Higher Education in the U.S.
When you leave here you will be able to understand this sentence:

If you need help with your DARS or Handshake, just use Starfish to contact your advisor.

Session Agenda

1. Review the different ways credits count towards your degree

2. Importance of scheduling with your Advisor
   a. Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)
   b. Starfish

3. Navigating the Classroom
   a. TA’s vs. Professor
   b. Email Etiquette
   c. Grading
So many credits, only one degree.
Degree Credits

University General Education Requirements (GER)
Required of ALL undergraduates: Communication A & B, Quantitative Reasoning A & B, ethnic studies requirement, some subject area breadth (often overlapped by school/college requirements)

School/College Requirements
Often referred to as Liberal Arts Breadth; vary by school/college

Major Requirements
Specific courses or electives which vary by major
Degree Credits

University General Education Requirements (GER)
Required of ALL undergraduates: Communication A & B, Quantitative Reasoning A & B, ethnic studies requirement, some subject area breadth (often overlapped by school/college requirements)

All students must complete 13–15 credits of coursework intended to provide a breadth of experience across the major modes of academic inquiry.

To find your DARS go to your Student Center

Reading your DARS Guide
Finding An Advisor

You should meet with you advisor 1-2 times a semester.

You may have a different advisor for your major(s), certificate(s), and career advising.

advising.wisc.edu/find-an-advisor/

https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#advisingtext
Advising Topics

- Setting your academic, career, and life goals
- Getting involved with campus organizations
- Finding an internship
- Talking about your challenges and difficulties
- Connecting with tutors
- Connecting majors and careers
- Checking into volunteering opportunities
- Practicing for interviews
- Talking about grad school
- Proofreading resumes and cover letters
- Understanding university policies and deadlines
- Selecting the right courses
You can access Starfish from your MyUW dashboard. To add the Starfish app:

1. Login to **MyUW**
2. Search for **Starfish**
3. Click **Add to home** for easy access
Navigating the Classroom
Teaching Assistants

• They are just as important if not more important than your professors.

• You will get more 1:1 time with them in discussion section and you should try and build a relationship with your TA right away.

• A question as old as time, when should I go to the TA vs. the Professor?
Office Hours

- Refer to green sheet in folder

- General tips
  - Attend at least once within the first 3 weeks (it’s easier to go again later when it gets busier and your stressed, because you already know where to go).
  - Write down your questions ahead of time - either related to the course, the professor’s research, or anything else you’d like to ask.
  - Faculty want you to come. They want to get to know students.
Office Hours

If you are intimidated to go to office hours....

● Go with a classmate

● Remember professors are people too (they’re just as messy as the rest of us).

● You aren’t interrupting or intruding, these hours are set aside for YOU!

● You’re paying to be here, get that money’s worth!
Email Etiquette
General Email Tips

- Do not expect an immediate response. So if you have a deadline regarding an issue, send out an email in a timely manner. (also communicate that deadline)

- If you need a recommendation, it is generally polite to ask at least several months in advance and then remind no later than 3 weeks from the deadline. Being organized and sending reminders is helpful.

- Professors get hundreds of emails daily, and your email can easily get lost in the ruble. It is ok to resend the email or send a follow up email if you haven’t heard back after 3 business days.

https://stemdiversity.wisc.edu/448-2/
Email Dos

- Always type a greeting, i.e., “Hello Professor LastName, ...”
  - “Dear” or “Hi” are also good

- Address them as Dr. LastName or Professor LastName, until they instruct you to do differently

- Introduce yourself: name, class/course, year in school, etc.

- Be concise and to the point: Professors are busy

- Suggest days and times you would like to meet with them to discuss your concerns.

- PROOFREAD - (reading out loud before you send can help find errors)
Email Don’ts

● Do not use gendered language, i.e., “Dear Sir”

● Don’t begin your greeting line with “hey” (it is too informal) or with “to whom it may concern” (it’s too impersonal)

● Be careful how many exclamation points you use (a few are okay to express enthusiasm).

● Don’t make your emails long. Complex thoughts or questions should be communicated at office hours or if those don’t work with your schedule ask to schedule a meeting.
Using tutoring is the difference between an A and a B not a C or a D.
Plagiarism

It’s a big deal here.
The following grades are included in computing the GPA:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points Per Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (Excellent)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB (Intermediate grade)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (Good)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC (Intermediate grade)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (Fair)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (Poor)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (Failure, see section below)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# GPA

**Current Total Credits**: 16  
**Current Cumulative GPA**: 3.4

## Current Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Science 101</td>
<td>AB (3.5)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math 342</td>
<td>BC (2.5)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab 528</td>
<td>A (4.0)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading 221</td>
<td>B (3.0)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>A (4.0)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester GPA</th>
<th>New Cumulative GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Grading Curve
The Grading Curve

Bell Curve Grade Chart

F: 2%
D: 14%
C: 34%
B: 34%
A: 14%
- C+: 2%