



The Insider's Guide to College Success

Are you excited about college? I loved it. The excitement of starting something new is everywhere. Or, if you've been at it a while, can you remember the feeling you had when you first arrived on campus? For most of us college is our first taste of real freedom. Now, add to all these emotions what it would be like if college was also the first time you ever actually enter a traditional classroom setting. This was my story, and I'm sharing with you the exciting secrets that I learned about making A's. You're going to learn exactly what I learned, and exactly what to do. If you make enough A's in enough classes, then you'll make University Honors...guaranteed!

P.S. If receiving University Honors isn't quite your goal but you would still like to improve your grades, then this information is just as applicable to you!

A Little Background

I came from homeschooling (forgive me!). I am the oldest of five, and because of this, was a bit of the guinea pig. In the early years of homeschooling my parents tried many different curriculums, which in the end didn't really fail; they just weren't a match for us. My mom, with her M.A. in Education wanted more of a set structure to our education, while my dad with his B.A. in English and Masters from seminary (Theology school), was drawn to a more Liberal Art's approach to learning.

The middle ground they found was something called the Robinson Curriculum. The basic premise was to do two hours of math, an hour of writing, and then read for two hours from a compiled list of great works (meaning OLD works) ranging from economics and history, to fiction and poetry. Inside of this plan our family developed our own twists to the curriculum. The greatest of these twists was in the way we approached writing; which led to us creating our own writing course which you can learn more about at www.advanced-writing-resources.com.

I'm telling you all of this to help you understand that I was approaching college *with no previous educational baggage*. I had no preconceived conceptions of how classes “should” go, or even what I should do. What I did have was the ability to learn how to learn by being able to read, write, and think with math; the heart of our family’s approach to education. So with this ability, I entered The University of Texas (Austin) rather blindly, though as I would learn later, my eyes were actually wider open than many of my fellow classmates.

THE GAME

Another piece of wisdom I gained prior to entering college (due to the daily repetition from my father) is that, “Education is a game.” I say this in no way to belittle education or its value; education is huge, it's crucial, but getting grades and graduating is still a game. Now, this eBook is about how to make University Honors (or just improve your grades if that's where you want to start) during any semester or quarter you choose; and knowing education is a game is the foundation which all other secrets lie upon. You must approach college with the mindset that it is a game. As with all games, there are rules to follow (I'm not much of a fan of rules, so I'd rather say principles), there are people who enforce the “rules”; but also like any game, it can be won. Inside of this analogy receiving University Honors is ‘winning’ the game. Now this game-mindset needs to apply to all aspects of college; thus each semester is a game, each class is a game, and in fact each assignment is a game.

I came into college with the approach that all professors have a way they want things done, a way they want tests taken, questions answered, papers written; they each have their own game. I left all thoughts about how they “should” teach and how they “should” grade me at the door, and instead spent my time working at understand how their game was played. If you truly buy into this idea it will free you up a great deal, for once you view your classes as a game, it becomes immediately possible for you to win. In addition to this, viewing each class as a game takes some of the edge off of the anxiety

most of us carry into college.

THE SECRETS

Now that you understand the foundation to receiving University Honors (it's the fact that education is a game if you missed the last few paragraphs), let me provide you a short recap of what my first two years at The University of Texas at Austin were like, and the way they led me to the point of fully understanding how the game works.

My first semester I came in nervous, unsure (was it just a fluke that I even got in?), and way too determined to prove myself. I was excessively diligent, worried more than I ever have in my life, and stayed sick throughout that whole semester. Through determination (I didn't know the secrets I'm about to share with you) I received University Honors with a ! Second semester I did a little less of everything, but still worked hard enough, though at the end of it I received my first B.

