

PCAM 299
College Student Success Skills
3 Credit Hours
Summer 2026 (6/22–8/3)
Online Asynchronous

Instructor

Professor Zoe Byrd

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Office Location: Starr Hall 126

Office Hours: My typical working hours are Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm. Appointments are preferred. I am available to meet at other times, including weekends or evenings, by appointment only. For weekends or evening meetings, I can do a phone call or meet virtually on Zoom or Teams.

Academic Bulletin Course Description

Contract approved by instructor, advisor, and academic dean is required for undergraduate studies. May be taken for elective credit only. May be repeated for up to 6 credits hours.

Full Course Description

This PCAM 299 independent study course will teach students how they can be successful in a higher education setting. This course is intended for all students, including students on academic probation, fully online students, and non-traditional students returning to education after a break. This course will equip students with the information, practical skills, and resources to be successful in college. This is a 3-credit course.

Prerequisite(s)

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the expectations for a college course, including a class syllabus, technology requirements, and class format
2. Demonstrate how to access and utilize campus resources and services
3. Demonstrate effective communication in a higher education setting with peers, faculty, and staff
4. Understand the goal setting process, including how it relates to personal reflections and motivations
5. Explain stress and its effects, identify personal stressors, and apply common stress management techniques
6. Identify their values and priorities and explore time management strategies to align their time usage and priorities

7. Identify and demonstrate the components of effective studying, reading, and test taking
8. Explore their identity as a learner and implement strategies for success

The learning outcomes are equivalent to those of a face-to-face (F2F) version of the course.

Instructional Methods

This is a fully online course, which requires the same level of commitment and engagement as a face-to-face class. Success in this course depends on being self-motivated, well-organized, and having consistent internet access. All course materials will be provided on Blackboard.

Active participation in online activities and completion of all coursework is required. On Blackboard, you'll engage with content, interact with classmates, and collaborate with me. I recommend setting specific days and times to complete course activities.

The typical class structure in Blackboard will consist of learning modules featuring:

- Short Video/PowerPoint Lectures
- Readings
- YouTube videos
- Online Discussions
- Quizzes
- Written journals
- Learning exercises

This is an entirely web-based course with no face-to-face meetings. You will complete your work asynchronously, meaning you'll work at different times than your peers. However, this is not a self-paced class or independent study. You will have assigned deadlines, and all work must be submitted on time. Assignments cannot be saved for the final weeks or days of the semester. Regular interaction with your classmates and me is a key component of this course. Each assignment sequence must be completed on schedule; you cannot fall behind and still be successful.

Course Communication and Feedback

I will communicate with you regarding grades and assignments. If you need to reach me, email is the best method. I generally respond to emails within 24 hours and provide feedback on assignments within one week. You may also post course-related questions on the Blackboard Discussion Board, where I will respond within 24 hours. If you're having trouble with the course or its material, please email me to discuss the issues.

Announcements will be posted to the course as needed. If there's additional important information, I will send it to the email address listed on Blackboard. Please make sure your email account is functioning properly to ensure you receive all important communications.

To check your email address in Blackboard, follow these steps:

1. Access [Blackboard](https://blackboard.sc.edu/) (https://blackboard.sc.edu/)
2. Click your name on the main navigation panel on the left
3. Review your email address. By default, Blackboard uses your university-issued email address.

Your email address in Blackboard should match your preferred university email. If you are unsure of your preferred email, [check your account](https://myaccount.sc.edu/) (https://myaccount.sc.edu/). For more information on changing your primary university email, please refer to the Knowledge Base article - [How To Change Your Primary University Email Address](https://scprod.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0011464) (https://scprod.service-now.com/sp?id=kb_article_view&sysparm_article=KB0011464).

Required Textbooks or Materials

There are no required books or materials to purchase for this course. You will be assigned readings and given assignments during the semester which you can find on the course Blackboard. This course utilizes Open Educational Resources (OER) to enhance learning and reduce student costs. All OER materials and/or site links are available through Blackboard. When accessing and using these materials, please abide by the terms of the creator's [license for use](https://library.triton.edu/oer/oerlicenses) (https://library.triton.edu/oer/oerlicenses).

All course readings/materials comply with copyright/fair use policies.

Technology Requirements

Online lectures will be available on Blackboard, with additional content from YouTube also accessible within Blackboard. To view and hear the lectures, you must have internet access. It is recommended that you have a back-up plan in case you have issues with your primary computer or Internet access. If you are close to campus, plan to use one of the computers in the Medford Library. If you live outside of Lancaster, plan to use a computer or Internet at your local library. Your computer should have an up-to-date operating system with the latest updates installed, along with speakers or headphones to listen to the lecture presentations (transcripts will be provided). No special software is required.

