Planning for Success

The first step in achieving academic success is to plan. In the words of Benjamin Franklin, “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”; put another way, by preparing, you are establishing a foundation for success. Below are some guidelines that successful students follow to ensure they are using their time wisely.

• Begin planning your term as soon as it begins. Put all important deadlines and dates into your day planner and/or a term calendar within the first few weeks of the term, including deadlines and dates for completing readings and assignments, and writing tests.

• For large assignments and tests, break the work into smaller goals: For example, give yourself a due date for when you want to have your thesis and first draft ready for an essay.

• Each week, set aside time to study/complete school work/prepare for test. Make a plan for yourself that prioritizes your work.

• Use a weekly planner to schedule your time on a more micro-level than your term calendar.

• Don’t over-plan! Be realistic and remember that time to relax is important. If you have a heavy day of class, it might not be realistic to plan to complete a number of readings that evening.

• Remember: Not every assignment in every class is going to be your best work. The most important thing is to submit every assignment completed to the best of your abilities. Prioritize which assignments warrant the most time. For example, it might not be wise to spend weeks on a reflection worth 2% and a single evening on a paper worth 20%.