At the end of my freshman year I didn't have much of a method; I had principles that guided many of my action but I didn't have much clarity as to what I was doing. Toward the end of the summer I was on vacation with my family in Gulf Shores, Alabama. I was reflecting on the year past and my single, marring B. I decided that I wanted to make it a goal to get a in the coming semester. Using another bit of my father's wisdom I set up a tension-resolution chart, something he actually learned from a mentor Robert Fritz. In the bare basics of it you establish what your goal is (for me it was to make all A's the next semester) at the top of a sheet of paper, then you establish reality clearly (for me it was the classes I was about to take that fall) at the bottom of the same sheet. Finally, you establish steps to get from reality to your goal; like steps on a ladder climbing from reality to reach your goal. Putting dates in for each step is also really helpful.

I wrote down the following chart in my leather bound book of other goals, thoughts, and poems.

GOAL - Get a in each class (by semester's end)

Step 5 - Make an A on final

Step 4 - Make A on Mid-term

Step 3 - Do extra credit

Step 2 - If no A on the first test---find out why

Step 1 - Make A on first test (or project)

REALITY - classes haven't started, but I am signed up for them

Now this was very much a skeleton, but at that point in time it was all I had; but, I knew that it was basic enough for most all of my classes to fit this plan. As Dad says, “You can’t start with perfect.” This basic plan also provided specific steps to be taken and clear sub-goals under my primary goal. I left the beach, came back to Texas, and began school. I followed my tension resolution system (chart / plan) and made a ...well not exactly. You see there is a small problem with human beings; we can actually not follow our own advice, our own system. I ended up once again making one B, but this time I clearly knew why. Looking at my chart I had clearly followed all my steps, except one, **I didn't do extra credit.** I had been doing pretty well in the class and thought I didn't ‘need’ extra credit. However, I didn't do as well as I needed to on the final paper in one class and missed my A by a measly 2.5 points. Now there were actually two things I did wrong resulting in my B: first, I didn't follow my system; and second, I will talk about that in a moment. What I did learn from that semester is that my system will work if I only follow it. I pulled out the chart again before the second semester of my sophomore year began, reviewed it, decided I wanted that , that I was going to follow all my steps, and sure enough I received my .

So here is my **second** secret; **follow the plan (chart)**. If you want a clarify that it is your **goal**, visualize what it will be like to see all A’s show up on your grade report. Next make sure **reality** is clear, but notice that an important sub-point to this is that **reality changes**. This was my second mistake when I first tried this system, I did not know exactly where my grade stood. If I had established the reality of what I needed to make on the final paper to get an A I would have realized I needed the extra credit to put me in a safe place. Reality should constantly be reevaluated and established, you should always **know what grade you have in a class and what grade you need to make**. Next realize that **each step** of making an A on the first assignment, midterm, and final **are all goals themselves**. I actually have the goal of making an A in every aspect of a class. Do I pull this off? No, but it is still my goal. So what happens when I don't make an A on something? This is where step two comes into play. I go to my professor (or whoever is deciding my grade) and I find out why I received the grade I did. This is part of discovering how their game works. I want to know exactly what I did wrong, what I did well, and what I could have done to have received an A on the assignment. Once I know the answers to these questions I know how to play their game for the next assignment. You must seek out this kind of feedback; it’s like a football team watching their game films to learn how to get better. You must get over yourself and go find out exactly what the instructor

wants from you. You also may have to continue going in to see them after each assignment. So what --- this is simply a way of refining your understanding of their game.

The **third** secret is to **get extra credit**. Personally I find extra credit slightly annoying because you typically have to go out of your way to do it, it doesn't get you a ton of points, and quite honestly, it's just piling on more 'things to do' in my schedule. But, as I learned after my third semester of college, it can make the difference between an A and a B. The quality of extra credit usually isn't graded that hard, so it is all but guaranteed. However, it has one huge value: it shows your instructor that you care, that you are actually making an effort. Extra credit is really an X Factor and can go a long way in building a relationship with your professor. Face it, if an instructor likes you, it can boost your grade! If they think you are trying, they may simply misunderstand and think you are doing it because they are great! Now I'm not saying this third secret about extra credit is a never-to-violate rule, but it is a rule of thumb. It is a useful tool, so use your mind and put the effort forth to do it when appropriate and you want to have some insurance for your grade in a particular class.