The PowerPoint lecture presentations, assignments, quizzes, rubrics, and links to articles are all available on the Blackboard site for the course. To participate in learning activities and complete assignments, you will need daily access, preferably from home, to:

- An internet connection and a computer that can be used at any time, configured for assignments, access to resources, and communication
- A USC email account
- A current web browser compatible with Blackboard (Google Chrome is recommended for Blackboard). Supported browsers include:
 - **macOS™**: Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox
 - **Windows™**: Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox
- Blackboard Learning Management System
- Microsoft Word as your word processing program

- Adobe Acrobat Reader 11 or DC
- Reliable data storage for your work, such as a USB drive or Office365 OneDrive cloud storage.

Microsoft Office 365 is available free to all students. It includes access to the latest versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, and much more. You can install Office 365 on up to five compatible devices, including tablets. All work can be saved online in OneDrive so it can be accessed no matter which device is being used. You can use this Office 365 subscription for as long as you are enrolled at the University of South Carolina. [Download Office 365](https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/division_of_information_technology/end_user_services/available_technology_resources/information_for_students/index.php) (https://sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/division_of_information_technology/end_user_services/available_technology_resources/information_for_students/index.php).

All computers connected to the university network must have up-to-date **antivirus software**. If your computer does not have antivirus software, you can download Microsoft Security Essentials for Windows or Sophos for the Mac free of charge by going to my.sc.edu, click the Student/Authorized Users tab, then click "Purchase computer software".

For further questions or assistance with software, please contact the USC Lancaster IT Service Desk via e-mail at USCLITTeam@sc.edu or call the Service number at (803) 313-7122.

Minimal Student Technical Requirements/Skills

This course requires a basic level of technical skills. All assignments and work must be completed and submitted online through Blackboard, so you must have consistent and reliable access to a computer and the internet. The minimum technical skills required include the ability to:

- Organize and save electronic files,
- Use USC email and manage attached files,
- Check email and Blackboard daily,
- Download and upload documents,
- Locate information with a web browser, and
- Use Blackboard effectively.

Technical Support

If you have questions or problems related to your computer, software, or need technical support (including Blackboard support), please:

- Contact the USC Lancaster IT Service Desk via email at USCLITTeam@sc.edu or via phone at (803) 313-7122.
- Contact the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) Service Desk at (803) 777-1800,
- Submit an online request through the [Self-Service Portal](https://scprod.service-now.com/sp) (https://scprod.service-now.com/sp)

If you experience computer issues, there are computer labs available at the Medford Library and in certain campus classroom buildings. If you are not located in the Lancaster, SC area, most regional campuses and public libraries have computers for public use.

Assignments and Assessments

General Assignment Information

- All coursework (e.g., assignments, projects) and rubrics are available on Blackboard.
- All assignments are due on the dates and times indicated in the course schedule.
- All quizzes will be administered and secured on Blackboard.
- All assignments within each category are weighted equally.

Final Reflection: College Success Plan

The college success plan will be a culmination of your learning and experiences in this class and in your college career so far. You will integrate personal reflection, strategies, and goals that will help you succeed in your time at USC Lancaster and beyond. This plan will include biographical information about you, your definition of success, your vision board, SMART goals, a letter to your future self, a letter to your past self, and strategies within the following areas: time manage & organization, reading & notetaking, studying & test preparation, and well-being & stress management. A full success plan rubric is available on Blackboard.

Vision Board

The vision board will serve as the class “mid-term exam”. Your vision board will be a visual representation of your dreams. A vision board includes images or words representing things such as:

- Who you want to become: character traits/qualities and values
- Your ideal lifestyle (active, minimalist, career-centric, etc.)
- Desired possessions (a particular car, type of house, clothing, etc.)
- Where you want to live or vacation
- Your dreams of different areas of your life: family, health/wellness, hobbies/fun, academics, career, etc.

A full vision board rubric is available on Blackboard.

Journals

Students will be assigned weekly journals that require written responses within Blackboard. Each journal will have a different prompt that will ask you to reflect on the learning topics for the week and your personal experiences within and outside of education. A full journal rubric is available on Blackboard.

Weekly Exercises

Each module will include multiple exercises to help you practice the concepts, strategies, and skills within this course. Exercises will be based on completion of the exercise requirements. All exercise descriptions and requirements will be available on Blackboard.

Quizzes

Six online quizzes will be assigned, each based on the instructional content in the modules. They will consist of True/False, Multiple-Choice, Matching, and Short Answer questions. Quizzes not containing Short Answer will be automatically graded. All quizzes are administered and secured within Blackboard. Quizzes fall within the “Weekly Exercises” assignment category.

