

April 24, 2008

Dear Incoming ES Student,

You are about to embark on a life-changing journey. You do not realize it now but this class will determine who you are and how you view life. As you go through this journey make sure to take time to reflect on what you're learning. Take a second to stop and think about what you're doing, why you're doing it, what your teachers are doing for you, and who the people around you are. You can't appreciate it now but in two years you'll look back and realize the amazing impact that this class, the teachers and your peers have had on your life.



Danielle Wroblewski

If ES were all fun and games, I would have quit a long time ago. I will be completely honest; ES is a great deal of hard work. However, it is not like many high school classes where the work is just mindless busywork. If busywork is the work you've grown accustomed to, like I had, brace yourself because you're in for a shocker. ES will require you to think for yourself and to stretch your mind to places you did not know existed. You will be asked to do everything from reading scientific literature and writing scientific reports to writing poetry and discussing the world's problems. You will even be told to go out and create your own project. Everything you do will have direct connections to your life.

One of the greatest things about ES is the people. While the class will be a challenge, your classmates are there to help you get through it. My greatest advice is not to procrastinate with the work. However, if you do, it can lead to some memorable late nights with your peers. Also, never forget the professors are there to help you but they, too, are learning. They may not have the answer to all your questions but they will likely know where to go for the answers. Take note, learning is your responsibility; you must be actively engaged in the learning process. Seek out answers and discover the world of being a knowledgeable, self-educating person.

How to get the most out of ES

Think With An Open Mind.

"Minds are like parachutes; they work best when open."~ Thomas Dewar

Open your mind; you will learn so much more when you do.

Think Before You Write

"Writing is nature's way of letting you know how sloppy your thinking is."~ Guindon

ES will make you write and you will learn to write in an organized way. As you learn and expand your thinking, writing will become easier and easier. You will come to appreciate this vital skill.

Do The Readings

"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."~ Will Durant

The amount of knowledge thrown at you through literature in ES can be overwhelming but read it! You will gain so much more. Two years from now you don't want to look

back and wish you had done more of the readings and feel that you had missed out on a lot.

Go To Class

"Education would be so much more effective if its purpose were to ensure that by the time they leave school every boy and girl should know how much they don't know, and be imbued with a lifelong desire to know it." ~Sir William Haley

Skipping class, much like not reading, will cause you to lose a great deal of potential knowledge. Go to class, being there is part of the experience and part of being an active learner. ES will bring to you some of the most knowledgeable, interesting and realistic down-to-earth guest speakers you will ever find. Don't miss what they come to say to you. Likewise, go on every field trip possible. Field trips are designed to allow you to see with your own eyes what goes on and allows you to participate and be involved with your own learning. This is part of what makes ES different from your everyday classes. Take advantage of it.

Participate in Class

"Education is that which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding." ~ Ambrose Bierce

Discussion times were designed to allow you to speak about and expand your knowledge on topics. Don't sit back; get involved. These discussions are there for you to review and sort out in your mind all the information that is being given to you.

Be An Active Group Member

"There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group; there is less competition there." ~ Indira Gandhi

You will get the opportunity to work with a great many people. These people will be different and think in different ways. Take advantage of this and learn from it. Be active and get the most from group projects. They are yet another way for you to apply what you have learned and to be an active learner.

Apply What You Learned

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." ~Mark Twain

Knowing is not enough. Make behavioral changes and act on what you have learned. Learning does not end when you step out of the classroom. Do not do something just because that is the way it has always been done. Challenge yourself to change for the better.

Approach Life With An "I Get To" Attitude

"Not have to, get to." ~ Cortney Martin

Look at assignments, projects, and life in general as something you get to do. After all, you chose your major and you chose what classes you are taking. Remember coming to class, doing projects, or even attending college is not something you have to do but something you get to do and that you should value and enjoy these experiences.

Respect and Value Your Peers and Professors

"What we have to do is find a way to celebrate our diversity and debate our differences without fracturing out communities." ~ Hillary Clinton

“The real death of America will come when everyone is alike.”~ James T. Ellison

In ES you will be around vastly different people with different opinions. You will learn to respect and value this.

Expect and Give More Than The Status Quo

“A 45 year-old woman is dangerous to the status quo.”~ Barbara Bekken

Those who did not accept the status quo as being the correct option created ES. The status quo is not enough, even though the world has come to accept it as so. Expect more and give more. Nothing great has ever come from doing the status quo.

Most of All Be the Change

“Be the change you want to see in this world.”~ Gandhi

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”~ Margaret Mead

ES is one of the greatest chances you will ever get to learn about how the world works and the problems in it. Take advantage of this opportunity as much as you can so that you can make educated changes in your life and the world.

I hope I have been able to give you some valuable insight into the journey you are about to take. If pictures are worth a thousand words then ES is worth a trillion and this letter does not come close to doing it justice. It is not something that can be explained, but something you have to experience. You’ve chosen to take this challenge that most will never experience. Now go forth and educate yourself and learn to love learning. Don’t blink! The next two years will go faster than you think.

Best of Luck!

Danielle Wroblewski

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