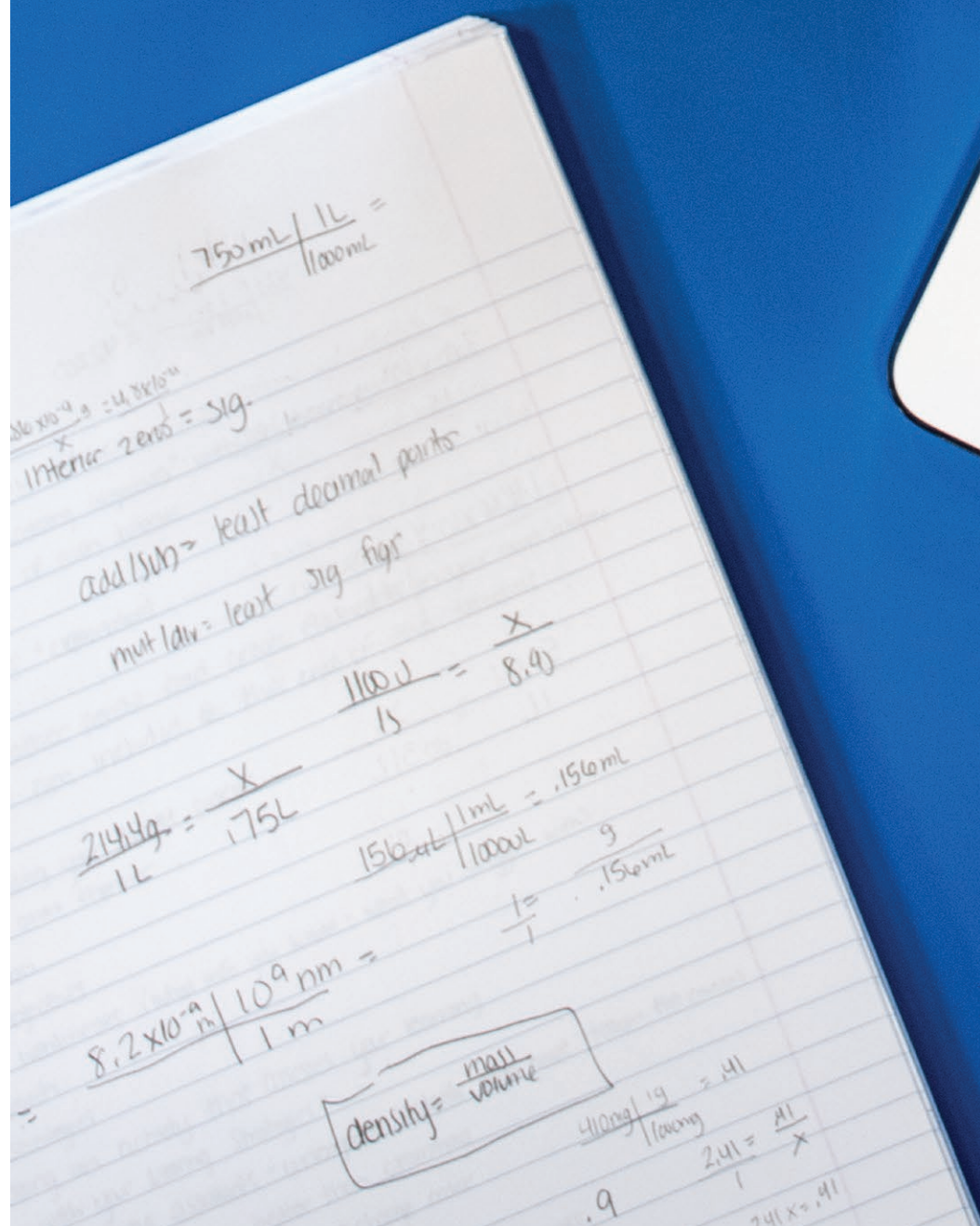


# FINALS WEEK





# ‘BITTERSWEET’

*Graduating seniors reflect on ups and downs of college exams as last finals week approaches*

By Kate Irwin  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

A certain air of nostalgia is overtaking Penn State seniors as they count down the limited days they have left to spend with their roommates, walk to the library and go out to college bars, but there’s one final hurdle before they can toss their graduation caps — finals week.

