

Extra Credit: Make Friends

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I often use the following extra credit assignment in the opening weeks of a new semester to encourage community building and to promote the use of Slack as an informal space for sharing—both to set up the meeting and to report on it afterward.

I've used this in face-to-face, hybrid, and fully asynchronous classes, and it often results in lasting bonds between students. For example, I once had a group of students in my writing course discover they had all taken or were taking the same difficult coding class, and they ended up using our Slack workspace throughout the semester to help and encourage each other to succeed in that other course. Incidentally, they all performed very well in my course as well!

Feel free to adapt these materials for your own use.

In all my experience teaching, the most consistent indicator of student success I've observed has nothing to do with the individual student—and everything to do with the community students create in and out of class. Those semesters where students form strong bonds and friendships, everyone seems to do better. Those semesters where students remain insulated and disinterested in their peers' wellbeing, everyone seems to struggle a bit more.

Therefore, I'm offering extra credit to those willing to make an extra effort to jumpstart our community-building.

Step 1: Meet with Peers

Meet **VIRTUALLY** with at least 3 other students from the class and get to know each other. Here are the exact specifications:

- There must be at least 4 people in attendance who are currently students of Dr. Grover.
- The meeting must take place virtually—over Zoom or another video chat preferably.
- You must obtain visual evidence of your meeting (say, a screenshot of the call).

What you do during your meeting is up to you, but it should last **at least 30 minutes**. Some suggestions:

- Have everyone make the same snack and compare how you each do it differently
- Play a group game of some kind (Two Truths and a Lie, Pictionary, etc.)
- Take turns doing 3-minute presentations about something you're passionate about
- Report on your summer vacation
- Kvetch together about how much you hate pandemics

Step 2: Post the Proof

Have one person in the group post the visual evidence to the [#random](#) channel on Slack along with a brief description of who was there and what you did.