



Q & A With Michael J. Bozack, Ph.D. Author of

***Street Smart Advice to Christian College Students
From a Professor's Point of View***

Q. Do you think students entering college have good study habits?

A. Few students, Christian or otherwise, come to college with good study habits. They either come from high schools where high grades could be achieved by not studying much or they were never taught how to study without memorizing everything. Effective study habits in college, however, require practice, work, and discipline. The earlier in your freshman year you get yourself alone in a library and being to study, the better you will do in college.

Q. How can a student 'clock in' to college so to speak?

A. Say you are flipping burgers at McDonalds to help pay for college. At minimum your boss expects you to show up on time, do your job completely, be professional and accountable. So, why would you do less as a student where there is much more at stake than cooking burgers? Why would you be on time for a job, but then cut your classes; or be competent at work, but then turn in sloppy, careless homework in college? You shouldn't! Treat being a student with the same loyalty and respect as you would treat a job. You will make fewer mistakes and you will feel better about your college experience.

Q. Can students save time by learning the grading systems used by professors?

A. You will save an enormous (that is a lot) of time and energy by understanding the grading systems used by college professors. Most employ either an absolute or a relative system commonly called a curved grading scheme. Students on the other hand, seem to understand an absolute or a relative system because they were used by teachers in high school. Because of that I find that most of my students taking introductory physics have no idea how a curved system works. If you don't understand how you're graded you'll find yourself putting your efforts where they are minimally effective. Don't shoot yourself in the foot by misplaced effort! Get ahead of the 'curve' and ask your professor to explain their grading system because effort is costly and should be placed where it matters the most.

Q. Why do students avoid asking for help from their professors?

A. When the going gets tough, it's amazing how many students turn to everyone and everything EXCEPT their college professors. Sometimes it's because they have had a bad experience with a professor, or their professor is not adept at helping students, or they simply don't want their professor to

know that they are so far behind the pace. Whatever the hang-up, you've got to move on. I always encourage my students to ask for help early in the semester. I mean really, why hire a tutor or get a roommate to help when you have an expert in the field who you've already paid for! It's true without exception that when a student gets in early for help, the one-on-one interaction turns an F on the first test into an A or B before the course ends.

Q. What are some common rookie mistakes freshmen make in college?

A. Success in life depends on minimizing mistakes. Just as turnovers play a large role in the outcome of a football game, (turn the ball over and you lose-hang onto the ball and you win), the same is true for college students. The best college students make the fewest mistakes. They don't cut classes, fail to hand in homework, put social life and work ahead of school, quit classes when they get hard, expect professors to spoon feed them, or prefer short-cuts to honest effort. And, they certainly don't wait until the last minute to study and then pray for God to rescue them-they actually study and do the work! If you can avoid these common rookie mistakes you will gain some serious yards and take your GPA to the goal line!

Q. How can a student benefit from time blocking their courses?

You have enough time in college to do all the things you need to do, but only if you manage yourself wisely. Decide which 4 or 5 things are the most important and stick with them. One tip is to organize your courses, for example, in the morning. Yes, you might find yourself brain dead after four straight hours of lectures, but you will appreciate the uninterrupted time in the afternoon to study or schedule labs. An hour here or an hour there between classes most likely will lead to a cup of coffee at Starbucks, surfing the internet in a campus computer lab, text messaging your friends or watching TV in the student union. Time blocking will help you use your time wisely and free up more time for you to be involved in other activities.

Q. What do you say to students who got A's in high school without studying, who feel they can get by in college the same way?

A. (NIV)Revelation 3:15 says "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!" You are not called to be lukewarm! I often hear students saying, "I got A's in high school without studying, so why should I study here?" Say what? This is not high school, this is college! And, a college education is determinative of the rest of your life; the stakes are much higher here. What worked for you in high school is not going to work in college unless you are majoring in basket weaving. The mediocrity of high school doesn't fly in college if you want to be a person of excellence. Don't spend too much time on the politics of getting through-instead enjoy the ride and do a good job at it.

Q. What are some of the social snares that pose issues for Christian students in college?

A. Christian students in a secular university inevitably are confronted by difficult social issues. College life is an environment full of new freedoms to experiment with risky behaviors formerly policed by parents and teachers. Sex, drugs, alcohol, and the culture are the four most dangerous risks that can derail a successful college career. Relationship issues involving boyfriends/girlfriends can suck an enormous (once again this means a lot) amount of time away from achieving your ultimate college goals. Guard your life and focus on getting your degree. This can be accomplished by holding fast to Biblical convictions and allowing God to guide your life. Poor judgements and social snares

can short-circuit the wonderful life God has planned for you.