While some seniors have heavier finals schedules than others, Andrea Marciano said she always feels better when some of her academic pressure is alleviated.

“I think there is always a feeling of relief after taking a final — as much as I enjoy the information I’m learning, I always have feelings of stress around due dates and completing assignments,” Marciano (senior-biobehavioral health) said. “Finishing a final, to me at least, lifts a weight off my shoulders in the sense I don’t have to worry about doing work for the class anymore.”

Marciano said she only has two finals, and one of them is optional since she took 12 credits this semester. Although she said she looks forward to feeling relieved and being done, she’s not “dreading” any finals either.

“Being in my last semester, I am currently in classes I enjoy taking — classes like chemistry, biochemistry and organic chemistry were all taken freshman through junior year,” Marciano said. “This semester, I am taking harder classes like clinical neuropsychology and medical terminology, but it is information I personally find extremely interesting and enjoy studying.”

Emily Close, however, said she’s not looking forward to her finals week, as not everyone has the same week of work.

“I’m honestly dreading all of them because a lot of my friends don’t have finals or only have one,” Close (senior-criminology) said.

Jessica Miller is one of the students who won’t need to hit the books throughout the first week of May.

“I don’t have any finals, but I feel way less pressure with



Jeremiah Hassel/Collegian

**Penn State seniors** are excited to finish their last finals but aren’t quite ready to leave behind their college memories. “I’m really looking forward to not having to worry about schoolwork,” Kayla Finkelstein said.

classes this semester in general since I’m a senior graduating soon and have a job lined up,” Miller (senior-supply chain and information systems) said.

Without the distraction of final exams looming over her head, Miller said she has more time to process her emotions about leaving Penn State.

“I am both excited and sad to graduate — but probably more sad,” Miller said. “I love Penn State so much, and it is amazing having all of my best friends so close to me in such a fun town.”

Other students agreed that finals week isn’t as stressful after securing a post-grad job. Kayla Finkelstein said she feels less pressure overall because she’s “so close to the finish line.”

“I think that at this point, most seniors are just ready to be done with everything,” Finkelstein (senior-food science) said. “Most of us are interviewing with companies and already have jobs, so there is less pressure to do exceedingly well and more generalized pressure to just get a grade that helps you pass the class so you can graduate.”

Marciano, who said she’s planning on taking a gap year to gain clinical experience before applying to physician assistant

programs, is focused on finishing her exams strong — even as a senior.

“My finals have the same priority as they have every other semester because I’m not just trying to pass the class,” Marciano said. “When I apply to PA school in the next cycle, they will have to see my transcript and be able to tell if I didn’t prioritize my academics in my senior year.”

Although Finkelstein said she has only one exam during finals week, she said she’s not looking forward to her meat science final.

“It’s very complicated and [contains] a lot of information in an area of my major that I don’t fully have an interest in,” she said. “I’m more interested in the confectionary, chocolate and bakery area of food science.”

Gigi Lin said she’s “relieved to be moving on from the classroom” as she approaches her last academic exams.

“I think for the creative arts, especially, college is a great place to start learning the basics, making connections and navigating how you will enter the industry, and to take the time to work on your technique and artistry,” Lin (senior-integrative arts) said. “But there’s only so much time you can spend on that in a classroom

setting before you’re plateauing creatively.”

Lin said she intends to be a lifelong learner, even beyond Penn State.

“I’m always going to keep learning and striving to improve, but it will be much more rewarding to do so outside of the classroom setting,” she said.

Lin said she will also be relieved to be past one specific final — her senior voice recital, where she said she’ll perform about 40 minutes of material fully memorized.

Bethany DeRose said being in her fourth year of college has not made finals week any easier.

“I think the stress has always been really bad, but it’s definitely different, though, because I know what I’m getting into,” DeRose (senior-civil and environmental engineering) said. “My anxiety during finals has either stayed really bad or actually [become] worse.”

DeRose said the pandemic may have contributed to these feelings of anxiety surrounding exams.

“COVID changed how finals are taken, and now, they’re almost back to normal,” she said. “Either way, they still stress me out a lot.”