Finally, use this simple chart as a skeleton, but flesh it out. Everyone's classes vary a little bit, so use it to fit your schedule or field of study. Once you know specific projects and assignments in a class, you can fill them in on the chart as steps to accomplish. Use it as a frame-work to approach all your classes with, but put it together in a way that works for you. Remember --- you can't start with perfect (but you can start).

THE ACTIONS

In this section I really want to speak with you about actions to take, and habits to form. It is here that we will actually get down to the business of what to do. If you are like most students you don't have that much time for the theory, you just want to know what to do. Unfortunately, I had to tell you the principles so you wouldn't keep thinking, "Well, why would that work?"

There are **four actions** that I recommend as pertinent to the quest for receiving University Honors. **The first action** (and I wish I didn't even have to mention this) is **Go To Class!** The physical act of being in a class, listening to the lecture, pitching in a few comments or questions, adds a tremendous amount to your understanding of a subject. Going to class also provides the opportunity to ask questions when you become confused. Attending class also helps you get the information you might not get from a study guide, or the text book. It goes without saying, but the textbook is not a

replacement for class, it is a supplement.

The second action that must you must take can only happen if you follow the first action of going to class. The second action is to **participate in class**. Don't get me wrong, even going to class and never saying a word is better than not going to class. But this second action is a huge boost to your pursuit of receiving University Honors. Ask questions. Answer questions. The best question to ask in class is almost always one you DO NOT know the answer to! The best answer is one you DO know the answer to but share as a question! For example, you can say, "Isn't it true that America's approach to the separation of church and state is the reason we haven't had the problems Europe has had with Kings and Popes fighting for power?" You get my point. Actively using your mind in class will tighten your grasp on the subject, and will show your professor that you care and are present (not a limp body just showing up). Remember, education is a game and your professor holds your success or failure in his/her hands. Participating can do nothing but help you. In an even more direct way, many times participation can count for up to ten percent of your total grade. Sharing your opinion in class seems to be a pretty easy way to improve your grade. In fact, receiving University Honors probably requires it.

The third action is to **Take Basic Notes**. You really must understand what I mean by 'basic' here. The real objective of note-taking is to be able to study your notes later as a means to refresh your mind before a test. If your notes are too sparse there will not be enough there to recall the information with clarity for the test. However, there is an equal danger in **excessive note-taking**. When an entire class is spent scribbling notes down as fast as possible it will tend to interfere with your ability to listen to the lecture. If you are not understanding and processing what you are hearing, it will have a very damaging affect on understanding the material. Your regurgitated information in the form of notes is not a replacement for the lecture, it is a supplement (P.S. Professors lecture on what THEY think is important...which THEY then usually put on THEIR tests). Thus basic notes are those which give you enough of a framework to help review the information when studying, but not taken in excess material to the point of missing what your professor is saying. Copying every word said is definitely too much, but writing a word or two here and there won't be enough; just work with writing down a basic outline with key points during each class. As a side note I will say there have been classes that I took absolutely no notes in after the first week, because I found that the tests were wholly based off of power-point presentations the professor gave us. Bottom line --- use your judgment, but as a rule of

thumb, Take Basic Notes.

The **fourth and final action** seems to be the hardest action for many students to carry out; **Do Your Assigned Reading**. It really is pretty simple. If before every class you actually read what you were assigned, don't you think you would understand the lecture better (the lecture is usually about the reading), be able to participate better, and overall perform better on any test/paper covering the reading. It must be clear that I am emphasizing completing your reading on time as much as I am on simply completing it. If you consistently read what is assigned to you it will not pile up, you will not become overwhelmed, and the information will flow at a speed which your mind can easily comprehend. Hey, you're going to have to read it anyway...why not before class? Reading the assignments is the most crucial for the first few weeks of class. It is this period of time where many fall behind. Be diligent from the beginning, for it is the foundation on which the rest of the semester will be built. Once again I've had classes where our grade in no way depended on the reading, and it did nothing to help me, but I only realized this after a few weeks of doing the readings, and then evaluating how beneficial they were for understanding, participation, and just enjoying being in class. Bottom line, do your assigned reading from the first day of class!

