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Good luck!
Welcome to St. John’s University. You have chosen a first-class university located in what is the leading city of the world. If you are feeling confused and harried, then you are right on target. Your first semester in college is as much about transition from high school as it is about academic excellence. The formation of a positive mindset, a disciplined approach and good study habits are critical to your future success at St. John’s. The following list of expectations, while by no means exhaustive, will help to point you in the right direction so that you can maximize your potential for excellence.

1. **College Classes**

A. College classes are designed to be much more than simply a medium for learning facts. They are also about the process of learning. You are expected to think for yourself. Keep an open mind. Consider new and difficult ideas. Draw conclusions. Evaluate the ideas of others. You will be challenged and the workload will be hard — it’s supposed to be! How else will you be able to excel?

B. All courses that are awarded credit for successful completion are serious courses at St. John’s. Do not make the mistake of thinking that because a course is not part of your major (for example Discover New York or a core Theology Course) that you can relax and not work as hard. There are no easy ‘A’ courses at St. John’s. You are expected to work equally as hard in all of your courses.

C. Your faculty regard the University Core Curriculum as your first major at St. John’s. The purpose of the Core Curriculum is to provide a unified educational experience that characterizes
St. John's students and provides them with the knowledge and skills necessary to become educated members of society. The core serves as a platform for excellence in the liberal arts and sciences professional programs of study and lifelong learning. Your faculty expect you to work hard in your core courses and learn well.

2. Homework

A. A significant proportion of learning will happen through homework and other assignments outside class time. For every hour of in-class time, students are expected to devote approximately three hours of out-of-class time, i.e., reading assignments, working on homework, participating in study groups and completing project work.

B. You can reasonably expect to read approximately 50 to 75 pages per week for each course in which you are enrolled. Some courses will require much more reading; others will require somewhat less.

3. Assignments – Follow Instructions!

Read your assignments carefully and follow directions completely. If you are asked to write a two-page paper, then it must be two full pages. Writing one full page and a few sentences on the next page is not enough. Nor should you submit a five-page or six-page paper when the assignment calls for two pages. Failure to follow instructions will result in a lowering of your grade.

4. Course Syllabus

A. Each of your professors will provide you with a syllabus. Read your syllabus carefully and refer to it often. Do not lose it — it is a valuable document. The syllabus contains important information such as a course description, course objectives, texts to be used, how you will be graded and a timetable of due dates for quizzes, papers and projects. Ask your professor any questions you have about the schedule or the syllabus.

B. Your professor may expect you to keep track of all test dates and due dates on your own; you may never be reminded in class.
Once you have a syllabus, it becomes your responsibility to keep track of what is expected of you. Missed assignments and the late submission of assignments will have a negative impact on your grade. There is no such thing as extra credit if the original credit work is not completed.

5. Contacting Professors

A. If your professor accepts assignments by e-mail, ask her or him to confirm that receipt of the assignment by return e-mail. Print the confirmation and save it for your records. Never assume that the intended party has received something sent through cyberspace.

B. When e-mailing your professors, use your St. John’s e-mail address so that the professor knows who you are. Sending your professor an e-mail from your personal e-mail account may mean that your professor doesn’t receive it — it might be automatically deleted by spam filters, or your professor may delete it to avoid possible viruses. Besides, you don’t want your professor to think of you as Dramaqueen@hotmail.com!

C. Write your e-mails to professors as if you were writing a formal letter — not a text message. Use full words and complete sentences. Your professor is not your text message buddy. The more easily the professor can understand you, the better he or she can help you!

D. Take note of your professors’ office hours and availability. Look at your schedule of assignments and tests and determine when you need to contact your professors with questions before due dates. Your professors will have a limited number of office hours, and you cannot reasonably expect them to respond to e-mails immediately.

E. Your professor’s “crystal ball” is not very clear. If you are having a problem that might negatively affect your performance, speak with your professor — sooner rather than later. The earlier a problem is discussed, the easier it is to find a solution. Waiting too long to contact your professor about a problem may severely limit your options.
6. Class Participation

You are expected to come to class on time and to stay for the entire class. You are expected to come to every class. Many classes have a class participation component in the grading system. Do not confuse attendance with participation. To be present in class is a physical reality; to participate in class is to contribute to the intellectual content of that class. Get involved!

7. Attendance and Absences

A. Do not expect your professor to repeat a class for you because you were absent. It is your responsibility to obtain notes for any classes you missed and to find out about and submit any assignments that may have been given.

B. Obtaining notes from another student is not the same as being in class. Another student’s notes will never include everything that happened or was discussed in class. Missing a class does make a difference.

C. Attendance policies may vary from professor to professor. Follow carefully your professors’ instructions regarding attendance. For example, some professors deduct points from your grade for absences. In some colleges of the University (for example, the College of Professional Studies), a professor may drop you from the class if you are absent too many days!

8. Taking Notes and Keeping Records

A. Take lots of notes. Do not rely on your memory. During the academic year, you will have four or five other courses and perhaps a job. Your notes will be your lifeline to the class. Review your notes regularly; it will help prepare you for tests and will help you identify any items that you need to understand better.

B. Keep all your assignments, papers, quizzes, tests, handouts, syllabi and other class materials. These records can help you study and could be useful if there’s a question about your grade.
9. Personal Technology in the Classroom

Pay close attention to your professor’s instructions regarding the use of technology in class. Turn off cell phones and pagers; do not listen to MP3 players or other forms of audio transmission; do not send text messages during class. If your professor permits you to use a laptop in class (and many professors do not!) make sure you use it only for class activities. It is never acceptable to surf the net or send e-mail to others during class time. Engaging in these activities will keep you from paying attention in class!

10. Classroom Rules

Show consideration for your classmates. During class discussions, focus on the assignment; do not use the time to talk to your friends. Follow your professor’s rules about eating in the classroom, coming in late, leaving early, working in groups and similar matters. When in doubt, ask your professor.

11. Grades

Professors do not give you grades; you earn them. If you do not work to the highest level that you are capable of working, then do not blame someone else that your grade is lower than you wanted. Remember that the grade of “C” is an average grade. Your professors hope that all students strive to achieve grades beyond a “C.”

12. University Resources

Take advantage of the resources of the University such as the Library, Counseling Center, Campus Ministry, Freshman Center, Student Life, Tutoring Center, Writing Institute and Math Center. Keep a general contact list to which you can refer easily (perhaps in your calendar or electronic address book) for your faculty members, advisors, tutors, deans and others you’ve contacted such as librarians and counselors. Make note of office locations, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses and office hours if appropriate. When you need help, you can easily find the right person to approach.
13. **Work Commitments**

Many St. John’s University students work either on or off campus. While your professors recognize that this may be necessary, working too many hours during the week could negatively affect your learning and your grades. Think long and hard about how many hours you must work. If you feel that you’re overextended, use University resources to help you reevaluate and try to make some changes.

14. **Enjoy Yourself!**

Become truly engaged in the St. John’s community. Enjoy all the wonderful classes, events and resources that St. John’s has to offer and make the most of your time here. You will never regret it!

**Good Luck**

Good luck as you pursue your goals and dreams at St. John’s University. A lot of hard work is ahead of you. You need to have commitment, dedication and balance. However, you are also on the verge of an incredibly rewarding and fun-filled four years. Your professors are here to help you realize your potential. Go to their office hours, ask them questions, e-mail them, ask them for help. Good luck!
Faculty Expectations of Students