Beyond the stress of doing well

on exams in order to maintain a GPA or receive an official degree, Penn State students said they’re starting to reflect on the finality that comes with submitting the last Canvas assignment.

“I’m really looking forward to not having to worry about schoolwork,” Finkelstein said. “But I do think that when I’m finished, it will all hit me at once that I am almost done with college.”

Close said she’s “sad about graduating and leaving State College and friends” but feels a “sense of excitement for what’s to come.”

For Finkelstein, a 2+2 student who transferred from Penn State Berks in the peak of the pandemic, she said she’s been “grappling with the idea of graduating for so long.”

“I’m excited to begin this new chapter in my life because I truly have a passion for food science,” she said, “but I can’t help but feel like my time was cut so short in college and especially at University Park.”

Other students shared Finkelstein’s excitement for their lives after school while maintaining some wistfulness for the undergraduate experience. Marciano said her feelings about donning her cap and gown are “bittersweet.”

“There are things I am definitely going to miss about undergrad, but I also have a plan in place and am ready to see where life takes me,” she said. “Being in undergrad was a fun time to have those moments where you were able to be irresponsible.”

Many seniors have been in classrooms since they were at least 5 years old, and many will never be students again once their final exam is submitted. Finkelstein, however, said Penn State will always hold a special place in her heart — even when she’s not a student.

“Penn State was truly my second home, and I’m so grateful for the experiences, friendships and opportunities that it brought me.”

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## Professors prepare for grading

By Katie Knol  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

With finals quickly approaching at Penn State, political science professor Michael Nelson is preparing to sit down at his kitchen table to grade — where he doesn’t move “unless it’s to get more coffee.”

According to Nelson, who teaches PLSC 1: American Politics: Principles, Processes and Powers; PLSC 309: Quantitative Political Analysis; and PLSC 477: Sex, Race & Justice: The U.S. Supreme Court and Equality, finals time is “stressful” for professors in different ways compared to students.

“For students, the front part of finals week is the worst because you’re trying to finish a bunch of papers, and you’re trying to study for exams,” Nelson said. “For us, it’s the end of the week — because you get all of those papers, and you get all of those exams.”

Based on Penn State policy, professors have “two business days” from the end of the final exam or final course assessment until grades must be submitted.

According to Nelson, this time frame is strict because many students need their grades finalized to graduate.

“If people need your class to graduate, you [have] to get your grades in,” Nelson said.

Nelson said he gives his students information on what concepts they should study for his final exams, and “fairness” is important to him.

“We do a lot of practice problems,” Nelson said. “In [PLSC 477], I usually give them the questions in advance. I give them six questions, and then I bring in dice on the day of the exam, and we roll the dice for two questions, and those are the two questions they have to answer.”

According to Nelson, this system allows him to “pick the six things that are most important for the class.”

“Having a good sense of what you should be studying is very important,” Nelson said. “Being as clear as possible about what the expectations are for the exam is really helpful.”

Penn State art history professor Heather McCune Bruhn teaches ARTH 107N: Rocks, Minerals and the History of Art, ARTH 111: Ancient to Medieval Art and ARTH 112: Renaissance to Modern Art.

For ARTH 111 and ARTH 112, she said she gives a final project where students are tasked with creating an art exhibition using the different pieces they studied throughout the semester.

“They come up with an introductory statement that would be like the didactic panel that you would read outside the show and then labels for each of the works that they choose,” McCune Bruhn said.

“There has to be one per lesson leading up to either the midterm or the final, and then a conclusion.”

According to McCune Bruhn, “most students take advantage”

of the larger time frame given with the project, and the open nature allows students to “play to their strengths” and “choose their favorite things.”

For McCune Bruhn, the creativity aspect also makes the projects more “fun” for her to grade.

During her grading, McCune Bruhn said she watches the five-and-a-half-hour 1995 “Pride and Prejudice” mini-series — which she said provides entertainment without being overly distracting.

McCune Bruhn said professors’ stress from finals week comes from the large amounts of grading once everything is turned in.

Penn State science professor Linlin Jensen, who is currently teaching CHEM 112B: Chemical Principles II, CHEM 130: Introduction to General, Organic and Biochemistry, and SC 220: Principles and Strategies for Effective STEM Learning I, said she offers many opportunities in her classes so students perform their best.

