

THE FIRST DAY OF THE CLASS- MAKE THE MOST OF IT

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The first day of class always creates some nervousness, even for seasoned teachers. It helps to have a mental checklist of objectives to accomplish so that you and your students come away with the impression that the course is off to a good start.



INTRODUCTION

The first day of class can be an anxious experience for your students also. Students enter the first day of class with at least eight questions:

Is the class going to meet my needs?

Is the teacher competent?

Is the teacher fair?

Will the teacher care about me?

Will I be able to succeed?

What does the teacher expect from me?

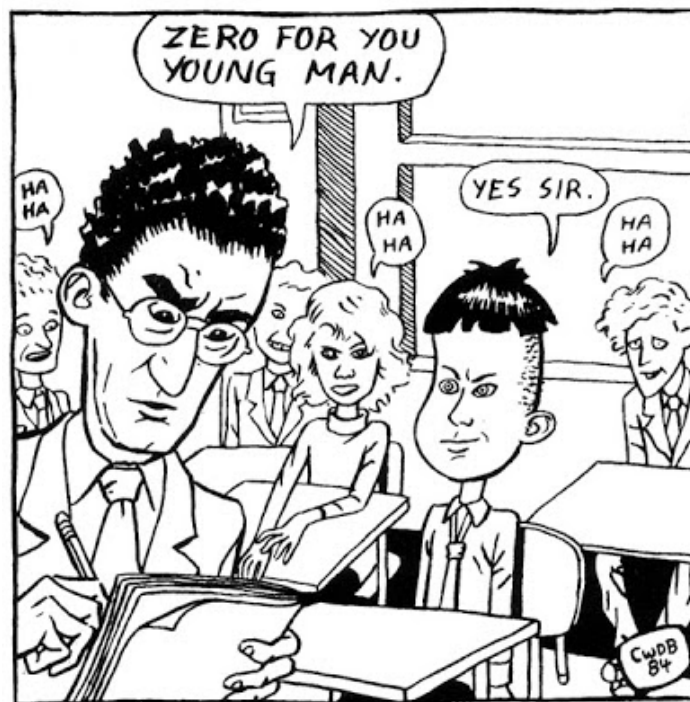
What will I need to do to get a good grade?

Will I be able to cope up with the workload for this course with the workload in my other courses?

First day of class sets the tone for the whole course. This is the best opportunity a teacher has to establish his or her expectations for student achievement and behavior. A teacher

should take advantage of the fact that most students will be looking for signs to indicate what the course will offer for them, and will therefore be highly attentive. Therefore, be careful to communicate to students not only the high expectations from them, but also the teacher's commitment to and support for their learning.

A teacher must avoid de-motivating statements such as, "This course will be a tough one and in the last semester a large number of students have failed in this subject". Such statements tend to discourage the students. Instead, a teacher should use language that encourages students: "This course will challenge you, but I am sure that you are capable of successfully going through it."



TO BEGIN WITH

It is essential to go over the syllabus carefully with the students. The syllabus represents the thought and planning that went into the design of the course. It therefore conveys to students much about teacher and how well the teacher is organized. Presenting and discussing the syllabus will give students a chance to ask questions, to clarify policies, and to reflect upon the demands of the course. *This is a good opportunity to talk to the students about academic honesty and the ethical standards.*