Discussion Boards

Special topics will be posted on Blackboard each week. You will be required to read the posted materials and participate in the discussion boards. Your contributions should incorporate your personal experiences and insights from the readings, videos and module content.

Discussion board posts are a key component of this course. Students must post responses to instructor-posted questions by 11:59 p.m. each Friday and comment on at least two peers' posts by 11:59PM on the following Sunday. A full discussion board rubric is available in Blackboard.

Grading Policy

All grades will be posted on Blackboard. You are strongly encouraged to check your scores on Blackboard regularly. A final letter grade will be assigned based on percentages.

Assignment Weights	Points
Journals	20
Discussion Boards	20
College Success Plan	12
Vision Board	8
Weekly Exercises	40
Total	100

Grading Scale

Total Points	Grade
90-100	A
87-89	B+
80-86	B
77-79	C+
70-76	C
67-69	D+
60-66	D
Below 60	F

Attendance and Participation Policy

Active participation is vital to the success of this course, as it enhances the learning experience for both you and your classmates. To ensure fair and consistent grading, the following attendance and participation policies will be applied.

Attendance Expectations

Online participation in weekly activities is required, and students must log in to Blackboard several times per week to complete tasks such as discussion boards, quizzes, or assignments. Even if you have completed your work, you must log in to check for any announcements or new discussion posts. It is your responsibility to stay updated on course-related information.

Anticipated Excused Absences

To arrange excuses for absences that can be anticipated at the start of the term and are considered an excused absence under the [USC undergraduate attendance policy](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) (https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) (e.g. authorized University activities, religious observances), you should:

- Submit a written request (email is acceptable) to the instructor, by the end of the first week of the course, specifying the dates of the anticipated absence.
- Provide an explanation for the absence, including any relevant supporting documentation.
- If applicable, request make-up work, including an updated timeframe and due date.
- For additional information, consult the [USC undergraduate attendance policy](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) (https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text).

Unanticipated Excused Absences

To arrange excuses for absences that cannot be anticipated at the start of the course and are considered excused (e.g., illness or injury, legal proceedings, or immediate family deaths) under the [undergraduate attendance policy](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) (https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) you should, at the first opportunity, contact the professor to provide an explanation for the absence, including any relevant supporting documentation, and arrange for make-up work, including an updated timeframe and due date.

Consistency and Fairness

Attendance and participation will be measured and applied consistently for all students. Any exceptions or accommodations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with university policies.

I will maintain verifiable records of your attendance and participation. These records will be made available to you upon request and will be used to ensure fair application of the policy.

Appeals

If you believe that the attendance and participation policy has been applied inconsistently or unfairly, you have the right to appeal the decision. Appeals should be made in writing to me within 7 days of receiving the grade penalty or participation evaluation.

Late Work/Make-Up Policy

All assignments, quizzes, and exams are due by the deadline as posted on the course schedule. Note that the clock on your computer may be different than the clock in Blackboard. If the clock is different by one second, you may be locked out of the assignment or quiz. Plan accordingly. I recommend that you submit your assignments, quizzes, and exams well before the deadline.

Makeup assignments and exams will be given without penalty if you have an [excused absence](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations) (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations>).

Unexcused absences for assignments and quizzes will incur the following penalties: 10% will be deducted from your grade for the first 24 hours late, with an additional 5% deducted for each subsequent 24-hour period.

Students who are absent from any final exam and meet the criteria for an excused absence under the [undergraduate attendance policy](https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text) (<https://academicbulletins.sc.edu/undergraduate/policies-regulations/undergraduate-academic-regulations/#text>) will be provided with the opportunity to make-up the exam.

Students who are absent from the final exam and do not meet the criteria for an excused absence may be given a grade of a zero on the exam without the option to make-up the missed exam.

Academic Integrity Statement

As a partner in your learning, it is important to both of us that any assignment submission is a pure reflection of your work and understanding. You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity.

Any deviation from the USCL Code of Student/Faculty Academic Integrity & Responsibility will result in a penalty. This code can be found in the [USC Lancaster Student Handbook 2025-2026](https://www.sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/documents/student_life/handbook.pdf) (https://www.sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/documents/student_life/handbook.pdf). Cheating and plagiarizing include copying another student's answer or work; copying a website's answer or work; submitting questions to an online search and recording the answers found in this search as your own; submitting questions to anyone (online or in person) and using their work as your own; using same or similar wording from any other source on your assignments; using artificial intelligence sites to write all or part of a paper, and allowing another student to use your work as their own.

