gbowee, a 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner for her work to end civil war in Liberia.

If you are looking for more events on campus, the Student Affairs Office sends out regular emails called "What's On at Western." These emails compile every program for the next week to two weeks in every category on campus. You can also find flyers posted all around campus in the residence halls and other buildings advertising upcoming events. Hopefully you can find something to fill your time and have a little fun.



** Don't forget to look for campus events in the WOW email each Thursday! **

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