CTL 53: Working Smarter

Dayo Nicole Mitchell, Ph.D.
Stanford University • Summer 2014

Course Description

College-level strategies and skills in time management, reading, speaking, writing, and test preparation. Students explore learning preferences to develop strategies in different academic settings.

Working Smarter is designed to help you set the foundations to succeed in a challenging academic setting. Many students who arrive at Stanford find that the bar for success is much higher than it was in high school, and—rather than working harder—they need to work differently, developing new skills and drawing on strategies that weren’t previously needed. The course emphasizes a conscious and self-reflective learning practice, encouraging you to develop the techniques that work best for you.

This course is a practicum, so you should expect to practice these strategies constantly through the quarter, both in-class and out-of-class. You will get the most out of CTL 53 when taken in conjunction with other classes where you can test the techniques.

Information

Wed 3:15 PM - 5:05 PM at Meyer 143 (CTL 53, Section 01, Axess Class Number 44002)
Wed 6:00 PM - 7:50 PM at Meyer 147 (CTL 53, Section 03, Axess Class Number 44048)

Instructor:

Dayo Nicole Mitchell, Ph.D., Academic Director in Undergraduate Advising and Research, Stanford University
650-498-4757, dayom@stanford.edu

Office Hours: by appointment. If it’s short notice, just phone me and see if I’m in. I’m generally in my office Mon-Fri, 9ish-5ish, although I may have meetings and will be taking several single days as vacation. Otherwise, email me with at least 2 or 3 suggested times and I will pick one.

Office Location: Lagunita Admin Building, Rm 110 (326 Santa Teresa Street; small brown building between the two entrances to the Lagunita Courtyard; office in back right of lobby).

Expectations

Regular Reading: You need the textbook, which is in-stock at the Stanford Bookstore. Walter Pauk and Ross JQ Owens, How to Study in College (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2014, 11th edition) [ISBN 1-113-96078-2]. Additional short readings will be added through the quarter.
I’ve activated the Coursework site for this class. I’ll put copies of the syllabus and all handouts there, and announcements if things change. You’ll also submit selected assignments electronically through Coursework.

You should be checking your Stanford email or set it to forward to an email you do check.

Electronic devices such as laptops, mobiles, tablets, electronic dictionaries, etc, are allowed in class, but please remember a few things. 1) It is very unfair of you to distract your classmates from their work by surfing the web next to them, or similar behavior. 2) There is no point in you taking this class if you are going to practice bad habits in the class itself. 3) I reserve the right to check what you are doing, or ask you to put electronics away as needed.

**Assignments & Grading**

*Be sure to save all returned assignments for this class, and keep them in a folder that you bring each week. We may review them at times or use them in class (also, this is a good habit to practice).*

“Getting Started In....” Presentation and Paper (20% paper; 10% presentation). Each student will identify an interest—such as a potential academic major or a potential career field—and will write up a discussion of what that interest involves and how one might get started in it. If possible, the paper will draw on an informational interview with at least one expert or professional in the field. The paper and an oral presentation will be due in the last class. The paper should be 600-900 words, and the presentation will be no more than 5 minutes. More details TBA (to be announced).

**Final Exam (20%).** The final exam will test your ability to apply the material covered in class.

**Weekly Quizzes (10%).** In-class, largely focusing on that week’s reading, but may ask you to connect earlier weeks. Designed as mini-rehearsals for the final exam.

**Weekly Homework (10%)** The instructions for many weekly assignments will only be discussed orally in class, so be sure to ask questions to make sure you understand what is expected. Late work will be docked 50%, and will not be accepted more than one week late.

“Exercises” refers to the exercises at the end of each chapter in Pauk; the Vocabulary in Action section is always entirely optional. All you need to do is write the numbered answers on a separate sheet, no need to copy the questions.

Most assignments (aside from the Chapter Exercises) are designed to be tools you use through the quarter. Be sure that you are giving me a copy or photocopy of all assignments, and that you will continue to have a copy for yourself.

**Attendance and Participation in Class (10% attendance; 10% participation).** You are expected to be on time, to be courteous and collegial to your classmates, and to engage actively in small group work, class discussion, and in-class projects. You should have done the reading and be prepared to discuss it, which includes asking your own questions.

*Each of these elements will be graded, so that you can practice good work habits and test yourself against the patterns of a typical class. However, this class is only offered for Satisfactory/No Credit, so the grading is largely for your own understanding of your academic skills. A 70% or above will earn an S in the class—this is probably very atypical of classes graded S/NC, but in line with classes graded CR/NC.*
Class Meeting Schedule

Week One

1. Wed 25 June
   Why Are You Here?—Evaluating a Syllabus—Grades vs. Learning—Break It Down—Habits and Growth Mindsets

Week Two

2. Wed 2 July
   Friction—Time Management—Learning from Unstructured Discussions—Library Workshop

Read: part of Chapter 1 (pps. 16-30; start with Give Your Brain a Break, end before Put Theory in Practice); Chapter 2; Chapter 13.

IMPORTANT: Class may meet in the library—watch your email/Coursework for a location update.

☐ Exercises for Chapter 2 and Chapter 13 (skip exercises for Chapter 1, Vocabulary in Action is always optional)

☐ Complete the Academic Skills Inventory online at http://academicskills.stanford.edu

☐ Bring customized Quarter-at-a-Glance

☐ Bring Weekly Schedule

☐ Identify a complex task you have this quarter in a different class and break it down into smaller tasks (include context)

Week Three

3. Wed 9 July
   Managing Stress—Procrastination—Writer’s Block—Setting Yourself Up to Succeed at the End of the Quarter on Exams and Final Papers—Informational Interviews—Value the Process

Read: Chapter 3; Chapter 12; Chapter 14

☐ Exercises for Chapter 3, Chapter 12, Chapter 14

☐ Time-Tracker

☐ Academic Resource List (tutors, advisors, office hours, library tools, OAE, etc; whatever is applicable to your other courses)

☐ Tools Research and Presentation

Week Four

4. Wed 16 July
   Getting the Most out of Lectures and Readings—Time Management Review—Midway Check on Paper

Read: Chapter 5; Chapter 6.

Practice the reading strategies on material in a different course.
Exercises for Chapter 5 and Chapter 6
Example of your usual note-taking in classes (lecture or discussion)
Example of your usual note-taking from reading
Preliminary Paper Assignment

**Week Five**

5. Wed 23 July Creating Notes that Work for You—Paper Consults
Read: Chapter 10; Chapter 11;
Exercises for Chapter 10 and Chapter 11
Example of your note-taking in a class using Cornell Notes and other Pauk suggestions
Example of your note-taking from reading using Cornell Notes and other Pauk suggestions

**Week Six**

6. Wed 30 July Internalizing Information through Active Learning—Preparing for Exams—Reviewing Grade Calculations
Read: Chapter 7; Chapter 8; Chapter 9.
Practice Recitation for material in a different course.
Exercises for Chapter 7, Chapter 8, Chapter 9
Create a Concept Map for a different course (include context)
Apply one of the tools from chapter 9 to material in a different course (illustration; category system; mnemonic—include context)
Bring your Grade Calculation for this course

**Week Seven**

7. Wed 6 August Final Exam—Time to Work on Paper and Presentation
Bring Blue Book to take the exam
Create a Review Sheet for a different course you are taking (include context)

**Week Eight**

8. Wed 13 August Presentations with Celebration & Potluck
Prepare oral presentation on your “Getting Started In....” (max 5 mins)
Submit finished “Getting Started In....” paper, electronic and print copies