

September Associate Dean Newsletter

Greetings Arts and Humanities students,

Welcome to the September edition of the Associate Dean's monthly newsletter, which many of you know was initiated a few years ago. Every month during this school year I'll be sending you an e-mail chock-full of important information on upcoming events, dates, and deadlines.

Here are the topics I'm addressing in this newsletter:

1. where did we go?
2. course add/drop
3. picking courses carefully
4. course at affiliates
5. reading course outlines
6. missing exams, classes, assignments, etc.
7. student with disabilities
8. what to do if things go wrong during the school year
9. appealing grades
10. scholarship eligibility
11. scholarships
12. student donation fund opt-out
13. degree requirements

1. You may be surprised to find out that the occupants of University College have moved out, including the Academic Counselling Office. The Departments of English, French Studies, Modern Languages and Literatures, and the Dean's Office are now located in the old Ivey building, which has been rechristened the Arts & Humanities Building. Film Studies, the Arts & Humanities Students' Council, and Academic Counselling are located in the newer addition adjacent to the Arts & Humanities Building, now called the International and Graduate Affairs Building. To find these, please check out the maps on the Arts Bulletin page found at http://www.uwo.ca/arts/current_students/undergraduate/bulletin.html

The reason for the quick move was that the University decided that it was finally time to renovate University College, which is long overdue. This year classes will still be held in UC, at least until January, while the architect, engineers, and contractors start poking around the building. Renovations will start in earnest as of May 2015.

Why we are in our new digs early while classes continue in UC is because the University could not afford to keep the old Ivey building shutdown. It has been out of commission

for over a year now and as we learned when things were turned on again, there were a number of areas that needed help, and the longer old Ivey was kept unoccupied the more serious those problems would become.

It will take a bit of time to get used to the new surroundings, especially considering that the Arts & Humanities Building is something of a maze, and please be patient as we will not have entirely completed the move by the start of classes.

2. It is Add/Drop season and this process is an on-line one until September 10, 11:59pm, then it is a paper process on Sept. 11 & 12, which if you can avoid the latter please do. Any inquiries about possible waiting lists for courses need to be addressed to the department offering the course, and not the Faculty counselling office.

3. When it comes to courses, please do shop around. You can sit in on classes of interest and even check past student evaluations for the instructors (you can login at <https://www.ipb.uwo.ca/evaluation/index.php>) before deciding to enrol in a particular class -- best to make as informed a decision as possible. If you are currently enrolled in a course that you think you might drop, don't drop it until you know for certain you don't need it. Many students in the past have dropped courses during the add/drop period and then discovered that they needed it and were unable to reenrol because it was full.

4. If you were thinking of taking courses at the affiliates, i.e., Huron, Kings, and Brescia, please be aware that Main Campus students may take a maximum of 1.0 course per year at an Affiliate as long as the course is not offered on Main.

5. Once you've settled on your choices carefully read the outlines for the courses. Outlines are essentially a contract between the instructor and her/his students, and there are specific University policies as to what should be on a course outline (http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/courseoutlines.pdf). Instructors cannot make substantial changes to an outline unless they have the unanimous approval of the class, at least not once the add/drop period has ended.

6. Should you encounter a situation which sees you having to miss a significant amount of classes, an assignment, test, exam, etc., you should seek accommodation. Usually students are not excused from any course responsibility unless they have a professionally documented reason, i.e., illness, death in the family, legal commitment, etc. Any request for accommodation must come through the Faculty counselling office in the International and Graduate Affairs Building room 0N05. If you have to miss an exam, assignment, etc., due to illness, you should see a doctor right away, both to be

treated and document the illness -- in terms of the latter, don't wait too long since some doctors will not issue notes to excuse you from an exam if you aren't exhibiting any symptoms of the illness that caused your absence. In turn, you must submit your documentation in a timely manner; if you sit on a medical note and only see the Counselling Office a month later, we will likely not be able to accommodate your need. By the way, for medical accommodations, you have to use the form that is found at the following link: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

7. Should you have a documented disability that requires special accommodation, please register yourself with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), they will communicate with your courses instructors and make all the necessary arrangements needed to ensure that you're able to perform at your full intellectual potential. Don't wait too long to register since there is a three week approval process

8. Should you run into any difficulties whatsoever during the course of your studies, please don't hesitate to communicate with your instructors if it involves a single course or if the difficulties affect more than one course or you feel that they are too personal in nature then please stop by the Academic Counselling office at IGAB-0N05. Anything you relate to our counsellors is done so in private and any dealings with course instructors, or any other individual, is done in complete confidentiality. There are stringent privacy laws in this province and we adhere to them.

9. If you feel that you were graded unfairly in a course, don't hesitate to ask your professor for an explanation, and if her/his explanation is unsatisfactory, then you have every right to appeal to the undergraduate chair of the department offering the course. This is your education and you have a right to at least an explanation as to why you performed poorly in a course, and ultimately every right to appeal. The appeal process is spelled out in the University Senate regulations (http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf) and is also a confidential process -- essentially the course prof has no involvement in the appeals process except in very exceptional circumstances.

10. To be eligible for or retain any scholarships, awards or bursaries you need to have a 5.0 course load in any given year.

11. Speaking of scholarships, there are quite a few available in our Faculty. Many you are considered for automatically, but there are a few that you need to apply for. A list of these awards is available on the Arts and Humanities website at <http://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/awards/index.html>. Don't hesitate to apply if you are eligible -- we've

had large awards that have gone unclaimed even though we knew we had students eligible for them simply because many felt they didn't have a chance of being awarded one.

12. To opt-out of the Arts and Humanities' student donation fund, you should visit the following link: <http://www.uwo.ca/arts/> starting around September 17. Please be advised that the deadline is September 30 and there'll be no extensions.

13. Lastly, if you are in a three-year program you need 15.0 credits to graduate and 20.0 credits if in a four-year program. Should you have any questions about your degree requirements, please don't be shy about contacting your department's undergraduate chair or the Faculty counselling offices (IGAB-0N05). Again, this is your education, not mine or the University's, and you have to be mindful of what you are taking and take every advantage of the amazing resources we have available at Western.

For on-going updates about important news and deadlines make sure to check out the Arts Bulletin page on the Faculty of Arts and Humanities website which can be found at http://www.uwo.ca/arts/current_students/undergraduate/bulletin.html

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your studies.

Sincerely,

John Hatch
Associate Dean (Academic)
Faculty of Arts and Humanities