**Tips for Success: Surviving Finals**

Finals are tough, especially for the Fall semester. You are fighting off sickness, distracted by the Thanksgiving break and winter holidays, and figuring out how to study for your first ever college finals. Here are some tips for making it through:

1. **Plan out your time as much as possible.** Almost all of our tips begin with making a plan, because organization and scheduling are essential to managing the college workload. With finals spread out over the week, two finals on the same day, or any other odd scheduling issues, it can be difficult to make sure you are leaving enough time to prepare for each exam or to write your papers. Plus, you may still want to hang out with your Lehigh friends before the long break. Schedules can help you stay on track. Also, as the Huffington Post’s College blog points out, make sure you have checked the exam schedule and that you don’t have any conflicting exams, you are correct on all the times, and you know what room you’re in; as they point out, “Missing an exam is the easiest way to fail.”

2. **Take care of your health and stress levels.** Again, we share this tip all the time, because it is super important. There is nothing worse than trying to wrap up a semester while feeling under the weather. Make sure you leave yourself time to sleep, wash your hands frequently, and eat well. Keep up whatever habits help you to de-stress, whether that is exercising or watching TV. While it can be difficult to let yourself relax when you know you have a major exam, taking care of yourself will improve your mental focus and clarity.

3. **Remember your motivation—and make sure it is something other than the grade.** At this point in the semester, you can feel worn down. It is easy to want to just finish the class, whether you perform at your absolute best or not. This feeling can especially be compounded if you feel that your grade goals are no longer achievable. To fight this sort of “mini-senioritis,” be mindful of your motivation for the class. What skills are you getting from the course that will be helpful to your future professional career? Do you have any goals related to the subject area that aren’t about the grade but about the content itself? If the course’s content isn’t directly relevant, how is the experience of the class helping you to be a better college student? Find the meaning behind your courses and focus on those benefits to help you make it through. Instead of a final hurdle before the end of the semester, think of your exams and papers as another way to practice your essential skills, demonstrate your mastery of important knowledge in your discipline, and reflect on what you’ve gained from the past 15 weeks.

For other ideas on how to survive finals, read these posts on Huff Post College blog, College Countdown, and Hack College. Hack College also has some great ideas on how to improve study sessions and increase your memorization skills. Good luck!

**Reflection Questions:** What do you need to do to wrap up the semester in a way that will feel successful and satisfying? Do you have a schedule to help you prepare efficiently for final exams and papers? What academic lessons, professional skills and new experiences has this semester given you?