

College Connections MWSU 1233
Sections 113
MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
Fall Semester 2026

Instructor: Dottie Westbrook
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Office Location: BAC 203D

Office Hours: By appointment Monday-Friday

Course: MWSU 1233

Course Title: College Connections

Class Time: MWF 12-12:50

Class Location: 113 G Moffett Library

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to help new students make the transition to a college environment, focusing on the cognitive, behavioral, and experiential dimensions of learning. There is an emphasis on study skills as well as written and oral communication. There will be a career exploration project. **Attendance will be required at every class.**

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will increase their **academic knowledge** in the following areas: note-taking, test-taking, studying, reading, research, critical thinking, learning strategies, time management, academic advising/planning, communication skills, and intellectual discourse.
 - a. **Learning Outcome:** Evidenced by participation in class exercises and assignments including a time management study, implementation of a daily planner, D2L/Portal, lecture notes, research project, team project/presentations, and a final exam.
2. Students will increase their **university knowledge** in the following areas: traditions, campus resources and facilities, Moffett Library, MSU policies, procedures, regulations, and cultural experiences.
 - a. **Learning Outcome:** Evidenced by attendance of campus events/activities and reporting their experience through class discussions and filling out the Adventure Guide.
3. Students will increase their skill for living in the following areas: transition in to college, relationships, values, awareness, health & wellness, goal setting, and diversity.
 - a. **Learning Outcome:** Evidenced by participation prompt entries, goal setting, career research project/presentation, group interaction, and positive participation in class.

Required Texts:

- There are no required texts that you must **purchase** for this course; however, you will be responsible for all handouts and articles assigned.

Required Course Materials:

- Adventure Guide (Will be used as a planner and will be provided by the University.)
- 3 Ring Binder to keep up with handouts with dividers
- Writing utensil (pen or pencil)

Attendance:

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY! Students are required to attend all class meetings and attendance is documented at the beginning of each class period. Attendance and class participation are deemed essential. Students are advised to plan carefully regarding appointments and/or work schedules to avoid missing class. Each student is allowed up to 3 absences to deal with any emergency which might occur throughout the semester. Any student who misses more than 3 classes will have their letter grade dropped by 1 letter at the end of the semester no matter how many points the student has earned. An additional letter grade will then be dropped for each absence following 4. i.e. 4 absences= 1 letter grade, 5= 2 letter grades, 6= 3 letter grades, 7= 4 letter grades. Students are required to keep track of their own attendance and are responsible for knowing how many absences they have incurred.

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*** A student who arrives to class 10 or more minutes late will be counted as absent. ***

Some assignments are experiential in nature and are only completed in class. If a student is absent from class on the day when one of these assignments are completed in class, they will automatically forfeit any points which might have been earned for the assignment. Personal emergencies that arise will be dealt with on an individual basis. Emergencies that result in a student missing multiple classes should be reported to the instructor and the Dean of Students Office.

Classroom Behavior:

As adults, students are expected to behave in a respectful manner. Disrespect, an indifferent attitude, and/or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and could result in the student being dropped from the course with a grade of “F” AND referral to the Dean of Students Office. In life there is a time and a place for everything and that same rule applies to the classroom. We will have interactive classroom discussions and activities and the utmost respect must be paid to each other at all times.

Academic Misconduct:

Midwestern State University operates under the Student Honor Creed which states, “***As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.***” The full Student Honor Creed can be found online <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/conduct/>

Documented Disability:

- In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations are made for any student with a documented disability. Students should register with Disability Support Services. More information can be found here: <https://msutexas.edu/student-life/disability/>
- Requests for accommodation are acceptable at any time during the semester, but you are encouraged to contact me in person, or via email, as early as possible.

Obligation to Report Sex Discrimination under State and Federal Law

Midwestern State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. State and federal law require University employees to report sex discrimination and sexual misconduct to the University’s Office of Title IX. As a faculty member, I am required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any allegations, personally observed behavior, or other direct or indirect knowledge of conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, or stalking, involving a student or employee. After a report is made, the office of Title IX will reach out to the affected student or employee in an effort to connect such person(s) with resources and options in addressing the allegations made in the report. You are also encouraged to report any incidents to the office of Title IX. You may do so by contacting:

Laura Hetrick

Title IX Coordinator
Sunwatcher Village Clubhouse
940-397-4213
laura.hetrick@msutexas.edu

You may also file an online report 24/7 at https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MSUTexas&layout_id=6

Should you wish to visit with someone about your experience in confidence, you may contact the MSU Counseling Center at 940-397-4618. For more information on the University’s policy on Title IX or sexual misconduct, please visit <https://msutexas.edu/titleix/>

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Instructor Policies

Cell Phones:

Put them away unless asked by the instructor to use them for a class exercise. Students may be asked to leave class if cell phone use continues after being asked to put them away.

