

All-in-One College Admission Crash Course

Course Syllabus

Logistics

Date: June 14 – July 7 (Tue and Thur)

Time: 9:00 PM - 10:30 AM (Seoul)

Target: (Rising) G9 - G12

Location: Zoom (only open to students)

Office hours: After class or by appointment (set time through Remind Messenger)

Direct Contact: Remind Messenger (link only open to students)

**Please download the Remind App for a more seamless communication*

Questions?

Reach out to mastad90@gmail.com or Kakaotalk/Wechat ID: **mastad90000**

Course Calendar

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	6/13	14	15	16	17	18
		Hackett		Ahn		
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Hackett		Ahn		
26	27	28	29	30	7/1	2
		Hackett		Ahn		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
		Ahn		Hackett		

Course Description

This course introduces the hidden gems of college admission strategies that are closed to the public. Instructors will put together years of experience into 8 concisely packaged lectures. The lectures will help alleviate the burden of having to seek professionals for planning the students' college admission preparation. The lectures will touch on how to prepare the entire admissions portfolio, tackle extracurricular activities, create a consistent theme, write winning essays, and communicate with admission officers pre- and post- application. This course is the first of its kind, providing detailed, insider information about how admission decisions are made, and which students get selected on what basis. This course summarizes the strategies used by most four-year admissions consulting projects and provides detailed instructions on how to use them.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

After completing the course, students will be able to:

- Create long-term and short-term strategies for how to design their high school career to fit the expectations of the admissions committees at top universities
- Create a concrete and working theme for their admissions portfolio
- Understand how to choose the right universities and majors
- Understand how to plan mid- to long-term extracurricular career portfolio
- Understand the standards that admissions officers use to distinguish good activities from bad ones
- Understand what to focus on and what to give up in their high school career
- Understand what “winning admission essays” look like, and how to write them

Course Structure

- Lecture (1hr – 1hr 15min)
- Q&A (15min + α)
- Office Hours (by appointment - first come first serve; link here to register)

Lecture Contents

Lecture 1 (6/2) Hackett

7 Qualities Presentation: The Seven Qualities That Your Application Must Show

(대학이 원하는 7 가지 인재상)

This first class will teach you to understand how your application will be assessed by admissions officers in its *entirety*: individual parts, like TOEFL scores, chosen AP courses and extra-curriculars are all important, although what is more important is the story they tell *together*: what do they reveal about you as a whole person? Students should not think that being extremely strong in one part of the application is enough, rather, the entire application will need to reveal what we call the seven qualities as much as possible.

Hence, this class will be of interest for two groups of students: first, it will teach those who are applying this year to make sure that when discussing their academics and experiences, they do their best to highlight these aspects, which can appear in personal statements, interviews, or supplemental essays. For those that are applying in the future, this class will be especially valuable: it will give you some general principles and guidance for deciding which courses to take, which activities to partake in, and how you can, in general, make yourself into a competitive applicant for the best schools in years to come.

The seven qualities are 1) stretch, 2) authenticity, 3) impact, 4) curiosity, 5) self-awareness, 6) social intelligence, and 7) coherence.

Lecture 2 (6/7) Ahn

All-Rounder vs. Specialist: How to be authentic, consistent, and still make a strong case (진정성과 일관성의 전략적 가치)

In this session, we will discuss in depth the value of authenticity, self-awareness, and coherence, not as ideals but as strategic goals. We often face the need to be good at everything. In fact, it is actually good to be good at everything. However, creating an *image* of yourself as an all-rounder (even if you are really good at *everything*) does not make you an ideal candidate for a university (especially top universities). One of the major reasons why universities don't necessarily look for all-rounders is because they want to create a community of uniquely talented students, not a community where all members each claim to be good at everything. Universities seek excellence through harmony and convergence.

