The Office of Learning Resources provides professional consultation services in university relevant skills such as academic reading, writing, study strategies, and time management to the Penn student community. This academic support is provided through a varied menu of services and programs:

**Individual instruction:** Students can make appointments for one-on-one consultations with a Learning Instructor to address concerns and build upon already strong study strategies.

**Walk-in hours:** Walk-ins are available during the academic year, Monday through Friday from noon to 3:00 PM and Tuesday and Wednesday from 4:00 – 7:00 PM. Sessions are one half hour and are provided on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Interactive workshops:** Several workshop series are designed for specific groups of students. The topic of Getting to Know the U.S. Classroom is often covered at the beginning of each semester in the **Academics Plus (A+)** series.

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**Getting to Know the U.S. Classroom**

**A Special Topic for International Students**

Weingarten Learning Resources Center
3702 Spruce Street; Stouffer Commons, Suite 300
215-573-9235
Getting to Know the U.S. Classroom

Studying in a foreign country can be challenging. It can also be a very exciting new experience. Here are some General Strategies to help you succeed in the U.S. classroom.

Classroom Etiquette
- Go to class on time and attend all classes. Let your professor know ahead of time if you will be unable to attend a class.
- Always go to class prepared. Do your homework and hand in all assignments on time throughout the semester.
- Make eye contact with your professors and classmates when participating in class discussion. Be sure to mention examples, personal experience or expertise, library sources, or facts which support your opinion.

Learning Outside of the Classroom
- Make an appointment to see the professor or teaching assistant (TA) during his/her office hours. Office hours allow you to obtain valuable clarification of lecture and text materials. In addition, you will get a chance to know your professor during the office hours.
- Communicate with professors about any concerns or problems you may have. Do not wait until it is too late!
- Use other academic resources on campus to facilitate your learning.

Homework and Grades
- Be familiar with the Code of Academic Integrity at Penn: http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity
  When in doubt, consult with your professors or academic advisors.
- Read your syllabus carefully and follow the directions for each homework assignment.
- Letter grades (A+, A, A-, etc.) are often used in the American classroom. If you are not familiar with or not sure about the grading system, talk with your professor or TA about it.

Here is a 3-step study strategy to help you achieve your learning goals in the U.S.:

✓ Step 1: Before Class
  - Review lecture notes from the previous class.
  - Make notes of important points as you read for the class. Find the author’s main idea(s) and restate the idea(s) in your own words.
  - Write down comments, questions and examples to discuss in class.

✓ Step 2: During Class Discussion
  - Be brave. Make a contribution in class to express your thoughts. When giving opinions, do not read your notes word by word.
  - Be organized and precise. Support your points with research studies and examples.
  - Acknowledge other students’ comments (For example: “To add to what she said,…” or “I heard what you said but …”) when you are adding to the discussion.

✓ Step 3: After Class
  - Review your class notes at least once within 24 hours.
  - Plan ahead and start working on your assignments early. Allow enough time for revision and practice.
  - Work in groups to review the class materials.