If cheating or plagiarism occurs, a grade of "0" will be given for the assignment to all parties involved in the academic integrity violation, and the offense will be reported to USCL's Academic Dean. The student has the right to appeal or dispute this charge. Repeated violations of the academic integrity policy will be reported to the Academic Dean and further action will

be taken. This action may include failure of the course; an academic honor code violation; or suspension / expulsion from the UofSC system.

Plagiarism

Using the words or ideas of another as if they were your own is a serious form of academic dishonesty. If another person's complete sentence, syntax, key words, or specific or unique ideas and information are used, you must give that person credit through proper citation.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Policy

No use of generative AI tools permitted

All assignments should be fully prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in the skills associated with this course, from student-based brainstorming to project development, will prepare you for success in your degree pathway and, ultimately, a competitive career. Therefore, the use of generative AI tools to complete any aspect of assignments for this course is not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this statement, please contact me.

Expectations for Classroom Behavior

Professionalism is always expected, including your interactions online. Because the university classroom is a space designed for the free exchange of ideas, we must show respect for one another in all interactions. We will show respect for one another by exhibiting patience and courtesy in our exchanges. Appropriate language and restraint from verbal attacks upon those whose perspectives differ from your own is a minimum requirement. Courtesy and kindness are the norm for those who participate in my class.

Netiquette Statement

Our discussion board provides a space for you to share your ideas and learning with your peers in this class. As fellow learners, we engage here in a respectful and supportive environment. Please follow these netiquette guidelines:

- **Respect one another:** It's essential to avoid personal attacks, even if you disagree with someone's opinion. We encourage healthy, constructive discussions.
- **Avoid using all CAPS:** Writing in all capital letters can come across as "shouting" and is generally seen as impolite or aggressive.
- **Use proper salutations:** Always begin emails or posts with a polite greeting (e.g., Dr. Name, Ms. Name, Hello Professor Name, Good afternoon Mr. Name). Informal greetings like "Hey" are not appropriate.
- **Include a clear subject line:** Be specific in your subject line, and always include the course number (e.g., ENGL 101) in your email. Sign off with your full name.
- **Ensure correct grammar and spelling:** Use proper grammar, punctuation, and capitalization. Text message shorthand and informal language are not acceptable.
- **Communicate tastefully:** Avoid profanity or offensive language in any communication.
- **Review before posting:** Always reread and carefully edit your message before you send, submit, or post it.

Please remember to keep your posts respectful and focused on course-related discussions and assignments. Your thoughtful contributions enrich our collective learning experience.

Incomplete Grades

You may be assigned an 'I' (Incomplete) grade if you are unable to complete a significant portion of the assigned course work because of an unanticipated illness, accident, work-related responsibility, family hardship, or verified learning disability. An Incomplete grade gives you additional time to complete course assignments **only if** there is indication that the specified circumstances prevented you from completing course assignments on time.

Course Accommodations

The USCL [Student Disability Resource Center](https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/disability_services/index.php) (SDRC) (https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/disability_services/index.php) empowers students to manage challenges and limitations imposed by disabilities. To receive reasonable accommodations from me, you must be registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (476 Hubbard Drive, Starr Hall Room 125, Lancaster, SC 29720, 803-313-7448). Any student with a documented disability should contact the SDRC to arrange appropriate accommodation. Once registered, students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me (within the first week of the semester) to discuss the logistics of any accommodation needed to fulfill course requirements.

Academic Success Center

USCL's Academic Success Center (ASC) offers a wide array of services to help you succeed in your courses. Their subject-specific tutoring (virtual or in-person) can make the difference between struggling and thriving. You can sign up for one-on-one tutoring by following [this link](https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/study/student_opportunities/academic_success_center/) (https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/study/student_opportunities/academic_success_center/). They also accept walk-in appointments during their operating hours.

Mental Health and Well-Being

If stress is affecting your ability to complete schoolwork, maintain relationships, eat, sleep, or enjoy life, please reach out to USCL's mental health resources. Mental health is as important as physical health, and counseling can help improve your wellbeing. Life can be full of challenges that make everyday tasks, such as school, work, relationships, self-care, etc. more difficult at times. Or we may find ourselves feeling more afraid, overwhelmed, down, or out of control. You are not alone. Counseling can be helpful for everyone and all kinds of struggles. **As a USCL student, you have access to free and confidential counseling services.** More information can be found on the [USCL Counseling Services website](https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/counseling_services/index.php) (https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/counseling_services/index.php).

If you send me an email with a picture of your favorite animal, I'll give you extra credit (one point added to your final average). The cuter, the better!