THE HABITS

This next section should have a title like, "The seven habits of a stress-free student." Actually, removing stress is only one benefit of these habits. They will help move you toward that goal of receiving University Honors (or just simply improving your grades).

The **first habit** is to **Spread Studying Out**. Cramming at the last minute isn't a strategy for learning and making an A; it is a strategy for just getting by. One thing we students don't think much about is the fact that when an assignment is given with a one week deadline, the professor actually thinks it will take a week to complete! Saving everything until the last minute is destructive in two ways: first, it will lessen your mind's ability to really grasp everything it needs to; and second, you will actually waste a lot of time. Spending hours upon hours cramming information into your brain lowers its efficiency. Your reading speed will slow down, your mental processing will dull, and overall your mind as a machine will begin to tucker out. Curiously, if you measured it, you'd find out you aren't saving time by cramming; you're just moving it all to one condensed-and-ineffective time period. The key to preventing this brain bust is to spread the work out into small pieces over time. When I receive

an assignment I mentally plot out how much I need to get done each day in order to have it finished on time. I do the amount I have determined, and before long, boom it's done, no big deal. In fact it is usually not more than about twenty minutes of work per day outside of class for any given assignment; and many times, its even less than that. With the looming act of cramming gone, the stress is also gone. Most of this comes down to the learning how to be diligent. By daily being faithful to the work at hand, I am able to fully absorb the information instead of trying to plow through it; this paradigm shift is at the root of the habit. Just try it. You'll learn that this habit is huge. Frankly, it's just easier to go ahead and learn what you need to!

The second habit is to finish studying for a test, or writing a paper, at least **one hour before it's due**. I can't count the number of times I have entered a classroom to take a test and found people around me freaking out for the last ten minutes leading up to the exam. Many are shuffling through flashcards, ruffling text book pages, or pouring over notes. This panic-study is only adding stress to what is already by nature a stressful event. Last minute studying like this can many times confuse the information you should already have stored if you were following all I have told you up to this point in the book. I typically invest my mind in something entirely different before taking a test, most often I read my Bible since I find it very calming. In fact, I even refrain from reviewing the information in my mind. If I have learned the information it is in my mind, and I can recall it; knowing this I realize I only need to wait until the test asks me to recall it. My guess is that stress will drop a test score by half a letter grade (at least). Is seeing a flash card one more time going to really get it into your head? Not really. At some point you've done what you can. Why not do what you can and take the last hour to get your heart set for the test so your head helps when it's time? To enter a test with this kind of peace allows your mind to do its job, and do it well, free from the distracting nature of your self-induced stress.

The third habit relates to the second habit; **Memorize Visually**. Many times the last-minute-study-panic is used because we rely on placing something in our brain just long enough to throw it up and hope it lands on our blue book. To memorize means it's actually in there, it's not just familiar, instead it is embedded in your mind. Whatever you are memorizing, be it titles of ancient Chinese paintings or how different types of drugs combat HIV (both of which I've had to memorize) the key is to visualize it. This is a pretty easy three-step process. Step one is to look carefully at the phrase or important information you need to recall for a test. Usually this isn't general information, but dates or

quotes you need to specifically recall. Step two is to ask your mind, “How do you want to picture that phrase.” I know it may seem funny to talk to your brain, but it has a mind of its own anyway! The picture(s) your brain offers will be the unique-to-you one(s) it will bring up the next time too, which makes it easy. Once you have the mental picture in your mind (it doesn't matter what it is as long as your mind has invented it) then add action to it. If your image moves it further cements it into your mind. The third step is to review your info/pictures. Review them as much as you like, but here's a solid pattern from the memory lab; first review information after about an hour, next after about five hours later, then a day, then every couple of days, by that time your test has probably come around. If you memorize everything using this visual method I promise that it will stick with you, there will be no need to cram or review right up until the test. Again, you therefore won't have stress.