“We give our students three practice exams,” Jensen said. “We also have [teaching assistants] holding review sessions. I actually hold a review session over Zoom, and that is recorded as well.”

Jensen stressed the importance of reviewing work to “understand the concepts” — rather than “just doing it to do it.”

*Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.*



Graphic by Mishelle Manoin

**Students** listen to a variety of music while studying for final exams and preparing their last projects.

## Study jams to help students ace exams

By Ria Tambe  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

My Spotify account is my biggest pride and joy. I have a playlist for every possible mood I may have and a playlist for all four seasons of the year.

This may all sound really crazy, but at the end of the day, I have, in my opinion, the perfect playlist for Penn State students to listen to on repeat while studying for their final exams.

Study music is really a personal preference, but I feel like we all need something chill to help us pull through the last few weeks of the semester and prepare for summer vacation.

So on that note, in no particular order, I present my recommendation for your finals week study session.

**“Pink + White” by Frank Ocean**

There’s just something about Frank Ocean that screams “chill vibes.” You can never go wrong with putting his songs on your study playlist.

**“Young” by Vacations**

I used to listen to this song on a loop all throughout summer vacation in 2019, so I would say it has a type of nostalgia attached to it.

Not only does the song have cool instrumentals, but it also

has a summertime energy, reminding students that summer is right around the corner.

**“Dark Red” by Steve Lacy**

In my opinion, this song is an absolute classic. The drumbeat is so simple and yet has me bopping my head every single time it starts playing.

**“Jane” by LAUNDRY DAY**

I recently discovered LAUNDRY DAY just this past year, and wow. The band has some of the grooviest summertime songs that’ll have people itching for a relaxing day trip to the beach.

This song acts as a motivator to push through a study session.

**“Socks” by Dominic Fike**

Dominic Fike starts out this song with “I can’t keep track of all my socks,” and I know I’m not the only one who relates to the missing sock phenomenon.

Fike is probably one of the more well-known artists on this list who is known for releasing lighthearted indie music.

**“Daunt” by Jelani Aryeh**

This was one of my most played songs during last semester’s finals week. Enough said.

**“Coffee For Dinner” by Orion Sun**

*Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.*



Jeff Shi/Collegian

**Professors at Penn State** spend the last half of finals week grading on a deadline. “If people need your class to graduate, you [have] to get your grades in,” Michael Nelson, political science professor, said.



# Summer showdown: students vs loneliness

By **Ayden Mateo Herold**  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

Loneliness is a feeling I am unfortunately well-acquainted with. Like toilet paper stuck to the paw of a golden retriever, it's an unwelcome accessory that clings to my otherwise self-satisfied being. Now, there have been plenty of moments in my life where loneliness has not come as a surprise — moments where I have felt quite alone and like there was nobody who I could truly call a friend. Arguably, its most devilish appearances are when I seem to have more friends than ever. There are days when I'm surrounded by people I admire and love, when I should be at my most content, yet the empty feeling emerges like a fog from within. With the school year beginning to wrap up, I am mentally preparing myself to return to “the real world,” a place where not everybody is college-aged, not every aspect of my life is within walking distance, and culture is far less homogenized. Like a young wizard returning from Hogwarts, I shall return to a world ruled by my parents and be separated from those I call my friends. Seeing as how I'm not the only person on campus faced with keeping the demon of loneliness away this summer, I have compiled a list of tips and tricks to

keep yourself together and your relationships strong.

## Keep in touch

Keeping in touch is a concept that I have found much easier to say than do. It's one thing to check my friends' Instagram stories and profiles daily, but it's an entirely other matter to actively speak to them and keep up to date on their affairs. This summer, I'm pledging to myself to call and FaceTime my friends as much as possible. Reading this blog, you likely have some kind of voice in your head narrating my words. Perhaps, if you have met me, the sounds of my velvety pipes are ringing in your head with every sentence. Yet the fact of the matter is, reading and writing just aren't the same as talking. Try as I might to make these blogs conversational but they will never have the pauses, stutters, interruptions and tones that real talking does. Thus, if I'm to truly “speak” with my friends, it'll be in a way that allows us to have a “true” conversation. It's for these reasons I'm going to call and FaceTime my friends when I can. They may not be present and sitting next to me, but I know this form of communication will help us feel just a little bit closer no matter the distance between us.



