

Skills for Success MWSU 1003
MIDWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
SPRING SEMESTER 2026

Instructor: Gidget Pettibon

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Office Location: 113 Moffett Library

Office Hours: TBA- If my door is open, come in or make an appointment via email.

Course: MWSU 1003

Course Title: Skills for Success

Class Time: T/TR 09:30 am –10:50 pm

T/TR 11:00 am – 12:20 pm

Class Location: 113 G Moffett Library

Course Objectives:

The *Skills for Success* course is structured to provide the student with both a broad base of information and specific instruction in the various facets of effective academic performance. The course objective is to enhance information processing and information mastery through the practice and application of effective study strategies. We will assess learning strengths and weaknesses and practice the application of strategic learning techniques and strategies through assignments, tests, and interactive, experiential learning exercises designed to build information processing and mastery skills.

Attendance will be required at selected activities and every class.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Identify individual learning strengths and weaknesses, and develop an individualized learning profile.
2. Develop and/or improve self-management, planning, and study skills as evidenced through assessments and his or her semester goals outcome
3. Apply and demonstrate strategic learning and study strategies related to the study environment, note taking, reading, information review and memory, and test taking.

What we will undertake in this course is to apply critical and creative thinking and problem solving to enhance individual organization and learning strategies, and develop and refine effective study practices for each student. Specifically, the student will receive instruction and application practice in academic study skills related to self-management and preparation, processing and remembering information, methods of repacking information for review and use, strategic reading strategies, and test taking performance.

Required Texts:

- *Essential Study Skills, 8th edition*, Linda Wong.

Required Course Materials:

- **Learning Portfolio** includes required materials as follows:
 - Three (3) ring binder
 - Five (5) dividers
 - Three-hole loose-leaf notepaper

These materials are the only basic structure of your portfolio. The portfolio is where and how you are to keep all class notes, discussion session notes, reading summaries, assessments, handouts, exercises, and other assignments organized for evaluation. **The Learning Binder/Portfolio** will be the record of your

work in the course and will be the primary means of assessing your progress on the learning outcomes for the class. Your work will be graded on correctness, thoroughness, completion, organization, and neatness.

The binder/portfolio will be organized in this order, using the tab dividers labeled as follows:

1. Class Work- daily lecture notes, in-class experiences, and exercise notes.
2. Handout Materials- all supplemental information and visual aids.
3. Reflection Writing- daily notations and topic writing assignments.
4. Assessments/Inventories- all learning, study products, and worksheets.
5. Semester Plan- this is where all semester planning and resource info is to be filed, including course syllabi*, course calendar, semester schedule overview, study schedules, and grade contract.

***THE SYLLABUS FOR EACH COURSE THE STUDENT IS TAKING MAY BE FILED IN THE PORTFOLIO FOR ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING PURPOSES (and possible extra credit).**

THE TEXT AND PORTFOLIO ARE TO BE BROUGHT TO EVERY CLASS MEETING.

THE CONTENT IN EACH SECTION IS TO BE FILED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER WITH NAME AND DATE.

Attendance:

ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY! Each student is allowed up to 3 UNEXCUSED absences to deal with an 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 retained. An additional letter grade will then be dropped for each absence following 4. 4 absences= 1 letter grade, 5= 2 letter grades, 6=3 letter grades, 7= 4 letter grades. In order for an absence to be excused, a student MUST have proper documentation. Students are required to keep track of their own attendance and are responsible for knowing how many absences they have incurred. **A student that arrives to class more than 10 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.

Additional Classroom Policies:

1. NO PHONES, headphones, music, nor texting/email/electronic messaging shall occur during class time. Please inform me immediately if you have a documented need for access or accommodation requiring the use of electronic equipment; otherwise, **ZERO Tolerance**- no laptops, tablets, or recording devices of any description are to be used during class. Devices are to be turned off and out of your sight and mine. The policy is based on my view that such things are distracting, unless needed as an aid in learning, hence, counterproductive to the learning goals in this course. Violation of this policy will be considered a conduct issue and an extremely bad plan.
2. Students are expected to adhere to the Standards of Conduct as published in the Student Handbook. Students should refer to the current MSU Student Handbook and Activities Calendar

for the University policies and Student Honor Creed on civil behavior, academic integrity, class attendance, student rights, and activities.

3. Assignments will be due at the beginning of class unless otherwise informed. No late work will be accepted unless specific arrangements due to extenuating circumstances have been made in advance with me.
4. Exams and graded assignments will be available for review in a timely manner; however, I do not return most quizzes or exams. If you miss an exam or assignment, you will be eligible to take a makeup or submit work only if your absence is excused by me and proper documentation is provided. Makeup exams must be scheduled the day you return to class. (Please remember that I am not only an instructor! **I am also the Senior Assistant Director of the Learning Center** and sometimes I get very busy in my other position. Give grace with regard to timeliness for grade returns and I will give grace while grading!)
5. Substitute or extra credit work is not offered. Doing what is required will accomplish the learning goals. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to stay current with activities and assignments. Students are responsible for checking their grades/absences and can do this on a regular basis by contacting me during office hours.

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 an 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 followed at all times. The power of life and death are in the tongue!

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.

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.

Course Requirements and Points: (800 Total Points Possible)

Grades:

You have 800 total points awarded to you the first day of class, and your job is to retain points across the semester to achieve your Grade Goal. Each evaluation will be an opportunity to retain points. Your performance on each exam, assignment, application project, quiz, and/or portfolio assignment will determine if any point deduction is taken. Your final grade will be the balance of points retained by your class and group contributions and participation, and skills competencies progress. It is the student's responsibility to keep up with his/her grades towards the grade goal. You have several places to keep track of your grades, use them!

If you would like to start the class with the ONE 10-point extra credit that will be offered, please take a minute and email me a cute baby animal picture.

A = 720 - 800

B = 640 - 719

C = 560 - 639

D = 480 - 559

F = 479 and below

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.

Individual Appointments:

There will be two instances during the semester where students will make an individual appointment to discuss topics including: expectations, goals, plans, and performance. These individual appointments will take place during the regularly scheduled class time and will occur at the beginning and end of the semester. Students will be responsible for providing all required materials at both appointments which include: Learning Portfolio (with all required materials) and a copy of the textbook.

[Next Page](#)

MWSU 1003: Skills for Success

Content Overview

Please note that the fundamental subject matter of the course is you as a learner. You will focus on defining your academic plan, enhancing learning strategies, refining, and developing study and review skills.

The course content can be understood in terms of competency areas vs chapters. The following overview represents the conceptual organization or competency areas covered in the course content. Each skill or competency is supported with relevant text materials and chapters, class exercises, assignments, collaborative group work, lecture notes, handouts, and/or portfolio checks.

Skills Competency

Self-Management

Related Topics/Assignments

- Academic Planning
- Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Motivation and Habits
- Preparing the Learning Environment
- Study Schedule
- Test Prep

Self-Assessment

- Intellectual Performance
- Sensory and Hemispheric Style
- MY, MBTI, Task Behaviors
- Thinking and Learning Characteristics
- Learning Strengths and Weaknesses
- Levels of Learning
- Critical and Creative Thinking

Information Memory

- Understanding Learning
- Learning Styles
- Principles of Memory
- Levels of Learning and Questioning
- Building Resources
- Types of Knowledge

Strategic Reading

Effective Note Taking

- Strategic Reading Strategies
- Visual Reading Methods
- Building Listening Skills
- Application Practices

Study and Review Practices

Test Taking Skills

- Repackaging Information
- Concentration
- Effective Group Work
- Test Anxiety