

**Life Skills 101:
Everything is Terrifying and Nothing is Okay**

Professor [PRINT NAME] _____

Time: Always | Room: Anywhere and everywhere

Introduction

Are you ready for the best years of your life? Damn right you're not.

Welcome to Life Skills 101, a non-credit, correspondence university course designed to give you the necessary skills to succeed both in school and beyond.

I can just picture you now, thinking, "I don't need this course. I didn't even register for it!" Oh, my sweet, innocent child. You don't realize it yet, but university (and, more generally, life) is a terrifying, dangerous experience for which most youth are inadequately prepared. However, you—despite your various shortcomings—have been chosen. You cannot, will not, fail in life, and this course will help you make sure that never happens.

So, make yourself uncomfortable. You're going to be here for a while.

About Me

I am many things: the voices inside your head, the shadows creeping in the corner of your room, the tiny bursts of breath that pass between your lips, the sweat on your palms, the stutter in your voice. Some have called me a chemical imbalance, or the result of childhood traumas, or—my favourite—a demon. But I hope that I can be just two things for you: your teacher, and your new best friend.

Students in my advanced program will be familiar with me from their primary and high school years, but for some of you, this will be our first meeting. Your university years are a fortuitous time for us to meet. There is so much change in your life that you'll need help with—so many ways you could hurt yourself or worse, hurt others.

Learning Objectives

In this course, you will learn:

- Introductory Hypotheticals, or, how to imagine every possible outcome for a situation
- Advanced Self-Other Comparison Techniques, including
 - Identifying your weaknesses and other's strengths and;
 - How to use self-hate as a motivator

- Directed Self-Reflection, including maximizing the amount of pain and embarrassment you can extract from one memory
- Embracing your Fear of Missing Out (F.O.M.O.) and why casual social interactions aren't worth it
- How to live a mistake-free existence and achieve total perfection

Course Schedule

This is a correspondence course and therefore can be completed at any time. To be successful, I recommend spending at least 3 hours actively working on course material and another 21 perfecting your minor skills (teeth clenching, nausea, sweating, stuttering, hyperventilating, biting/scratching/cutting/hitting, etc.) Many students find the hours before they fall asleep to be the ideal time for completing course work.

A note about additional correspondence courses

Each year, several students will find themselves chosen for one or more additional non-credit correspondence courses such as 'Contemporary Theories of Self-Hatred,' 'Advanced Dieting and Body Image Perfection' or 'Ordering the Chaotic Universe.' It is not my concern how these courses may conflict with mine, nor how they may combine to increase your workload.

Course Texts

- *Secrets of Productivity: How to Worry Yourself to a Better Life!* by A Real Life Coach
- *The Oxford Dictionary of Self-Insults, Volume 2*
- *Are They Laughing at Me? Oh God, I Don't Even Know Them but I Bet They're Laughing at Me* by Your Brain

Course Materials

- 1 crystal ball and a natural proclivity for clairvoyance/telepathy
- 1 face tattoo of your most recent grades or resume
- 1 mental slideshow of your most embarrassing moments
- 1 constant, nagging sense of dread
- 1 phone with Facebook/Twitter/Instagram installed (so that you can follow along with the exploits of your friends who *obviously* aren't in this course)
- 1 travel-sized specter of Death

Assignments

Going to university is like walking into an alligator-infested swamp with bare feet; you can't expect to come out with all your toes intact. Beyond the pressures of academic life, there are myriad social, emotional and physical pitfalls which can trap the unprepared student at any point in their degree. It is in such situations that you will apply your knowledge.

A selection of obstacles you will likely encounter during your time in university:

- New friendships and relationships
- Impossibly high rent prices and limited housing options
- Applications for internships, majors or scholarships
- Student loans and university bureaucracy
- Systemic barriers and discrimination (eg: racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, transphobia)
- Job scarcity and the crushing fear that university wasn't actually the best option

Evaluation

Unlike a regular course, all grades in Life Skills 101 will be determined through self-evaluation—because, let's be honest, anyone else would probably lie to you.

After you experience one of the assignments listed above, please submit a self-evaluation. Here are some questions to guide you in this process:

1. How many hypotheticals did you imagine while experiencing the assignment?
 - For example: What would have happened if you missed that important phone call?
 - Or if you suddenly projectile vomited everywhere?
 - Or if a meteor struck the Earth, creating a cloud of ash that blocked out the sun and plunged the planet into an ice age like the one that killed the dinosaurs? Did you think of that?
2. Were you effectively able to avoid/prevent any and all dangers to yourself and others?
 - Note: Are you sure? How *can you* be sure? You better double-check that you didn't miss anything.
 - Note # 2: Remember, sometimes not starting an assignment or abandoning it halfway through is the safest option.
3. At any point, did you tell someone that you are taking this course and/or become an enormous burden to them by asking for help with the assignment?
4. Did you give into any of the Four Indulgences (sleep, food, non-educational media or saying 'no') and, if so, how guilty did you feel afterwards?

5. How does your performance on this assignment measure up to that of a friend, colleague or fictional character? List 5 ways they handled this assignment better than you.

Important note

While Life Skills 101 is a non-credit course, *do not* make the mistake of thinking you can 'slack off' or 'relax' here. Each year, the majority of my students report being told to 'relax' multiple times by friends or family not in this course. If you hear something similar, let me assure you: they do not know what they're talking about. Relax?! They might as well tell you to find some reasonably priced housing on campus!

Remember: Relaxation is a false concept created by those who want to lure you off the path to success.

Attendance Policy

Haven't you been reading so far? Attendance in this course is mandatory. Life never stops being dangerous, and you cannot let your guard down. Even for a second. Because in that second, you could get hit by a truck. Or start a house fire. Or forget your friend's birthday. And then where would you be?

We both know how lazy you are, but don't make the mistake of thinking you can avoid me or your coursework for long. I'm only concerned for your success, and your safety.

Final Exam

There is no formal final exam for this course. Rather, I hope you'll treat every day like it's your final exam. And you just missed your bus to campus.

Withdrawal Policy

Students are free to withdraw from Life Skills 101 at any time. However, this is a long and arduous process entailing terrifying visits to a therapist, medication and/or lifestyle changes (time that could be spent achieving your goals!), and I would not recommend it. Furthermore, many students find that, when they turn to others for help withdrawing, the course is so often unknown or misunderstood that few take them seriously.

If at any point in the course you feel the need to withdraw, I recommend revisiting your self-evaluations, as well as examining your course work from other classes and to ask yourself one question: How could I have accomplished any of that without Life Skills 101?

Welcome to my class, also known as having an anxiety disorder. Good luck!