

Week 8 - Monday

SLD 2600

Hidden Curriculum

Hidden curriculum

- **Hidden curriculum** can mean two related things:
 1. Classroom and academic expectations that are never explicitly stated
 - Sometimes these expectations negatively impact students from certain backgrounds or with cognitive differences
 2. Skills and behavior students learn implicitly that are not explicitly stated as educational goals
 - How to present yourself, how to dress, or how to conduct yourself professionally are expected outcomes of college, even if they're never taught
- It pays to be aware of unstated expectations

Making the hidden curriculum visible

- By stating the implicit expectations explicitly, we can make it clear what they are
- In some cases, these expectations might be classist, racist, or otherwise exclusionary
 - But it's still good to be aware of them, because the world outside of college is often classist, racist, and exclusionary
- In other cases, the expectations are valuable, so it's good to be aware of them

My own experiences

- I found the K-12 classroom experience daunting
- Teachers quickly explained rules like raising your hands
- But other things, like not wearing hats, were viciously policed and never explained
- "Don't talk back" never made sense to me when we were also supposed to answer questions all the time
- This year's common book, *My Seven Black Fathers*, has an excellent description of the author's experience of being a Black elementary student in a primarily white school

In Higher Education

Formality

- Generally, there are increasing expectations of formality as you move from K-12 education to college and into your career
 - Note that the work world is less formal than it used to be, both in terms of dress and language
- Some professors will expect you to address them as "Dr."
 - It's better to err on the side of too formal
 - People who don't have a PhD rarely object to being called "Dr."
- Put your first and last name on work you turn in
 - Just "John" or "John S." might be enough for K-12 but no longer

E-mails

- Include a subject line
- Include a polite greeting
- **Check your e-mail several times a day**
- Err on the side of being too professional rather than too casual
- Always feel free to e-mail your professor, but it's worth a quick check to see if a practical question has been answered in the syllabus or on Brightspace

Standard English

- People used to talk about correct and incorrect English
- If you're a native speaker of English, all your English is ... English!
- But "standard English" is a set of standards and norms for grammar, spelling, and style that is still valued in some places
- Standard English is usually expected in e-mails and professional communication
- Papers that you write for class are expected to be in standard English
- The ability to use standard English continues to be a mark of someone who is college-educated
- The importance of standard English may be decreasing now that there are LLMs that can crank it out

Lateness and absences

- Professors are annoyed by lateness
 - Some have policies
 - Some won't give you more time for quizzes or tests if you're late
- Absences matter **a lot**
 - They're one of the best indicators of a student in trouble
 - No call/no show is one of the best ways to get fired from a real job
 - Communicate with your professors and explain why you were absent
 - You're responsible for making up whatever you missed

Office hours

- Office hours are commonly given as an example of the hidden curriculum
- Some students think they're hours when you're explicitly not supposed to bother your professor
 - But the reverse is true!
- These are times set aside specifically for a professor to meet with students
- Going to office hours is a great way to get help **and** to get to know your professors better

Syllabus

- **Read the syllabus for every class!**
- It's not exactly a contract, but it has quasi-legal status
- The professor states their expectations, including how your grades are decided
- If a professor says something in the syllabus, you can be held accountable for it
 - And so can they!

Time spent studying

- I'm sure you've heard something like this already
- The expectation is 1-2 hours studying (or doing homework) outside of class for every hour in class
- That's why 15 hours is considered a full load
 - $15 \times 3 = 45$
- The expectation for work outside of class has probably increased since high school
 - But you have much less time in class
 - And different professors and courses vary widely

Media in the background

- Having a movie or a show on in the background makes you worse at studying or doing work
- Having music on almost always makes you worse at studying or doing work
 - Calm, instrumental music with no lyrics has mixed research findings
 - Lyrics always make you worse at cognitive tasks
- Some believe they work better with media playing, but the research shows that they're all wrong

Differences from high school

- No one (necessarily) checks on you if you stop attending classes
- Or turn in your assignments on time
- Professors are generally reasonable
 - But some do not accept late work
 - There are few universal standards that professors adhere to
 - Know your professor
- You have much more freedom to fail

Math preparation

- The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a national test of US educational achievement
 - Sometimes called the nation's report card
- The 2024 12th grade math score is down 3 points from 2019, making it the lowest score ever reported
- 45% of students are below the NAEP basic standard, the highest percentage ever
- Why? Maybe COVID, social media, or other factors
- The truth is that students are not as prepared for college math as they used to be
- There are similar results for reading

If you're behind ...

