University of Rhode Island
University College for Academic Success
UCS 161
Becoming a Self-Directed Learner
Spring 2025

<u>**Location:**</u> **Ranger HAll 312**
<u>**Instructor:**</u> **David Hayes, Ph.D.**
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<u>**Office Hours:**</u> **You can find me most of the time in 403 Roosevelt Hall. Meetings are by appointment, but please don't hesitate to ask!**

<u>**Course description (from the catalog):**</u>
Analyze and apply strategies for developing self-directed learning and personal leadership skills in college settings. Focus on metacognition, strategies for self-directed studying, problem solving, planning and work management.

<u>**Course Credit and Grading**</u>
1 credit course
Grading: A-F

<u>**About this course:**</u>
As a follow-up to UCS 160, UCS 161 focuses on further strengthening academic performance by developing a goal-driven strategic approach to self-directed learning. To succeed in college, students need not only to be able to plan and study effectively but also to determine their own needs, analyze challenges, and devise their own solutions. In UCS 161, you will learn how to set goals for your academic growth, align your goals with strategies for skill development. You will be responsible for applying strategies from class to your other courses, analyzing their effectiveness, and refining your approach in pursuit of your goals. Topics include:

<u>**Learning Objectives:**</u>
The goal for UCS 161 is to help you assert greater control over your own learning and growth– to act with greater autonomy and self-efficacy and to be able to identify, research, and strategically address academic challenges. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
- Set and pursue goals that are measurable and achievable
- Identity your academic learning and support needs and connect with appropriate people and resources
- Apply new strategies and techniques and assess how they are working for you
- Communicate effectively around your learning needs

<u>**Course Text and other Materials:**</u>
UCS 161 is a one credit course. The course text consists of customized lesson modules, each with links to additional reading and video. Modules and all other supplemental materials will be available via Brightspace.

<u>**Attendance policy**</u>

Much of our learning together in UCS 161X will happen in class, so **attendance and participation in weekly meetings is mandatory**. If you must miss a class, you will need to contact your instructor in advance of the class to explain why you will be absent. Students are allowed up to 2 excused absences. If you have not contacted the instructor before class to explain your absence, it will be marked "unexcused". **Unexcused absences will result in a zero for the day's attendance and participation.** For further details on how attendance and participation is graded, see the section of the syllabus on grading, below.

<u>**Course work and expectations**</u>

UCS 161 is a follow-up course to UCS 160. Where UCS 160 introduced a lot of strategies on a variety of topics, UCS 161 focuses on putting strategies to work and reflecting on individual progress. It expands on UCS 160 topics, adds a couple of additional topics focusing on self-directedness, and asks students to focus more closely on how they

are applying strategies to: a.) address the challenges they are facing, b.) fully develop the academic skills they need, and c.) set and realize growth-oriented academic goals.

Goal setting At the beginning of this class you will be assigned a **Goal setting activity**. This activity will ask you to rate your challenges and strengths in several key areas that our class will address. This activity will enable you to set goals for your learning and academic skills development for the class.

Keeping a weekly journal of your progress toward your goals Each week, you will choose from among the strategies discussed in that week's module and apply at least one of those strategies to your studying in other courses you are taking. You will then submit a written reflection of approximately 250 words detailing what you did, how it went, and what you learned from your activity. Detailed directions for these reflections will be posted in Brightspace. **Each weekly reflection is also worth 5 points.**

Starting in week 3, each week's class will include a 15 minute panel discussion and Q&A. At the beginning of the semester, we will review all of the available topics in the course. Students will pick at least one topic that they feel is important to their development toward their goals. Each week, students who chose that week's topic will act as panelists. For that week's class, 3-4 students will do a close reading of short readings or video on something on their topic - something to do with learning and studying (including things like motivation, focus, study strategy, planning…). Panelists each week prepare a 3-5 minute talk just on how they relate personally to the topic (e.g, how it relates to you, whether it's useful, etc. It's a chance to think more closely about an area of growth that interests you, and initiate a class discussion on it. We will then open small group discussions in which all students will be expected to participate by asking questions or sharing thoughts.