Courtesy of Victoria Gough

**Ayden Mateo Herold** basks in the sunset whilst perfecting his yoga poses in time for combatting the loneliness that arises as summer begins.

## Connect with family

For some, this step may seem like a no-brainer. For others, it may seem impossible. In my case at least, it's a goal I'd like to attain this summer. It has been unfortunately easy to stay out of touch with my family this year. With all of the running around and assignments and worries of college, I will sometimes go days before realizing I haven't spoken with my family at all. This summer, I'm moving back to the sleepy town of Just Outside

Philly and subsequently back into my childhood home with my folks and little brother.

While I may have an internship lined up for the next few months, I know for a fact it's within my power to spend quality time with them before I leave again for the fall semester. This quality time doesn't just include vacation. Quality time includes going grocery shopping, having dinner together or watching a show together — so many little things that add up over the

course of a summer.

## Find a new hobby

Now then, I've gone over a few ways to cope with loneliness by reaching out to others, but what about looking for satisfaction when left to your own devices? In this matter, I strongly recommend finding a new hobby. The hobbies we already have during the school year can provide comfort over the summer. Visit [collegian.psu.edu](http://collegian.psu.edu) to read the full story.

# Artistic ways to destress before spring semester finals

By **Arianna Jones**  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

Finals are here, and finding time to treat yourself can be difficult. Here are some fun and artistic ways to destress in between studying to help you get through the last few days.

## Make an emotion wheel

Emotion wheels are used to help communicate feelings. The easiest and most recognizable emotions are at the core that can then be used to move into the complex emotions on the outer edge of the circle. Students can design their wheels with any emotions they

want, and they can feel free to color code it any way they want. With emotions reaching their height during stressful times, this method could help people sort out their feelings and clear their minds before finals.

## Paint rocks

Rock painting can be a fun way to destress. Wash the rock with soap and water before painting to make sure all of the dirt is off. Acrylic paint is best to use, but paint pens can work as well.

## Make a vision board

Vision boards are a fun way to dream about the future. They

can include magazine scraps, pictures, quotes and drawings. With the end of the semester coming up, this is a perfect way to envision life after finals.

## Make a clutter collage

Throughout the school year, many students have random sticky notes, index cards and birthday cards left around the room. With a clutter collage, all of these items can go straight into a scrapbook and be used as a memory. This way, the clutter around the room is all gone, but the pieces don't have to be thrown away.

## Paint pottery at 2000

## Degrees

2000 Degrees is a pottery shop in downtown State College that resides between Dunkin' and Icy Snow. The shop has a range of pottery pieces to choose from, and painting can be a relaxing project before diving into those school projects over the next few weeks. Adults can paint for \$6 an hour, but after an hour and a half, 2000 Degrees stops charging. With a maximum of \$9 spent on time, pottery pieces range from \$4-\$79, and the average price of a piece is \$12.

## Make a stuffed animal

This could be as simple as

going to a Build-A-Bear Workshop, although that would be a long drive from Penn State. Amazon also sells stuffed animal kits with and without sewing required. Crocheting an animal is an option as well. Making a stuffed animal is relaxing and allows you to create your own friend.

## Take photos outside

Spring is in the air, and Penn State's campus is beautiful. This is the perfect time to go outside and take pictures of the trees, flowers, squirrels and bunnies. Students can even take some in front of the Nittany Lion Shrine for extra spirit before finals.



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# ‘MOMENT TO BREATHE’

*Pollock Testing Center employees give students advice on how to take their time with finals*

By Teagan Mayr  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

With Penn State’s finals week quickly approaching, some Pollock Testing Center employees are prepared for collecting more stories like the ones they’ve previously experienced during their time at the center.

Pollock Testing Center Manager Lance Galloway said he “enjoys seeing all of the students who come into the testing center.”

Although the Pollock Testing Center is an intimidating place for many students, that doesn’t stop employees from pranking students around campus.

