



# Handout

December, 2015  
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ACADEMIC RESOURCE MENTORS— YOUR ARM HAS A HANDOUT FOR YOU!

IN THIS ISSUE

## It's Not Too Late!

by Jackie Servillo, Centennial ARM

Many students feel when the end of the semester creeps closer, they have no chance of saving their grade. This is not necessarily true because there are many resources on campus that can help. It is important to meet with your professor and let them know you have been struggling, but are really trying to earn a good grade. Some professors will respect you for coming to them and may be able to work something out with you.

Other professors, unfortunately, may say you should have come to see them sooner and there is nothing they can do. This year we are very lucky to have the withdrawal date late in the semester, so if you truly believe there is no way you can pass the class, then you may withdraw until December 11<sup>th</sup>. However, it's always important to

have a good mindset and believe that you can still save your grade.

Study resources on campus will be the best tools for people who are struggling in the last weeks of the semester. It has been a long, difficult semester for some and it is important to keep persevering and believing you can still save your grade. If you are finding difficulty with writing papers, visit the Writing Center on the third floor of Haas Library. If you find difficulty



culty with your JLA classes or business classes, visit the Learning Commons in the Westside classroom building at Young's Library. Overall, make sure you also visit your professors and see if there is any extra credit available or some way you can raise your grade a little bit; but just remember it is never too late to try!

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Finals week is almost here! Do you feel the pressure yet? If so, one of the major ways to release this stress is to start studying now! It may seem too soon, but before you know it you'll be taking your finals. Studies show that preparing weeks before exams help you do better than cramming. When you cram, you are making the brain work even harder than it would if you studied on a regular basis. It is almost safe to say that when using the cramming method, ideally right after the test you will forget most of the material, or you may even forget while taking the test. So let's take a look on how we can start preparing for different types of tests.

### Multiple Choice

The goal of this type of exam is to answer as many questions correctly as possible, but **do not** rush through it!

- ◆ Read the question before you look at the answer.
- ◆ Think about the answer before reading your choices so it doesn't trick you.
- ◆ Eliminate answers you know aren't right.
- ◆ Read all the choices before choosing your final answer.
- ◆ If unsure, take an educated guess and select an answer.
- ◆ Don't keep on changing your answer because usually, your first choice is the right one (we've all experienced this before)
- ◆ In "All of the above" and "None of the above" choices, if you are certain one of the statements is true don't choose "None of the above" or one of the statements are false don't choose "All of the above".
- ◆ Usually the correct answer is the choice with the most information.

# Test Taking Tips

by Nadia Orjiugo, Centennial ARM

- ◆ Mark questions that you are unsure about because this will save time when going over your test.

### Short answer

Try to predict questions that could be on the exam. Usually what the instructor emphasizes in class will be on the test.

- ◆ Use flashcards to identify key terms and important concepts to help with the learning process
- ◆ Try not to leave an answer blank. Even if you don't know exact answer, partial credit is usually given and that's better than no credit!
- ◆ Read the question vigilantly and make sure that you answer everything that it asks for.

### Essay

Read the directions carefully. Pay attention to whether you're supposed to answer all the essays or only an indicated amount.

- ◆ Make sure that you understand what the question is asking you. If not, ask the instructor.
- ◆ Write down everything that is asked in the question and more.
- ◆ Don't spend the entire test on one essay.
- ◆ Pay attention to the time allowed.
- ◆ If the question is asking for facts, state only facts and **not** your opinion.
- ◆ Be as neat as possible.
- ◆ Make an outline before writing your essay. This way your essay will be more organized.
- ◆ Don't write long introductions and conclusions. Remember that your time is limited.
- ◆ Focus on one main idea per paragraph.
- ◆ **ALWAYS** proofread and correct any errors.

The final tip to preparing for exams is making sure that you are healthy, get a good rest, and eat! Good luck to all with your finals!