- Being behind is hard
- Catching up means learning both the new and the old content
- Come to office hours!
- Get tutoring!
- When things get hard is when it's hardest to keep going
 - But also when it's most important!

Dropping classes

- It's **always** better to drop a class than to fail it
- This semester, the last day to drop a class without a W was September 23
- The last day to drop a class with a W is November 6
- Getting a W means that it will show up on your transcript, but it won't affect your GPA
- For financial aid, you need at least 12 credits to be consider a full-time student
- But they typically don't count a couple of withdrawn courses against you if you withdraw in the middle of the semester
 - Of course, you still need to make a certain amount of progress each year

Brightspace (or other LMSs)

- Brightspace allows professors to post:
 - Course content
 - Assignments
 - Grades
- And they can collect assignments there too (as you know)
- Professors can give feedback on assignments too
- I mark up student assignments and post them
 - But most students never read my feedback
- Brightspace gives reminders of due dates, so make sure you check it frequently

Resources

- Academic Support Center
 - Math Lab: hours given [here](#)
 - Writing Center: schedule time for help [here](#)
 - Get a personal tutor for a course by scheduling [here](#)
- Let me repeat the value of office hours again
- Library
 - Sometimes a course textbook is available free!
 - Librarians are a great resource for research
- Don't be shy about using these resources: You've already paid for them

Advising

- Registration for spring semester should begin in a couple of weeks
- You'll get an e-mail saying when you should register
 - Make sure you register then, before even more classes fill up!
- Before registering, your academic advisor should send you an e-mail requesting a meeting
 - If you don't get an e-mail from your advisor, hunt them down
- During advising, your advisor will give you advice about which classes to take and how to pursue your future goals
- **Go to advising!**
 - Not graduating on time because you took the wrong class is awful

Mentorship

- There's no special formula for mentorship
- If you want a mentor, ask them!
- Professors are usually happy to mentor students
- Upperclassmen *might* be happy to mentor you
 - But they're also busy with school
- Mentors can't do all the work for you
 - Tell them your goals
 - If they recommend work to help you meet your goals, do it!

Professors are human beings

- I'm not sure where the best place to fit this slide in is
- Professors are human beings
 - Sometimes professors are hungry
 - Sometimes professors are tired
 - Professors like some people better than others
- Most professors try hard to be fair
- Just remember that they have feelings and have good days and bad days

Working

- Many students work in addition to being students
- Theoretically, you're not supposed to work more than 20 hours a week if you're a full-time student
- I wish I could tell students to work less, since I often see it affecting their studies
- But I also know that most students who work have to

Athletics

- Athletics are kind of like working
- Lots of students are athletes
- Sometimes it helps them
 - Athletics add structure and require a minimum GPA
- But some students let athletics take priority
- I'm always surprised that students come to Otterbein to play, since we don't have athletic scholarships

Clubs

- Clubs are great
- There are clubs on campus for almost every interest, academic and otherwise
- I highly recommend joining a club and eventually becoming an officer, maybe as a junior or senior
- It looks good on a resume and gives you a chance for some low-stakes leadership

Acronyms

- Higher education has lots of acronyms and other abbreviations:
 - ACT, AP, BA, BS, FERPA, SAT, STEM, LMS, OER, Title IX
- Otterbein has its own:
 - BAE, ECSP, FAEC, FYS, HPSLC, INST, KMERI, OSJA, OUSG, SYE
- If you don't know one, ask or Google
- If you find yourself using them, be sure your audience understands what you're saying

TL;DR: Ask

- Ask your professors
 - About course expectations
 - About course content
 - About making exceptions
 - About mentoring you
- Ask your friends and upperclassmen
- Ask librarians

Upcoming

Next time...

- Cohorts and mentors

Reminders

- Our next class meeting is October 19
 - No class on October 12 because of October Break
- **Assignment 4 is due next Wednesday**