Headphone/earbuds:

Please do not wear headphones or earbuds during class. This is disrespectful and you may be asked to leave or be dropped from the class with an “F” if the practice continues.

Hoodies:

I understand that it gets fairly cool in some classrooms; however, you will not be allowed to have a hoodie on your head during this class. Please remove all hoodies from your head or you may be asked to leave the class and you could be dropped with an “F.”

Course Requirements and Points: (850 Total Points Possible)

Grades:

The basis for the final grade will be the average of assignments, projects, tests, and participation. In other words, everything a student does in and for class counts. Students must demonstrate competency in writing through entries in the Adventure Guide and other written work, in oral communication through class presentations and participation, and computer competency through specified assignments. Grades will be as follows: (A) 765-850, (B) 680-764, (C) 595-679, (D) 510-594, and (F) 509 and below.

Grading Scale:

- **A** = 765-850 points
- **B** = 680-764 points
- **C** = 595-679 points
- **D** = 510-594 points
- **F** = 0-509 points

Due Dates:

All assigned work will be due at the beginning of class on the dates specified. No late work will be accepted unless specific arrangements have been made with the instructor in advance. A missed assignment will be eligible for makeup only due to an officially excused absence with *proper* documentation provided, and must be scheduled the day the student returns to class. It is the student's responsibility to stay current with class activities and assignments. If documentation is provided as to the reason for the absence and the absence is excused in accordance with university policy, the student must request the missed work/materials the first class after they return.

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Information on the Mustangs Adventure Guidebook:

This guidebook serves as a shared experience across all incoming freshmen enrolled in any of the FYS (First Year Seminar) courses. The Adventure Log in the front of your guidebook was designed for the credit/no credit version of the FYS. You are in the College Connections version of the FYS; therefore, some of the adventure choices have been changed. Please see the following table of required adventures with grading breakdowns:

Adventure	Date	What did you do?	Points available
1	September 18	High 5	10 points to be awarded in total value
2	November	Met with my academic advisor to schedule spring classes!	50 points to be awarded toward Registration Assignments for this course.
3	November *During Class*	Attend Financial Lit Workshop	Part of Participation Grade
4	September 16	Your Choice	25 pts Campus Activities
5	October 12	Your Choice	25 pts Campus Activities
6	November 6	Your Choice	25 pts Campus Activities
7	December 2	Your Choice	25pts Campus Activities

Activities

Campus Activities

4 events x 25 points each

100 Points

You must attend 4 campus events/activities and document them in the Activity Log in the Adventure Guide and a picture emailed to me at dottie.westbrook@msutexas.edu (May change to D2L upload). Examples of activities include a basketball game, a school production, a UPB Program, or an artist lecture series event. You may not count more than one of the same sport/activity (i.e. 4 movies) and no more than two of the activities can be sporting events.

Registration Assignments

2 assignments x 50 points each

100 Points

You will be responsible for completing 2 tasks related to the registration process at MSU. Details and deadline will be discussed during the semester and will include Timely Advising (to be logged in the Adventure guide), and Timely Class Registration.

Mustangs Adventure Guide/Planner Check

2 checks x 25 points each

50 Points

You will be asked to keep the Mustangs Adventure Guidebook with logs and planners for the Fall 2026 semester. The guidebook will be checked 2 separate times during the semester. Failure to produce **AND/OR** keep up with the guidebook will result in receiving a zero for that check.

Assignments

4 assignments x 25 points each

100 Points

You will be responsible for completing selected assignments covering assigned chapters in your text. Failure to complete the assignment on the assigned date will result in a zero for that assignment. (SMART Goals, Wellness Wheel, Time Management, Quiz 1)

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Save Act Assignment

1 survey x 100 points

100 Points

To help create a safe educational environment, A NEW UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AT MSU is required to complete an online program called “Think About It” during their 1st semester on campus. You should receive log in information through the email you have listed in the system. Older students that have completed the assignment will be given a separate assignment.

Career Project

1 project x 200 Points

200 Points

You will be asked to choose a career that interests you and research that career. You will use resources from the Career Management Center, complete a resume, compile your research findings into a portfolio, and present those findings through an in-class presentation. Details will be given later in the semester.

Final Exam

1 exam x 100 points

100

A final exam will be given on the last day of class.

Class Participation

100 Points