**F**orget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you're going to do now and do it."

*William Durant*—Industrialist and founder of General Motors Corporation



## I'll Be There With Bells On!



By Lexi Fonda, Litchfield ARM

In my freshman year, I wasn't allowed to go home until Thanksgiving weekend. My mother had been obsessed with online articles about students needing the time to acclimate to their new environments and how students that go home are more likely to stay home. So, on Move-In Day, I really wasn't allowed back from late August to late November, but it was never really a problem for me. I often hung out with people that made for good company and busied myself with extracurricular activities and hobbies. Being away from home was a good way for me to really explore my interests and myself.

Thanksgiving came around, and suddenly it was time for me to go home. While it was only for short period of time, I had already established a new life style while being away at WCSU. I really didn't know what to expect to come home to. I wasn't sure what my friends were up to, or how my new friends at school would be incorporated into my home life, what changes Mom had made to the routine at home... Being home was just really different than being at school.

A lot of my high school friends took very different routes than I did after graduation. Some of them chose schools closer to home than I did; some of them chose to dive right into their careers; and some of them are taking gap years. I think it felt so weird coming back home because I moved away to school while they all stayed home. So since I'd been gone, I'd been out of the loop a little. But all it took was a phone call and some time to catch up and make memories just like we did before.

And as for my new friends, they've been so supportive and always make the effort to come out to see me. Even if it's a little bit of a drive, we still meet at my house, which is essentially the halfway point for everyone. All we did was pick up right where we left off when we were at WCSU. They also enjoy being around my family and vice versa. A hang out session at my house is seamlessly a good time for everyone.

Also, when people say your bedroom will become the new storage closet after you leave, it's true. I was so baffled when I came home to see my mother's bicycle and a bunch of laundry scattered all over. Apparently my room was part storage and part laundry room. Needless to say, it was always strange waking up to a bike in the room. On the other hand, my mom did some nice redecorating outside of my room while I was gone. I think that has something to do with the nest being empty, since none of my brothers and I were living at home at that time.

While I encourage everyone to stay on campus on weekends as often as possible, it's important to maintain a steady home life too. For so many people, that's their place of refuge when the going gets tough, namely classes. Going home for the holidays is time meant for seeing your friends and catching up with everyone. Just relax and enjoy yourself.



December is marketed to us an opportunity to shop for Christmas presents and carol in the cold eaves of towns, but there're so many other holidays and celebrations going on in the last month of the year that they can't be ignored. Take a look at what's going on in December!



**Chanukah**, sometimes spelled Hanukkah, is a Jewish holiday occurring in November or December for eight days and nights in commemoration of the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against

the Seleucid Empire of the second century BC. The holiday begins on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the Kisleb according to the Hebrew calendar, which is why the date fluctuates from year to year on our Western calendars. The holiday is celebrated by lighting a candle on a menorah, a special candelabrum, each of the eight nights of the holiday. Other activities affiliated with the holiday include playing dreidel and eating doughnuts and latkes.



**Yule** is a holiday originally observed by Germanic peoples as a means of celebrating the coming of the Winter Solstice on December 21<sup>st</sup> of each year. Yule is not related to any religious holidays, and is considered a pagan holiday which predates many of our modern celebrations. People celebrated Yule for a number of reasons (one of them being that the Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year) with each following day gaining more light until the Summer Solstice in June. Many elements of Yule were fused into Western Christmas traditions, including mistletoe and the yule log, which was burned until it was completely extinguished on the evening of Yule. There's a ritual that a priestess performs for initiating the celebration of Yule, which you can find online if you're interested in reading it.



**Festivus**, being labeled as "the perfect secular theme for an all-inclusive December gathering," is a holiday taking place on December 23<sup>rd</sup> that was made popular by the sitcom *Seinfeld*, where it was presented as an alternative holiday for those who didn't wish to participate in the pressures and commercialism of Christmas.

