

Waiting to cross Forbes: Stories of Homework

English (translation)

"Hello and welcome to Waiting to Cross Forbes.

[Traffic light signal over piano music: "Wait! Wait to cross Forbes Avenue at Morewood Avenue. Wait!"]

My name is Nedjma, and I am your host today! In this episode, we will be discussing horror stories related to homework. [dramatic sound effect!]

Not really horror stories. But homework is CMU students' primary activity, and there are courses that are notorious for their intense homework. I'm going to talk mostly about math and science courses, since I'm in physics. First up: Mathematical Concepts! Concepts, as it's called, is the first course for a math concentration and a required course for computer science majors. It is the first introduction to proofs for most students. In the fall semester, the homework is due on Friday at midnight. So every Friday, in all the common areas, you can find panicked students at 11 p.m., midnight, 1 a.m., 2 a.m., and 3 a.m. By the end of the semester, the TAs, the teaching assistants, tired of giving explanations, just give out the solutions. I took the course in the spring, and it was a little different, but not by much. I love math. The problems are fun for me. Yes, they are difficult, but in a puzzle-like kind of way. However, they are a lot less fun after spending one or two hours on the same problem.

I've also heard stories about 112 and 122, the introductory computer science courses. The homework is difficult and long, but most of the stories come from the fact that the professors are crazy about academic integrity violations. It's forbidden to even breathe the same air as those working on the same assignments. And if you see another student's computer—even by accident—*gasp*. But I've talked about these courses too much. I don't want to be accused of cheating.

The lesser-known courses at CMU aren't easy either. As a physics student, I'm currently in Physics II. The homework usually consists of two or three questions, but each question takes an hour. Generally, the questions are nice. They use the concepts to lead us in new directions and explore new paths, and you have to actually think, not just do algebra.

For students in theater and architecture, the homework has to be done in a studio, and I'm sure I wouldn't be surprised to hear that they actually live in the studio and spend all their time together. The culture of these students seems like a cult to an outsider.

We're reaching the end of the episode. Thank you for listening, and come back for the next episode where we'll learn more about sports and clubs at CMU. Don't forget...

In any case, I believe that if you can enjoy the challenges and love what you do, you'll have a good life here. It's so cool to do something you've never done before, something you hadn't even imagined. But it's not easy to find balance. Hmm... can I calculate the optimal balance between work and rest...? Maybe I have to go to office hours...