Sorry for the hiatus! It’s that time of the year that swamps everyone — FINALS! My finals journey has been a little different because, as a theater and journalism major, I’ve only been given final papers to write. Yes, a paper for each of my classes! I’m a little stressed because I feel like I’m a better test-taker. But as this is my third year of college and my second semester at UMass Amherst, here are some study tips to help you make it through finals:

1. **Stay ahead of everything!**

   It’s super important to stay on top of your assignments, and make sure that you are aware of what you have to do for your class finals. Some teachers will cancel the exam period and have you write a paper. Or they’ll write on the syllabus that you have a large exam at the end of the semester that will greatly impact your grade. Whatever they choose to do, be prepared. Know what you need to do for each class and get a head start on it.

2. **Create your own study guide.**

   Professors usually pass out study guides to help students study for the exams and give a helping hand as to what is going to be on the test. Or if you’re given an essay, you may get a rubric. But it may be helpful to create your own study guide because sometimes teachers surprise you with never-before-seen information! Be prepared. Create your own rubric to make sure your essay is the best you’ve ever seen.

3. **Go to review sessions!**

   If you’re taking a class that offers these, take advantage. It can be hard to find time
during class to review hard topics with your teacher. These sessions allow you to go over hard material while being in an academic atmosphere so you don’t get to distracted, which can happen when studying alone.

4. Create a study group.

Yay people! Friends! Creating a study group is a fun way to learn and stay focused on the task at hand. This will only be effective if everyone in the group is serious about doing work and is there to help each other review and study. I can get distracted easily, so when I use this method, I try to only stay with a study group for about an hour, then break off on my own.

5. Take care of yourself!!!

There may be times when you do all-nighters by trying to get all your work and studying done, and you forget to eat and shower, and then everyone is in class wondering who’s that with the grumbling stomach and smells a little funky. Don’t let that be you! Take care of your body and mind. Make sure you stay healthy, and keep your stomach filled. Your brain needs food to function. And sleep! Sleep is your best friend during finals week.

Blog Column: A UMass Amherst Survival Guide

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