Stephanie Luong, a customer service representative for the Pollock Testing Center, said she loves seeing students around campus.

“It’s kind of funny when I walk out of the building, like if I go to the [HUB-Robeson Center] and I see students out there, and I go ‘Where is your phone?’ to see their surprise,” Luong said.

Mary Wassel, a customer service representative for the Pollock Testing Center, said the employees just want to make the place happy for students.

Wassel recalled a time when one student was sad that they couldn’t be home for Easter.

“While she was testing, I made her an Easter basket out of



Casey Loughlin/Collegian File Photo

A Penn State student enters the Pollock Testing Center to take an exam. Employees of the center shared their favorites memories of students coming in for finals.

scratch paper and put some eggs and candy in it,” Wassel said.

During exams, Wassel and Luong make rounds to ensure that everyone is doing OK while taking their exam.

“I remember the one time I

walked in there and there was a student sleeping away. I had to step back, [tap him] and say, ‘You know you still have an hour left, so do your best,’” Luong said.

Some of the crazier stories at the testing center normally hap-

pen during those brief moments during check-in and check-out. Both Wassel and Luong noted experiences when students misunderstood instructions.

Wassel said one time when she told a student to “just hop over” a

turnstile, “he hurdled over it completely.” And since the Olympics were going on, she “got a paper and wrote [a] 10 on it.”

“Sometimes students are so excited after their exams that they forget to swipe and fall over the [turnstile],” Luong said.

During their time at the center, employees have had the opportunity to be introduced to students’ parents.

Luong and Wassel said one time they had to help a student hide her nose ring from her parents.

As finals week approaches, team members from the testing center said they wanted to leave students with some advice.

“Make sure to check [your] email; we send constant reminders,” Wassel said. “We are full for finals, so please come at your assigned time... and breathe.”

Galloway stressed the importance of coming to the testing center equipped for exams.

“The more prepared you are, the smoother the process, and you will reduce your stress,” he said.

Luong said she wants the testing center to remain a stress-free environment.

“If you need a moment to breathe, a moment to reset yourself, it is fine,” Luong said. “Take a seat, and remember to come in on time.”

## Students learn from quirky finals

By Ella Castronuovo  
THE DAILY COLLEGIAN

For many Penn State students, the word “finals” conjures up various feelings or even traumatic memories.

Some students might picture taking an exam in the Pollock Testing Center, spending the whole week in the Pattee and Paterno Library running on Starbucks coffee or staying up late to cram for a major test while running on four hours of sleep.

While these experiences may resonate with most Penn State students, to others like Nick Hewes, Georgia Holthenrichs and Steph Scalamogna, the typical finals experience is unfamiliar.

Hewes (junior-film production) said for his COMM 337W: Intermediate Documentary Production class, his final consisted of making a short, seven- to eight-minute documentary with members of his class.

Instead of an exam, Hewes said during finals week, his class meets for a screening of all of the films.

Hewes said he finds this type of final to be “very fitting” for the class.

“I feel like I learned better in this class by showing what I can do than showing what I can remember on a test,” Hewes said.

Compared to other finals Hewes has taken, he said this one is “less stressful” because he doesn’t need to cram during finals week.

“It’d be more stressful to study for an exam than it is to work on a project about something you actually enjoy,” Hewes said. “I’m passionate about the

documentary I’m making. I’m not passionate about studying for an exam.”

For Holthenrichs (senior-film production), she’s enrolled in COMM 440: Advanced Cinematography and Lighting Techniques and COMM 444: Advanced Post-Production Techniques.

For COMM 440, her final consisted of spending a week shooting a scene from a movie or television show and editing it, while for COMM 444, she’s creating a 20-second animation to end the course.

Similar to Hewes, Holthenrichs said she finds these types of finals to be “very fitting because they incorporate everything you’ve been learning throughout the entire semester into one last final project.”

Like traditional finals, Holthenrichs said these projects are cumulative because she has to use the skills she’s learned throughout each week to create it.

Additionally, Holthenrichs said these finals help her learn and retain information from the semester better.

“I love this [type of final] because I’m a very hands-on, in-person kind of learner,” Holthenrichs said. “I’m not a very audible person where I can just memorize stuff and then spit it back out. I prefer physically doing it and retaining the information that way.”

