

Exhaustion, pain complete some class syllabi

Everyone has a class like this.

I sat on my bed, between piles of laundry and books. Staring out at the cold, wet and dreary October day, I knew it was either pass or die.

I was in an altered state, somewhere between purgatory and hell. I had started to smoke and drink more, while food intake, sleep and bathing took a back seat.

It had nothing to do with reading 500 pages the night before a major history exam. It had nothing to do with rote memorization of the circulatory system for biology.

This was my life.

Forget the nine other credit hours I had signed up for, I was obsessed with passing my MANDATORY advanced news-writing course.

The weed-out course. The class that could make or break my future. The class that made me weep.

OK, OK, I had been forewarned that this was the class from hell. But my sources had been the unorganized few who wanted others to revel in their misery tales. They had to take the course twice. And while my opinion of them didn't lower, not passing the course in a single try had become a personal stigma.

So, the first day of class, I decided that I would be confident and good. I would not only pass, but I would get an A.

Besides, we would only get our little syllabus, introduce ourselves and be on our way, right?

Nope. The professors began by telling us the class's structure. We would be graded on a letter/point system under which each story would be given a letter grade and a certain number of points, accordingly.

At the end of the six weeks, if we had acquired a set number of points we could go on and work for the lab newspaper, The Journalist. If not, we had to try again.

After assigning the first story, the professors warned that we would have four stories due each week during the trial period, so we would have to budget our time carefully.

Walking out of the classroom, I remember telling a fellow classmate that this probably would be a good time to organize our schedules so as not to get bogged down. We went to O'Rourke's . . .

For the next half dozen weeks I spent my evenings and wee morning hours at the Daily Nebraskan or at the Journalism College in Avery Hall (what we journalism majors fondly call Slavery Hall).

The bitch switch was on and I lived for

my weekend marathon sleeps. I sobbed to my professors, I alienated my friends, I hung up the phone on my parents several times.

Nights turned into days, days turned into nights -- and my six weeks were up. As I headed to Avery to find out the VERDICT, I approached every garbage can with the hope that I could somehow get rid of this horrid feeling in my stomach. No such luck. One of my professors was posting the list.

"You made it," he chuckled. Kind of corny and anticlimactic all at the same time. He asked me if I had any doubts. I left the room chuckling nervously.

No sweat. I went home and straight to my room. I closed the curtain, listened to the rain and cried myself to sleep.

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Anna Dockins/Daily Nebraskan

Graduate assistant Nancy Risch tutors John Tiedje at the Academic Success Center located in Selleck Residence Hall.

Center helps students

Tutoring, workshops, study skills courses offered

By Christine Pillard

Staff Reporter

For many students, academic problems in classes arise because of how they are studying, rather than what they're studying.

For those students, the Academic Success Center, housed in the basement of Selleck Residence Hall, has a variety of programs to enhance study skills and to teach students how to be more effective learners, said Ken Kiewra, director of the center.

Kiewra said the center offers individual tutoring, workshops and courses in study skills.

Kiewra said the center has something for students of all ages and majors. The program is designed for enrichment, not remediation, he said. There are even professors and instructors, he said, who could benefit from learning how students learn.

"We can help anyone," he said.

The center has a program offering supplemental instruction for seven courses. A staff member from the center attends the particular course and holds a study session two or three nights per week. This fall, supplementary instruction is available in Biology 101, Sociology 100, Physics 141, Math 100 and 101, Political Science 100 and History

101.

Kiewra said the center receives 60 to 75 requests per year for study skills workshops. Requests come from sororities, fraternities, residence halls and academic groups. There are about 10 different workshop topics. Some of the topics include time management, memory, note taking, test anxiety and writing.

Individual tutoring is available in the same study skills areas. The center does not tutor specific subjects, but rather uses the course matter as a base for learning study techniques, Kiewra said.

The staff is comprised of six part-time graduate assistants who have been trained in a study skills system that Kiewra helped develop. Most of the study skills consultants are students in the Teachers College's Educational Psychology Department.

Next semester the center will be offering two sections of a 100-level study skills course worth one credit, Kiewra said.

Kiewra said the center is free to students, and there is no limit to the number of appointments a student may make during the semester. The center is funded through Student Affairs, with help from Academic Affairs and Teachers College, he said.

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