The **fourth habit** is a mindset you need which relates back to what we learned earlier about education being a game. The fourth habit is to **Always Look at the First Assignment as a Learning Experiment**. At the beginning of any class you won't ever know the new professor's game. So try hard on the first assignment, do what you know to, but do not view that first grade as the pacesetter for the rest of the semester. I made a 75% on the first test I ever took in college. I totally freaked out, got depressed, and in some dark corner of my soul I'm sure I thought it was the end of the world. Fortunately I had the good advice you're getting here to go and talk to the grader. By the end of the semester I made an A in the class. View the first assignment as a way to learn how the game of that class is played, not as the final indicator to how well (or bad) you'll do by the end of the game.

The final two habits may not seem to relate directly to education, but I have found them to be extremely valuable.

The **fifth habit** is to do at least one thing you enjoy every day. I came to a place during the first semester of my sophomore year where I was totally drained. My Coke has lost its fizz. I felt I had no control over my life; that I was mechanically going from one action to the next. I was a faceless worker in a learning factory. Fortunately, Dad had me talk with one of his 'coaches' who made the suggestion that I set aside time each day to do one thing I enjoyed, one thing I would have total control over. For me at the time it was poetry. I love writing poetry (you probably would too if you gave it a try!), and no one was telling me how it should be written, what the subject should be, or when it was due; I found freedom and joy in this simple activity. In this simple act of writing poetry each day it

massaged my soul, diminished stress, and made me feel alive again. Your fifth habit may not involve poetry, but it does involve something. What would bring you joy and renewal? Make it a habit to do it every day.

The sixth and last habit that is important to form and will help you in your journey to a is to Get Enough Sleep. Sleep in an odd thing when you are young. At times I feel I can live without it, and at other times I can over indulge it. This may shock you, but your body NEEDS sleep to function. Simply put, if you are depriving your body of sleep your mind will not be as sharp. Equally important as knowing the material is having a mind sharp enough to get it onto the paper. Everyone has an individual amount of sleep they need to run effectively (which can vary with circumstances); you know your body, so use your own judgment. If you don't know your body, just pay attention; it communicates pretty well! I promise, if you really need two extra hours of sleep they will be more valuable to you than studying. Make a habit of sleeping the right amount for your body's needs. Chances are you'll get sick less too.

My next insight into the world of college is one I discovered first semester of freshman year: Grades Are Negotiable. Because of my homeschooling background grades were a somewhat new concept. Sure I had grades on some aspects of homeschool but it was not the emphasis, the emphasis was learning. Because of this it allowed me to approach grades with a fresh perspective. I wrote a paper for my freshman sociology class, received it back, checked the grade (which I wasn't happy with) and then began to read the red scribes of critiques. As I went through them there were several I simply didn't agree with and thought were not justifiable reasons to take points off for. I met with my TA who was the grader of the paper, she tried to defend her decisions, I in a very respectful manner explained that I still did not understand; she sent me to the actual professor. The professor listened to what I was asking, and ended up adding points to my grade. This was my first experience that taught me grades are negotiable. Having this knowledge in hand later that semester I was assigned a final paper for my art history class, it counted for a large part of my grade. I was on the edge of an A and a B in this class and so my plan to push my grade over the edge went as follows. I finished the paper early, went to the office of my grading TA, and with paper in hand said, "I really would like to make an A in this class. Here is my paper, if you could tell me what to change so that I could get an A that would be great." She took the paper, laughed, made some suggestions, told me not to worry, and I got my A. Grades are never fully set until they are actually submitted at the end of the semester, at that

point you're kind of stuck. Now what I am not saying is to burst in on your professor every time you get a bad grade and demand they change it. What I am saying is that those educating you generally want to see you succeed, they are willing to help you out and they realize that it is possible to make mistakes in their grading. In conclusion, talk to those that hold your grade because it is always negotiable.

