

0

SHARES

[ShareTweet](#)

554 views

Darcy Anderson

danderson11@radford.edu

Around this time of the semester, students have divided themselves between the ones who show up to class and the ones who do not. Each professor has his or her own views of attendance and how he or she should run the class. You have the professors who say you only learn by showing up and will make attendance so strict you could fail the class based on attendance. These professors will probably relate school to your future workplace so you have an idea of what “out there” is like.

For example, Dr. John Brummette has the following policy for his “Persuasion in Communication” class: *You will be allowed a total of (4) excused absences throughout the entire semester. These absences should only be used for unforeseen circumstances ... Classes will NOT be cancelled unless the university is officially closed, even on days in which we are having inclement weather. Absences on these days will NOT be excused. Students who are currently registered for this class and do not show up on the first day of class will be counted absent. 75-points (out of 500) will be deducted from your final grade for every absence over the 4 absence limit. 10-points will be deducted from your final grade for every class in which you show up late. Again, please make sure you clearly understand this policy. Students who show up to class after 9:15am will be counted absent.*

This view is beneficial because it may correct any “absent minded behaviors” before it affects them in the real world. It can be harmful for the students who cannot show up because of work, constantly being sick or family issues that need attention and end up failing the class because of something they cannot control.

Then there are the professors who give out participation grades, which gives points to the students who go to class and participate. The students who are absent or do nothing in the class are given either no points or deducted points. Some professors will even give incentives, such as extra credit if you miss one or no classes throughout the entire semester. This one is helpful because it gives the student a reason to go to class other than just to learn but bad for the ones who do not like to speak up or who have the same issues as the first view.

You also have the professors who have next to no attendance policy. These classes are usually the more crowded - around 35+ people - so that the professor does not have to take time out of class to lecture. and are the ones who drop in attendance fast. This is good because the students can control whether they go to class or not, teaching them to make their own schedule. It can be bad, though, because classes like these are the ones students do not mind skipping and will have a major decline in attendance around this time.

My idea is for professors to make an attendance policy based off of where the content is. If the class is all or mostly lectures and little homework, have a stricter policy. On the flip side, if there is a lot of outside homework and researching, make attendance not as mandatory. This is hard to do, however, because it's all a spectrum and professors see their class as the most important one for a student.

So what about the students' side of all this?

The two sides I have heard over the past three years at college have been "I pay for my class so I should be able to do what I want" and "I pay for my class so I should make the most of my tuition." The side about students being able to do what they want makes sense because they have paid for it and the professor is being paid whether they show up or not. So why should someone else decide what the student does? This mindset can have negative effects, however, because if a student fails a class by not showing up and learning the material, they will have to pay for the class again and again until they can pass the class. The second viewpoint from the students about making the most of their tuition is good because why pay for a class if you are not going to try your best at it? This view might also stress the student into doing too much schoolwork and not focusing on themselves every now and then.

In my opinion, students should have the second viewpoint and go to class, but take some time off every now and then. We are not machines who can spit out assignment after assignment without any repercussions. Psychologically speaking, we cannot go for long periods of time without relaxing. If you have a class that is easy on attendance and find yourself falling behind on either classwork or taking time for yourself, consider skipping it one day to rejuvenate and get back on track. You will feel better after doing so, trust me.