Previewing and reviewing the lesson modules Most weeks in our class will include a lesson module on a relevant topic, like minimizing procrastination, planning effectively, or studying in ways that promote learning. You are expected to preview the module prior to our class discussion meetings. You should arrive at the meeting prepared to discuss the module content knowledgeably. *It is expected that you will come to the discussion each week with at least two ideas or two questions from your review of the module that you would like to discuss.*

Final project Your **final project f**or this class is to submit a post-assessment in which you measure how you have progressed toward your goals. The final project will include an 800-850 word reflective essay detailing and evaluating your overall efforts over the course of the semester, and a strategic plan in outline format for continuing to make improvements in the semester ahead

Grading:

Points are earned as follows:	#	pts ea.	Total
Goal setting assignment	1	10	10
Calendar assignment	1	10	10
Panel Assignment	1	10	10
Weekly progress journal assignments	9	5	45
Final Project	1	25	25
Attendance and participation	13	2	26*

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- **How attendance and participation is graded:** Your participation is a very important part of our class. Students will lose 2 points from their points total for each unexcused absence, or for obvious lack of participation/negative participation (e.g, not responding/participating in discussion when asked, leaving meetings for substantial amounts of time, disruptive behavior, etc.) A point may also be added on occasion at instructor's discretion for exemplary activity. We will discuss this policy in class to make sure everyone is clear on what to expect

Your grade will be determined by dividing the number of points earned by total possible points to obtain a percent grade. Letter grades for the course are on the following scale:

A 93-100	A- 90-93	B+ 87-89	B 83-87	B- 80-82	C+ 77-79
C 73-76	C- 70-72	D+ 67-69	D 60-66	F = 0-59	

Schedule

Date	Topic
1/23	Making Change on Step at a Time
1/30	Planning and managing time and work 1 (Time Boxing)
2/6	How we learn and How we should study 1 (Top Strategies)
2/13	Motivation and procrastination 1
2/20	Rest, Recreation, Rewards and learning
2/27	Focus and Distraction
3/6	Planning and managing time and work 2 (Study cycle/ 5 day Plan)
3/20	Mid-Semester Goals and Progress check in
3/27	How we learn and How we should study 2 (Studying from texts)
4/3	test taking & test anxiety
4/10	Communicating with professors & Self-advocacy
4/17	Workshopping on Elective topics
4/25	Final projects

Schedule

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND RESOURCES

- **Anti-Bias Statement:** We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Response Team at www.uri.edu/brt. There you will also find people and resources to help.

- **Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) Statement:** Your access and ability to fully participate in this course is important. Please send me your DAI accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DAI, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DAI can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: web.uri.edu/disability, or emailing: dss@etal.uri.edu. We are available to meet with students enrolled in Kingston as well as Providence courses.

- **Academic Enhancement Center:** Located in Roosevelt Hall, the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) offers face-to-face and online services to undergraduate students seeking academic support.

    - **STEM & BUS Tutoring** (STEM, BUS, NUR, EGR) helps undergraduate students navigate a variety of 100 and 200 level science, math, business, nursing and engineering courses through free peer tutoring in person and online. Students can select weekly or occasional (as-needed) tutoring sessions through the TracCloud system or visit the Drop-In Center, located in the Carothers Library lower level room LL004. The TracCloud application is available through URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on and more detailed information and instructions can be found at uri.edu/aec/tutoring.

    - **Academic Skills Development**
        - **Courses**: UCS 160: *Success in Higher Education (1cr.)* and UCS 161: *Becoming a Self Directed Student (1cr)* teach strategies for planning, studying, and addressing academic challenges. For more information, contact David Hayes at davidhayes@uri.edu.
        - **Peer Academic Skills Coaches:** Need help managing your time or studying more effectively? Just ASC! Academic Skills Coaches (ASCs) are personalized 1-to-1 meetings designed to help students build skills to meet their academic goals. For more information contact Heather Price at hprice@uri.edu.
        - **Professional Academic Skills Consultations:** Students can schedule consultations with Dr. David Hayes on Starfish or may be referred by an advisor or case manager.
        - **Resources:** The Study Your Way to Success page is a self-guided web portal offering curated tips and strategies in response to common academic challenges.

    - **The Undergraduate Writing Center** provides peer writing support to students in any class, even if you haven't started writing yet. Peer writing consultants work with students at any stage, from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas to developing, organizing, and revising a draft. Writing consultations are available in person and online, and can be scheduled through URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on via TracCloud. For more information, visit uri.edu/aec/writing.