Course Schedule

Dates	Module	Assignment/Activity	Due Date
6/22 – 6/28	Module One: Getting Started	• Review “Start Here” page on Blackboard • Watch introduction video from professor • Participate in Discussion One: Meet Your Classmates (initial post and two response posts) • Read “The College Freshman’s Guide to the Course Syllabus” • Read the class syllabus • Watch the syllabus overview video • Take the Syllabus Quiz • Watch overview of technology video • Complete Exercise One • Complete Journal One • Review Module One Outro	11:59 PM on Sunday, June 28th
	Module Two: Communication and Campus Resources	• Review Module Two Intro • Watch Module Two Lecture Video • Read online article “A College Student’s Guide to Self-Advocacy” • Take Module Two Quiz • Participate in Discussion Two: Finding campus Resources (initial post and two response posts) • Read online article “Professional email guide” • Read excerpt online article “How to be an effective communicator in 7 easy steps” • Complete Exercise Two • Complete Exercise Three • Complete Journal Two • Review Module Two Outro	11:59 PM on Sunday, June 28th
6/29 – 7/5	Module Three: Goal Setting	• Review Module Three Intro • Watch Ted Talk “Dream Big, Dream Passionately, But Simply Dream” • Watch Module Three Lecture Video Part One • Review Vision Board Mid-Term Instructions • Complete Exercise Four • Complete Exercise Five	11:59 PM on Sunday, July 5th

Dates	Module	Assignment/Activity	Due Date
		• Watch Module Three Lecture Video Part Two • Participate in Discussion Three: Motivation (initial post and two response posts) • Watch SMART Goals YouTube video • Complete Exercise Six • Take Module Three Quiz • Complete Journal Three • Review Module Three Outro	
7/6 – 7/12	Module Four: Time Management and Organization	• Review Module Four Intro • Watch Module Four Lecture Video • Complete Exercise Seven • Complete Exercise Eight • Complete Exercise Nine • Watch YouTube video on time management • Read online article “10 School Organization Tips for Students” • Participate in Discussion Four: Time Management & Organization (initial post and two response posts) • Read online article “Time Management Skills, Techniques and Strategies - The Ultimate List” • Complete Journal Four • Submit Vision Board Mid-Term • Review Module Four Outro	11:59 PM on Sunday, July 12 th
7/13 – 7/19	Module Five: Reading & Note-Taking	• Review Module Five Intro • Watch Module Five Lecture Video • Watch YouTube video “How to listen to lecture” • Read online article about note-taking strategies • Complete Exercise Ten • Reading online article about reading a textbook • Read online article about SQ4R reading method • Read online article about reading a novel • Complete Exercise Eleven • Participate in Discussion Five: Sharing Wins (initial post and two response posts)	11:59 PM on Sunday, July 19 th

Dates	Module	Assignment/Activity	Due Date
		• Complete Journal Five • Take Module Five Quiz • Review College Success Plan Final Exam Instructions • Review Module Five Outro	
7/20 – 7/26	Module Six: Studying & Test-Taking	• Review Module Six Intro • Watch Module Six Lecture Video • Watch YouTube video about test anxiety • Read online article about test taking tips • Participate in Discussion Six: Test Prep (initial post and two response posts) • Read online article about creating a study plan • Complete Exercise Twelve • Take Module Six Quiz • Complete Exercise Thirteen • Complete Journal Six • Complete Journal Seven • Review Module Six Outro	11:59 PM on Sunday, July 26 th
7/27 – 8/2	Module Seven: Well-Being and Managing Stress	• Review Module Seven Intro • Watch Module Seven Lecture Video • Watch videos on five stress management techniques: mindfulness, belly breathing, guided imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, and journaling • Complete Exercise Fourteen • Complete Exercise Fifteen • Participate in Discussion Seven: Stress Management (initial post and two response posts) • Take Module Seven Quiz • Review Module Seven Outro	11:59 PM on Sunday, August 2nd
8/3	Wrap-Up	• Submit College Success Plan Final Exam • Complete Course Evaluation (for extra credit)	11:59 PM on Monday, August 3rd

Important Dates and Deadlines

Summer V Classes	
Monday, June 22, 2026	First day of class
Tuesday, June 23, 2026	Last day to add or drop class
Wednesday, July 22, 2026	Last day to withdraw with a “W” grade
Sunday, August 2, 2026	Last day of class
Monday, August 3, 2026	Final Exam

The full academic calendar for summer 2026 can be found [here](https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/admissions_records/academic_calendars/academic_calendar_25_26/index.php)
(https://sc.edu/about/system_and_campuses/lancaster/internal/current_students/admissions_records/academic_calendars/academic_calendar_25_26/index.php)