The holiday was originally a family tradition of one of the writers on the sitcom, and included activities such as setting up an unadorned aluminum Festivus pole, having a Festivus dinner, sessions called "Airing of Grievances" and "Feats of Strength," and the labeling of rationally explained events as "Festivus miracles." This is one holiday you could embrace if you had a mixed group of people and wanted to try out something new for themed holiday party, so be sure to consider it when planning festivities this December.



**Kwanzaa** occurs from December 26<sup>th</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup> and celebrates African heritage and culture through seven core principles, with activities ending with a feast and gift giving. Created in 1965 by Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa celebrates the seven principles of African Heritage, including Unity (Umoja), Self-Determination (Kijichagulia), Collective Work and Responsibility (Ujima), Cooperative Economics (Ujamaa), Purpose (Nia), Creativity (Kuumba), and Faith (Imani). Some of the symbols associated with the festivities include corn and other crops, a seven slotted candle holder called a kinara, a communal cup for pouring libation, and gifts. Each of the symbols was designed to convey the seven principles of the holiday.

These are only a few of the holidays taking place in December, so over this winter break, why not go and see which others you can find? You never know which holidays may appeal to you and suit your needs!

# Don't Wait to Study for

by Jamie Maitland,  
Newbury ARM

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# Finals — Start **NOW**



**1. Figure out your finals schedule:** Finals week is 12/12/15-12/18/15. See what days you have your finals on so that you can plan accordingly. If you have a cumulative final you may want to meet with your professors to go over the topics on the exam. Also, focus on the exam that comes first. For instance, if you have an exam on 12/14/15, focus on that exam before you focus on the exam on 12/17/15.

**2. Get enough sleep:** Pulling “all-nighters” is not only detrimental to your health; it’s also detrimental to your grades. Make sure to get at least 7-8 hours of sleep a night. You will be amazed at how much information you can remember if you get enough sleep!

**3. Utilize your resources:** If you find yourself struggling in a class, make sure to seek help within your residence hall first. That girl/boy down the hall from you who’s in your class can be really good at a particular topic that you find hard. Go down the hall and introduce yourself to that person and they may be able to help you. If not, then seek outside help. Go to the tutoring resource center, now located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the library, or the math lab that is now located in Higgins Hall. There is help everywhere; you just need to find it!

**4. Set time aside for you:** Finals week can be overwhelming; you can get so caught up with all of your responsibilities and studying that you forget to set time aside for you. It’s okay to put on a movie, go out with friends, or even just rest. Your mental and physical health is extremely important!

**5. Keep calm:** You CAN do this! Your attitude goes farther than you may think. If you think you can achieve something, YOU WILL! Keep the positivity and focus. Don’t let negative thoughts/people get in your way because everything will be okay. While taking your test, stay positive and remember not to change your answer unless you’re 100% sure that the answer you originally put is wrong.

**6. Remember to eat:** When some people are stressed they don’t eat, they just study, study, study! You need to eat! You need to make sure that you take care of your mind, body, and spirit during finals because it’s easy to forget. All you may be focused on is receiving a passing grade on your finals. However, not eating can harmfully affect you in more ways than one. You need to make sure to have a nutritious breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the day.

**7. Study in a quiet place:** While studying for finals you need to concentrate on the material. You may think that you are fully concentrating on work while you are around a group of friends or in a distracting place, but you are not. Grab some snacks, a water bottle, and find somewhere quiet to study.

And ... if mnemonics help you remember things, try these three mnemonic tips for taking tests:

## BREATHE:

- **B**reathe Deeply
- **R**est well the night before
- **E**at a healthy breakfast
- **A**lways read the directions
- **T**ake your time; there’s no need to rush
- **H**ave confidence in yourself
- **E**nergize by stretching during breaks



## RELAX:

- **R**ead the question carefully and then reread the passage or problem to find the right answer
- **E**xamine every answer choice before you choose your answer
- **L**abel your answer in the passage or in the problem
- **A**lways check your work
- **X**-out answers that cannot possibly be correct



And finally,

## PIRATES:

- **P**repare to succeed
- **I**nspect all instructions
- **R**ead, remember, and reduce
- **A**nsWER or abandon all questions
- **T**urn back and answer all questions
- **E**YE it again to check for careless mistakes
- **S**tay calm



## Maria

Exchange from England to the U.S.