ADVANCED TIPS

Here are my advanced tips that will take you to the next level--if you choose to go there. These are really powerful for multiplying your learning and improving your grades and life.

The **first advanced tip** is to **Mentally Connect All Material** within a single class. Your brain grows by making connections, and with more connections the speed at which it can function increases, including the speed at which you can recall information. Most of the time we make the mistake of approaching what we are learning in a class on a lecture-to-lecture level. At best we think about it in sections or chapters. What I am challenging you to do is think about all the information in the class as holistically dependent; the information as a whole makes up what the professor is trying to teach you. It is a look at the whole globe and not just where Iceland sits. Each day of class provides knowledge that can serve as a building block for all future information. In every class I take I am constantly asking myself how what I am currently learning applies to anything my professor has taught me previously. If you take this approach you will be building a mental highway with more connections; the more lanes, the faster your information can travel, thus you'll do better on all tests and papers, and get closer to receiving University Honors. Your professor has laid out the material with the whole semester in mind, you would be wise to think about it the same way. By the way, there is a chance your professor knows what he/she is doing despite the popular opinion around campus!

My **second advanced tip** is that ***Time Does Not Equal Grade***. It took me a long time to figure this one out. I, like many of you, thought if I spent a great amount of time studying, or working on a project, it meant I would do well. Frankly, there is little truth in this idea. You can study smarter or you can study dumber! You could spend a ton of time studying and make a great grade or a poor grade. Inversely, you could spend very little time studying and still make a great grade or a poor grade. Because there were other activities I wanted to spend time on I decided to study smart. I also admitted to myself that there were times when I was studying for the sake of studying, and all it provided was a silly sense of security. If I'm prepared for a test and it only took me thirty minutes to get ready, I'm still ready and there is no need to study more. Now don't get me wrong, there are occasions when a lot of time is required, but not always, and usually there are ways to cut your time down. (Learning how to Speed Read has been one of my greatest time savers).

Advanced tip three is to Study what you are Passionate About and what you can Excel At.

I almost didn't include this but after a conversation with a friend I decided it was an important tip to include. My friend mentioned above is one B short of an A and majoring in Computer Science. He was asking me about this very eBook while I was in the process of writing it. He admitted that he didn't have a system to his good grades, and was surprised/intrigued that I did. What he also admitted to me was that he is just one of those guys who, "Stuff comes easy to." After discussing this a little we realized that what "came easy to him" were those classes related to his major. I knew exactly what he meant. I am an Art major and I can honestly say that my art classes have been the easiest classes I've taken in college, which isn't to say Studio Art is easy. I have not made below an A in any of my Art classes, and I always enjoy going to them. I picked a major that I knew I was good at and that I loved. I have another friend who has spent the past two years struggling through Petroleum Engineering, almost flunking out, and hating it all the while. He chose the major for a number of reasons, one of which was the money he would make with the degree. He failed to ask himself if he would be good at it or would love it. Needless to say, he finally switched majors to something he loves (and will be good at) and is doing great. When you study what you excel at and what you love, it actually makes receiving University Honors hardly difficult in the grand scheme of things. In many ways I feel like it is a bit of a 'duh', but I constantly meet people who are struggling with school because they were not made for what they are studying. Frankly, if education is all about learning how to learn...and...if the statistics are right that 85% of the people who graduate are in a totally different field than they studied for within 10 years; then doesn't it make sense to just study hard at what you like and end up with high grades? The other option is to struggle through and be mediocre. There is one way around this issue of passion and talent. You can ask yourself the following question: "Is there a way for me to learn to love this area of study?" If you find the answer to that question, I'm sure you'll do well.

So there you have it, all the tools you could possibly need to receive University Honors; but now comes the tricky part, applying it on a personal level. It's up to you to take the steps to succeed, but knowing how is half the battle.

