

Dear Student:

Every year there is a common rumor that it is better to stay in a course and get an F than it is to drop the course which leaves a W or WP on your transcript. Please be very careful in making this very important decision because it will have consequences for you several years from now.

You need to understand that the grade you make will show up on your SMU transcript **FOREVER**, even if you retake the course and make a better grade and even if SMU does not include the first grade in your GPA under the **SMU First Year Repeat Rule**. Grades **DO NOT GO AWAY!** Future employers and professional school admissions personnel will see ALL grades and not just the best ones.

Please see Page 50 of the Undergraduate Catalog under the section title **Grades for Repeated Courses**, in particular the following sentences.

“Both the initial and the second grades will be on the student’s permanent academic record. Students are cautioned that for some purposes, such as admission to an academic program, both grades may be used.”

Students who will apply to graduate programs in most fields, including the health professions and MEDICAL SCHOOL must understand that even if the course is repeated, both grades can be used to calculate the GPA. Premed advisors have told me that the following statement appears in the American Medical Colleges Application Service (AMCAS) instruction book:

“AMCAS counts all attempts of a repeated course, even if your school does not.”

AMCAS does NOT count (weight or value) a course from which an applicant has withdrawn or dropped and which appears as a W on the transcript.

So think long and hard before making this decision. See your Advisor and discuss the information in this letter with him/her.

There is NO “Freshman Forgiveness” !

Dr. Patty Wisian-Neilson
Professor of Chemistry
Southern Methodist University
pwisian@smu.edu
214-768-2483