

Class Time	Instructor & Phone	Office Location	Instructor Email	Office Hours
MWF 11-11:50	Amanda Nimetz	MC Hall	amanda.nimetz@msutexas.edu	M 2-3, TR10-12
	940-397-6244	Room 114		

Learning Goals

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 goal 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.

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 repackaging information for review and use, strategic reading strategies, and test taking performance.

The learning outcome goals are that the student will be able to:

1. Identify their 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.

Classroom Environment

Skills for Success is structured in a seminar format built around individual and group participation in discussions, demonstrations, and experiential application of information and skill competencies (we will do what we talk about.) Class meetings may include topic lecture, discussions of assigned readings and related materials, and experiential applications of learning competencies.

What I expect each student is that he or she:

- A. Be on time and present in each class.
- B. Come ready to work with all required materials and completed out of class assignments. Being prepared for class includes (but is not limited to), no phones, no headphones, having their book, and having a pen/pencil and notepaper. Not being prepared for class could lead to being asked to leave class and being marked absent for the day.

- C. Invest themselves in a productive and meaningful way in activities, discussions, and exercises.

To facilitate participation and the application of learning competencies each student will function as a member of a workgroup throughout the semester, as well as work in partnership with the entire class and me. Each class will provide opportunities to practice important elements of successful performance including organization, listening and reasoning, recording, and participating in thoughtful discussion.

Textbook and Class Materials

- **Essential Study Skills, 8th edition, Linda Wong.** The textbook is **required** and will be used to augment lectures, discussion assignments, and class exercises. Reading to build background knowledge and practicing information-processing strategies is a significant emphasis in this class. We will use the text as a workbook in many chapters and the student is responsible for reading and knowing the content of the assigned chapters. Exams will include questions based on the textbook readings, lecture notes, classroom exercises, study activities, and assignments.
- **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 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 portfolio binder 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.

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

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's 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 returned for review in a timely manner. 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.
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.

Attendance

Attendance is REQUIRED! Attendance is documented with a sign-in sheet at the beginning of class each period. If you miss any class, assume you missed important, need to know information. Students are advised to plan carefully regarding medical, dental, and/or legal appointments during class times to avoid unnecessary absences. Generally, routine scheduled medical or work conflicts during class time are avoidable with proper planning.

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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 25 minutes late will be counted as absent.

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

Related Topics/Assignments

Self-Management

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

Self-Assessment

- Intellectual Performance
- LASSI
- 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

Evaluation Criteria (Grade)

You have 650 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.