Finally, keep in mind that I figured out all of this by trial and error, learning from others first hand, or through books; but in the end I still had to sort out what worked for me. You will have to do the same; figure out how you play the game of education. And, remember that it is a game, it's not life or death, a bad grade has never caused the world to end. I'm learning do what I can and leave the rest in God's hands. I know He has it figured out and will take me where He wants me to be. I guess it just comes down to the fact that the Lord doesn't seem to steer a parked car! Get moving!

If God doesn't suit you, then best of *luck* to you in all your goals and educational endeavors.

Blessings,

Tripp Lybrand

Austin, Texas

A SUMMARY OF THE SECRETS, HABITS, AND TIPS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN COLLEGE

Secret #1

All professors have a way they want things done; a way they want tests taken, questions answered, and papers written. They each have their own game.

Secret #2

If you want a clarify that it is your goal, visualize what it will be like to see all A's show up on your grade report. If you just want better grades then clarify that as your goal, make the goal unique to you. Next make sure reality is clear, but notice that an important sub-point to this is that reality changes. Reality (what's happening with your grades and progress) should constantly be re-evaluated and established, you should always know what grade you have in a class and what grade you need to make.

Secret #3

Get extra credit, it can make the difference between an A and a B. It shows your instructor that you care, that you are actually making an effort. Extra credit is really an *X Factor* and can go a long way in building a relationship with your professor. Face it, if an instructor likes you, it can boost your grade!

Action #1

Go To Class! The physical act of being in a class, listening to the lecture, pitching in a few comments or questions, adds a tremendous amount to your understanding of a subject.

Action #2

Participate in class. Ask questions. Answer questions. Actively using your mind in class will tighten your grasp on the subject, and will show your professor that you care and are present (not a limp body just showing up).

Action #3

Take Basic Notes. If your notes are too sparse there will not be enough there to recall the information with clarity for the test. However, there is an equal danger in excessive note-taking.

Action #4

Do Your Assigned Reading. If before every class you actually read what you were assigned, don't you think you understand the lecture better (the lecture is usually about the reading), be able to participate better, and overall perform better on any test/paper covering the reading.

Habit #1

Spread Studying Out. Cramming at the last minute isn't a strategy for learning and receiving University Honors; it is a strategy for just getting by. One thing we students don't think much about is the fact that when an assignment is given with a one week deadline, the professor actually thinks it will take a week to complete!

Habit #2

Finish studying for a test, or writing a paper, at least one hour before it's due. To enter a test with this kind of peace allows your mind to do its job, and do it well, free from the distracting nature of your self-induced stress.

Habit #3

Memorize visually. Step one is to look carefully at the phrase or important information you need to recall for a test. Step two is to ask your mind, “How do you want to picture that phrase.” Once you have the mental picture in your mind (it doesn't matter what it is as long as your mind has invented it), then add action to it. The third step is to review your info/pictures.

Habit #4

Always Look at the First Assignment as a Learning Experiment. View the first assignment as a way to learn how the game of that class is played, not as the final indicator to how well (or bad) you'll do by the end of the game.

Habit #5

Set aside time each day to do one thing you enjoy, one thing you have total control over in order to massage your soul, diminish stress, and make you feel alive again.

Habit #6

Get Enough Sleep. This may shock you, but your body NEEDS sleep to function. Simply put, if you are depriving your body of sleep your mind will not be as sharp.

A Key Insight

Grades Are Negotiable. Those educating you generally want to see you succeed, they are willing to help you out and they realize that it is possible to make mistakes in their grading. Talk to those who hold your grade because it is always negotiable.

Advanced Tip #1

Mentally Connect All Material within a single class. Your brain grows by making connections, and with more connections the speed at which it can function increases, including the speed at which you can recall information.

Advanced Tip #2

Time Does Not Equal Grade. You can study smarter or you can study dumber! You could spend a ton of time studying and make a great grade or a poor grade. Inversely, you could spend very little time studying and still make a great grade or a poor grade.

Advanced Tip #3

Study what you are Passionate About and what you can Excel At. When you study what you excel at and what you love, it actually makes receiving University Honors hardly difficult in the grand scheme of things.