Q. Why is it so important to pull a good GPA your freshman year?

A. One of the impediments to high performance in college is surviving the freshman year. A bad start makes everything difficult, meaning of course that a good start makes everything easier. A high GPA earned during your freshman and sophomore years is difficult to knock down during your junior and senior years. Correspondingly, starting as a freshman in a GPA hole makes it difficult if not impossible to build it back to acceptability during the remainder of your college years. Opt for deferred rewards and work hard early on-then you can cruise later.

Q. What is the biggest thing Christian students neglect in college?

A. The biggest mistake you as a Christian student could make is neglecting God in college. It makes zero sense to leave God out of your university life when He is the primary reason you are there! So much is riding on your college years that you need God now more than ever! You need daily wisdom, guidance, and strength that no professor can offer. You need help studying for tests, doing assignments, finding good friends, finding a job, finding a church, and to guide you through a host of other college related experiences. Most of all you need God to protect you from cultural forces that seek to derail your life.

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Biography of Auburn University Professor Michael J. Bozack, Ph.D
**Author of *Street Smart Advice to Christian College Students-
From a Professor's Point of View***



Michael J. Bozack Ph.D., is a professor at Auburn University whose 'Dave Letterman Physics' class was chosen as one of *America's Top 10 Classes* by *The Daily Beast*. The article tells that he is infamous for charming his students with a variety of stunts, including lying on a bed of nails, letting students shoot him with tasers, and jumping on the lecture table dozens of times a semester. He uses physics to explain the best way to hold a tennis racket or tackle a running back. His lessons have made his intro “mythbusters” course probably the most popular way on campus for undergrads to fill their science requirement

Outside of science, faith is the fuel behind this professor. Tired of seeing Christian students failing and dropping out of college, or buckling under the pressure of the college life, he decided to write a book geared towards new students who want to make the most of college, learn some inside pointers on how to succeed, and remain Christian throughout it all.

Bozack received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in physics from Michigan State University and a Ph.D. degree in applied physics from Oregon Health and Sciences University (OHSU). At OHSU, he worked for Dr. Lynwood W. Swanson (founder of FEI Corporation) and Dr. John S. Blakemore (of Solid State Physics and Semiconductor Statistics fame) on the surface physics associated with B- and As-emitting liquid metal ion sources.

Next, he was a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Surface Science Center at the University of Pittsburgh, where he performed pioneering experiments with Professors J. T. Yates, Jr. and W. J. Choyke on Si and SiC surface chemistry, epitaxial growth, methods in semiconductor surface chemistry, and electron-stimulated desorption (ESD and ESDIAD) of F⁺ from Si(100) surfaces.

Later, he moved to Intel Corporation as chief surface scientist during development of the 386-486 (pre-Pentium) microprocessor. During this period the Materials Technology Group at Intel experienced tremendous growth with the addition of nearly \$20M of surface, thin film, and materials instrumentation to support VLSI technology throughout Intel.

Currently, Dr. Bozack is Professor of Physics at Auburn University and Director of the AU Surface Science Laboratory (AUSSL). His research interests include gas- and metal-surface reactions, semiconductor surfaces, thin films, ohmic and Schottky contact development, semiconductor processing technology, wide bandgap electronics, liquid metal alloy wetting, and Pb-free solder technology, and tin whiskers. Current work focuses on the details of chemical reactions between liquid and solid surfaces. The focus is to obtain a microscopic description of surface dynamic processes by exploring the kinetics of surface reactions and the nature of the surface chemical bond.

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Suggested Interview Questions For Michael J. Bozack, Ph.D. Author of

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1. Do you think students entering college have good study habits?
2. How can a student 'clock in' to college so to speak?
3. Can students save time by learning the grading systems used by professors?
4. Why do students avoid asking for help from their professors?
5. What are some common rookie mistakes freshmen make in college?
6. How can a student benefit from time blocking their courses?
7. What do you say to students who got A's in high school without studying, who feel they can get by in college the same way?
8. What are some of the social snares that pose issues for Christian students in college?
9. Why is it so important to pull a good GPA your freshman year?
10. What is the biggest thing Christian students neglect in college?

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