

Love, The Old Man: Hello Darkness, My Old Friend



So ... Class selection ...

For those of you who have not undergone this before, you will soon discover that this is perhaps the most stressful time of the year, vying for first with finals.

On the bright side, you can take a good week to prepare, and then class selection lasts for all of five minutes.

On the downside, classes fill up fast, every course you need seems to be scheduled for the same time, SPIRE doesn't want to process your request, professors aren't answering your requests for overrides, the one class you need to graduate got cancelled ...

Okay. Take a breath.

tears open the window and screams into the night like a banshee

Sorry ... One more time ... Breathe ...

It's not the end of the world if you don't get into the class you need. Heck, it's not even the end of your educational career. Most departments are quite good about providing multiple courses that satisfy the same requirement and sometimes simply provide duplicate courses to the same end. Even if you don't get into that course, there are tons of others that you could take to satisfy other requirements, at least early in your UMass career.

The further down the road you go, however, the narrower your options get. With each passing semester and each filled requirement, scheduling time for and getting into those last few classes you need becomes a game of darts, except that the dartboard is moving and is half its usual size and you're pretty sure that the "darts" you're holding

are wiggling in your fingers.

The only advice I can give you at that point is to plan ahead. SPIRE is designed to give preference to upperclassmen for this exact reason; however, it does not always work out. Even if the classes you need aren't full, you might find them filling the same time slot. That's about the time you start feeling the darkness creeping in and trying to drown your mind in despair.

The best you can do in that situation is go to your major's advisor. They have dealt with similar issues before and, theoretically, know how to sort this stuff out. Either way, you'll get through it.

As *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and my father like to say, "Don't panic."

As I like to say, learn to get comfy with that anxiety-drenched darkness. It's going to be hanging around for a while.

Song of the Week: This should be pretty self-explanatory. Also, I adore Disturbed's version of it! Normally, I think that covers are inferior to the original, but the soulfulness here strikes a different emotional resonance than Simon and Garfunkel's version does.

Enjoy!

Blog Column:
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