

19 – VII | Maximizing Final Grade

No matter where you are in the course or what the syllabus says, there is always a way to pull through. If you knew there was no way to pass, you would have likely withdrawn by now, so I assume you know you can still pass.

When to give up: (If you continue using Khan Academy or a private tutor, change your major, or stop!)

Sometimes you just have to be realistic. Suppose you are in Calculus, Linear Algebra, Differential Equations, or Physics, and you are at an F just before the final test or final exam. It is time to throw in the towel. In over 15 years of tutoring, I have only seen about 1% of students in this situation pull through, and this is after spending \$5,000 on a high-priced, experienced tutor, working 5+ hours a day over a period of 2 weeks or so. And listening to and following every word they say without question. If you question the tutor, it is time to throw in the towel.

When to pull through:

If you are at a D or F and need a C- or maybe a D- to pass, you might be able to pull through.

- 1) Ask the professor for extra credit or to replace a lousy grade exam with the final exam grade.
- 2) Explain to the professor that this course is not part of your overall degree, so it is difficult to engage properly, and you just need to get it out of the way.
- 3) Cry your eyes out if you are a girl talking to a male professor. Don't do this to either sex if you are a male. [despite the modern concept of equality, everyone is a discriminatory racist of some sort, yes, even you]
- 4) Work smart, not complicated by selective studying.

i. Office Visits

Bug the crap out of the professor! Go to their office every single week. Ask them a million questions and come back again and again. If you do this, they will pass you to ensure they never see your annoying butt again! It works!

Professors are just as human – if not more so – as everyone else. Play on their emotions, irritations, and frustrations. If your goal is to simply pass the course, find a nice cozy spot up their rear end and stay there until you get that passing grade.

As I said before, college isn't just about studying; it is about learning how to become a member of society. Sometimes, we must persistently get what we want (without cheating).

“Nothing is more common in the average person than talent – only through persistence is success possible.”

If you are reading this before the class starts, and you know it will be a challenging course for you, begin annoying the professor right away.

- i. Sit in the front of the class and ask a question every ten minutes.
- ii. Visit the professor at every single office hour.
- iii. Stay after class.
- iv. Ask before class.

Make sure the professor knows exactly who you are. When they grade you, the more they know you, the more they will either respect you or never want to see you again. Either way, the result is a passing grade.

ii. Asking Questions and Never Missing Class

More reiteration of previous topics. Just know this- participating in lectures and attending office hours could be the difference of a whole letter grade or even a passing grade.

As mentioned earlier, I always think of a lecture as a party or gathering. A designated time for people to gather for social practices with planned food and entertainment. Something the host put a lot of effort into, hoping all their friends show up for the event. It would hurt their feelings if someone didn't show up simply because they thought it was a waste of time.

So, don't hurt the professor's feelings by missing class. They spent a lot of time preparing (at least, some of them do this) the lecture for you to be best prepared for exams. If you don't get much out of the lecture, chances are you did not read the book first, and you will be unprepared for the exam(s). You need to study the material the lecture covers before the lecture—otherwise, it is pointless.

Now, in some cases, at large universities with 100+ students per lecture and multiple-choice exams, much of what I am saying is not going to apply to those courses, at least as far as point maximization goes. However, skipping a lecture is characteristic of your character, and you do not want to reinforce the behavior of a child. Go to freaking lecture and grow up!

If you have a massive class with multiple-choice question exams. The best way to prepare for these exams—as they are worth 90%+ of your grade—is to take two to three or more practice exams from previous semesters every single week so that you learn how they word the questions and become accustomed to answering them. I, for one, am terrible at multiple choice—of course, I never practiced them!

iii. The List for Passing Courses in College

- 1) Before the semester starts, be at least 2 sections ahead of each lecture.
- 2) Never miss a lecture.
- 3) Ask questions in every lecture.

- 4) Visit the professors during office hours with completed solutions so they can grade and offer advice.
- 5) Take at least one practice exam each week in a very distracting location, timer set, no notes, and no calculator. Even if you can't finish the problems, sit there thinking until the alarm you set for the exam duration goes off.
- 6) Strategize by pooling qualified questions for the exams.
- 7) Be neat, precise, and clear on each solution on the exam.
- 8) Don't waste time simplifying or calculating when unnecessary.
- 9) Write out all formulae and related information before attempting to solve any exam question.
- 10) Spend more time on the questions you are most confident in than the ones you are not. (Sloppy solutions equal bad grades.)
- 11) Relax! In a hundred years, you'll be dead.