### Are you doing a half-year or a full year study abroad program? What have been the challenges you have faced as a study abroad student?

I am doing a full year study abroad program. I really enjoyed being at WCSU, and I am so sad that the first semester is almost over.

It is hard to adjust myself to the new environment at first. However, I have adjusted by participating in as many school activities as I can. It really helped me adapt to the new environment faster. For example, I joined the a capella (Play It By Ear) club and served on the executive board for the Black Student Alliance; I made a lot of friends and got to know the people, surroundings, and culture differences and so on.

### Why did you choose to study abroad in the United States?

I chose to study abroad in the United States because this country is known as a “melting pot” based on its diversity. It provides the opportunity to meet people from different countries with different experiences. It is valuable to be able to connect with different people.

### What is your major? How many classes you are taking at WCSU that will help your future career?

My major is International Law back in England. I am taking political science, world history, and Southern African culture. In some of my classes, I got to learn some criminal and human rights laws that relate to the current news, which really broadened my perspectives on the current events. Especially in my political science class, learning how American government works is very helpful since it is related to my major and the information I learnt in this class is what I need to know in the future as well.

### What is the difference in culture?

The culture difference between England and America is people’s attitude towards one another. In the United States, it is common for people to greet each other with such enthusiastic attitude; people are

more friendly and outgoing. Even strangers will talk to you. However, in England, it is unusual for people to have a conversation with a stranger. Everyone is more serious and reserved, keeping certain distances between each other.

### What advice would you say to other students who are interested in studying abroad in the United States?

I would definitely say be prepared to be open with people, being talkative, and putting yourself out there. Trying to trust people and letting other people know that you are approachable. Besides that, make sure to set up a schedule to talk to your family members and friends back home to keep the connection. Last but not least, be ready to be homesick.

## Donna

Exchange from the U. S. to China

### Are you doing a half-year or a full year study abroad program? What have been the challenges you have faced as a study abroad student?

I'm studying abroad for one semester. Being homesick is the most difficult challenge for me. At first, it was very fun to travel and see everything. Right now, I'm having a difficult time because I miss my family and friends in the US.

### Why did you choose to study abroad in China?

I chose to study abroad in China because I really like the culture, the history, the beautiful landmarks, and how the Chinese economy has been growing rapidly. Therefore, I thought it was the best choice for me since I have always been interested in traveling around China and I think it is beneficial for my career path as an accountant to learn about the Chinese economy.

### What are you looking forward to most when you return home?

I look forward to seeing the people I've missed when I return home! I miss seeing and hanging out with all my family and friends. I met a lot of great people in China and it has been awesome to spend time together, but I still need the people back home. Right after reuniting with my

friends and family, comes the heated buildings. A heater is not common in China. You just have to wear a lot of layers.

### What is the difference in culture?

There are so many cultural differences between the US and China. I don't even know where to start. In the US, we favor individualism, while in China, they favor collectivism. Everything in China evolves around collectivism. For example, for the group project, they just focus more on what the entire group achieves instead of what individual achieves.

### What advice would you say to other students who are interested in studying abroad in China?

I say DO IT!!! I think there is little opportunity in the future to go to another country for so long without any worries. I would do it again if I had the chance to study abroad before I graduate. It has taught me so much, both in school and in life. You start to find out more about yourself and what you want because you are separated from everyone you know. You can start over in a way because no one knows who you are. I know sometimes it is difficult with financial or other situations, but I think it's worth every penny and no situation is too big to stop you from studying abroad. I couldn't have been happier with my decision of studying abroad.

by **Qin Lin**, Pinney ARM

**isep**  
**Perspectives**



# Graduate School 101

by Alex Saraceno,  
Pinney ARM

Graduate school is a critical stage for career development, but not every profession requires a Master's degree or a PhD. Some master's programs prepare graduates for specific professions while others refine and enhance proficiency in a specific field. Doctoral programs prepare students to become experts in a particular field, and with that level of knowledge one can teach at the university level or continue to research. The decision to apply to graduate school requires thoughtful short and long term planning.