Holthenrichs said benefits to more “nontraditional” finals are that professors can see students know what they’re doing and what they learned during the semester instead of repeating facts back on a handwritten exam.

However, Holthenrichs said a downside to finals like these,

depending on the professor, is the time given to complete the final.

For one of her classes, Holthenrichs said she just received instructions for her final project the other day.

“I definitely would say for professors to not just do cumulative exams,” Holthenrichs said. “Actually try to incorporate projects to make sure that your students are... retaining the knowledge.”

Scalamogna (junior-film production) said she’s taking COMM 338: Intermediate Narrative Production, and during the entire semester, she’s been creating a film she’ll share for the final.

“I definitely think that having a project-oriented class is so much more beneficial than just cramming for an exam,” Scalamogna said. “I’ve learned so much over the entire semester working on this project.”

A downside to projects like these, according to Scalamogna, is that it can feel like “the Wild West” — with the lack of structure.

Scalamogna said she’s responsible for creating the structure, and the responsibilities fall on the students, which can be a good thing, too.

However, Scalamogna said she has “a lot more passion” for the final because it’s something she’s been working on and has put “a lot of time into.”

For a traditional final, Scalamogna said “it’s a lot of being told what you’re supposed to know or what you’re supposed to learn.”

“So, this is more creative in that you can seek out guidance, and you can seek out technical answers on things, but the project itself is all coming from us, and it’s like we’re all actually creating something — which is super cool.”

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Jeremiah Hassel/Collegian

Students sit on the lawn of the HUB-Robeson Center on a sunny day in State College.

MY VIEW | KYLE HUTCHINSON

## Finals week is far too easy

Back in high school, as final exams approached, I’d always see a million students cramming at the last minute.



Hutchinson

My friends would sit in their cars with binders full of notes falling out and parked outside their teachers’ rooms asking last minute

questions. Pretty much every final I took in high school was cumulative. While studying notes from the whole year is a lot of work and takes time, it was a good way to relearn material throughout the whole year and retain any knowledge given to you during class.

For those reasons, I still remember quite a bit of what I learned in high school. Whether various terms from my economics class or the years of certain military coups in Nigeria, what I was taught back then remains in my head today.

College has taken a bit of a different approach to finals, however:

Right away freshman year, none of my professors had any cumulative finals. They went on about wanting to make it easier for the students and having our best interests at heart, opting for one of two options.

The first would be simple enough — a standard final exam based on the last third or fourth of lessons learned in class, no different than the previous exams given. Because these exams cover the last topics from the class, anything learned at the start of the year is basically tossed out the window.

The second, which seems to be more common each year, is a final paper. These papers are usually given weeks in advance, allowing students to have plenty of time to prepare their arguments and organize their essay the best they can.

For the most part, it seems to me that most of my peers are receptive to these options, which are undoubtedly easier.

“I’d rather my finals be more difficult but worthwhile rather than easy and pointless.”

Having a test that only covers a portion of the year makes it more manageable to study, and any final paper given weeks in advance lets students take time to finish up their last class assignment.

While I’m not an educator and can’t speak for why professors have opted for non-cumulative exams and final papers, it’s fair to assume it’s easier to make a test that isn’t cumulative without having to worry about balancing questions from different units. A final paper is probably the best way for some classes to hand out a final, such as an English class.

But in classes where it is possible to avoid passing out a paper, is a final that isn’t cumulative really the best option?

Sure, it may be easier for students to just study recent material. But it doesn’t benefit the student. We go to school to learn skills and knowledge for life that hopefully serves us well after graduation.

Tests not being cumulative prevent students from caring about anything after they learn it. If you’re told syllabus day that the final isn’t cumulative, why bother remembering if it won’t matter later on?

Even if it’s harder, cumulative exams pay off more in the end and provide a more meaningful class experience than finals that don’t bother to summarize the year. I’d rather my final be more difficult but worthwhile rather than easy and pointless.

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Courtesy of Xinyi Qin

Georgia Holthenrichs watches as members in her film group shoot a scene for her final project. Making a film is just one of many possible “nontraditional” finals offered at Penn State.