Choosing to attend graduate school involves thorough research on programs, schools, and degree options. Certain programs may require a specific examination such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), GRE Subject Tests, the Law School Admission Test

(LSAT), the Medical School Admissions Test (MCAT), or the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). While letters of recommendation, essays, work samples, and interviews also impact your application's strength, test scores are considered crucial for certain program and schools. To prepare for any of these exams there are classes held all-year long both online and in person through resources such as The Princeton Review or Kaplan.

It's never too early to begin the application process. Your hard work in researching and visiting schools as well as communicating with prospective professors will lead you to finding the perfect program and school.



## AVOIDING HOLIDAY LANDMINES

by Maribeth Griffin,

Director of Residential Programs & Staff

Having time off from classes and spending time with your family sounds great, doesn't

it? After all, you've had a busy, tough semester, and this will be a great time to relax and take it easy, right? Well—sort of.

Going home for more than a few days will be different for you now that you're in college, and you need to be prepared for it. You've been on your own—no curfews, no one needing you to run to the store or watch a younger sibling, no planned trips to your grandparents. It's going to be tough to realize that your family still has expectations for you.

- \* **Talk to them when you get home** (or even before you go) to discuss what their plans are for the break and the holidays. Try to arrange the schedule of what YOU want to do to fit with your family's plans. Be willing to compromise!
- \* You're an adult (really!) **Offer to pitch in** around the house. Does your mom need help with the holiday meal prep? Could your sister use a lift to the mall to finish getting her family gifts? Does the laundry need done, or the bathrooms cleaned, or

could you vacuum and dust to help get ready for guests coming for dinner?

- \* Remember that when you're home, your parents worry more about you and where you are. If you go out, **let them know your plans** and when you might expect to come home. If you're going to be later than you discussed, remember to call or text them to let them know! Seriously—there's nothing worse than seeing the look on your mom's face when it's 3 am and she expected you at 1.
- \* **Spend time with your family.** Sure, you'll want to see your friends from home and compare what has been happening these last few months. But remember that your family needs to spend some time with you, too. Take your brother ice-skating, or spend some time with your dad watching a game. You'll be glad you did!

You won't find home so filled with potential landmines if you have a little common courtesy, a few conversations about expectations, and spend a little time with those who love you!

### IMPORTANT HOUSING REMINDERS



The halls close for intersession on Friday, December 18th @ 6 pm, but you are expected to leave no later than 24 hours after your last scheduled final if you finish earlier in the week. Please look for signs and an email from your RD that explain what the process is for YOU to check out for the break from your building.

Remember—if you are moving to a new room for Spring, or if you are leaving campus, you must completely remove your belongings, sign out on your Room Inventory Form, and follow other check-out procedures for your building. You may NOT leave any belongings in your room, nor may you move them to your Spring room until check-in in January.

If you are planning to stay for Intersession, applications are available now on the [www.wcsu.edu/housing/announcements.asp](http://www.wcsu.edu/housing/announcements.asp) website. Pinney and Centennial will be open. If you don't currently live in either of those buildings, you must find a suite or apartment that will allow you to stay over the break, and have each resident of the suite/apartment sign giving you permission to live in the room. Please ask your RD if you have questions. Applications are due by December 11th to stay for Intersession.

It feels like a long way off now, but check-in for the Spring 2016 semester will be on Monday, January 18th, from 10 am—6 pm. (This is the MLK holiday). Classes will begin on Tuesday, January 19th.



\*\* 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](mailto:housing@wcsu.edu)