Showcasing yourself as authentic and consistent, therefore, is the best strategy to *make an image of yourself* as a **UNIQUELY** talented, qualitatively **distinguished** candidate. To do this, you need to be extremely self-aware, able to shift perspectives to imagine yourself and your history in unimagined ways. By learning how to technically organize and understand yourself and your story under an authentic and consistent framework, you'll be able to create an application that stands out amongst the thousands of mundane applications. We will deal with **real, successful application packages** to discuss how admission candidates become "authentic and consistent." We will also conduct a round-table talk of how each student might make their high school portfolio more authentic and consistent.

Lecture 3 (6/9) Hackett

Extracurriculars: How Does the Admission Officer Score, See and Rank Them? (입시사정관이 학생의 대외활동을 평가하는 기준)

Building on previous sessions, we will explore one of the most complex issues for students: **extracurriculars**. Which ones should students choose? Which ones impress admissions officers? How do you balance different activities? And just how much time do you need to dedicate to have "strong" activities? We will address questions like these and more in this class by **outlining a grading system for students to apply to their own activities**. The goal will be to help students understand what kind of activities are valuable and unique, but also how they might take their own current activities in new and interesting directions that will make them stand out to students. To do this, I will ask the students to prepare a brief summary of their main activities, modeled on the common application, and we will conclude the class by reflecting on how students could take these to the "next level" based on the grading system we learned in class.

Lecture 4 (6/14) Ahn

From Events to Narratives: Overarching Themes, Setting the Tone, and Going Outside the Box (스토리텔링: 하나의 테마, 하나의 목소리, 하나의 목표)

In this session, continue our discussion of authenticity and coherence. Specifically, we will go in-depth about how your life story, in its entirety, is a tool to making a successful application. Reinterpreting your life events to fit a specific theme is a difficult but rewarding process. Events form who you are, and they become grounds for why you do what you do. Efficiently explaining that to the admissions committee through your application helps the committee grasp the full picture of who you are. We will discuss

which life events we can use, and how we can interpret them professionally to fit your theme. In addition, we will also talk about going outside the box to make your narrative an appealing one. Students are often “trapped” in the boundaries of the common app framework. They are manipulated to include certain materials and leave certain ones out. They are also puzzled by the “additional materials” box. How can we think outside the box and utilize everything that is at our discretion to promote our story?

Lecture 5 (6/16) Hackett

School Selection: Finding “Fit” and Understanding Reach, Match and Safety

(학교 선택: Reach, Match, Safety 에 대한 이해와 학교 FIT 에 대하여)

This session will help students understand a key concept: **fit**. No matter how good the student, no matter how good the application, if students do not “fit” the school they apply for, they will be rejected. Hence, in the class, we will explore some key distinctions, such as state versus private universities and state/private universities vs liberal arts colleges. These are just the most general distinctions and there are many more that are important. For example, if a student enjoys humanities subjects, social sciences and is deeply committed to an “intellectual life”, the best schools to apply for of the top universities would be Columbia University and the University of Chicago because of their curriculums. To help students understand how they will prove they are a good fit for a school on their application, we will consider a case study: Columbia University. We will explore the kinds of unique knowledge a student could demonstrate in their application to demonstrate to admissions officers that they fit the school values and academic culture.

Lecture 6 (6/21) Ahn

Common App and Supplemental Essays: Writing a Winning Essay

(합격하는 커먼앱과 추가 에세이 작성법)

In this session, we will discuss the technicalities behind writing winning admissions essays. We will deal with both the substance and the structure.

Substantively, we will deal with questions like the following: Are we better off listing our successes or engaging with one specific story? Are we better off being personal or academic? Are we better off emphasizing our leadership or our academic interests? Can we talk about our shortcomings, or should we just go with our strengths?

Structurally, we will deal with questions like the following: Are we better off using an argumentative tone or a narrative tone? How should we divide paragraphs? Should we broaden out our story as we proceed or should we remain at a single level? Can we be informal in our tone? Can we write in different tones for the main essay and the supplemental essays? How much do we have to write for supplemental essays? How do we deal with really short answer questions?

Lecture 7 (6/23) Ahn

Adding Style to Your Portfolio: How to Approach Non-Essay Writings and Documentations

(원서에 느낌을 더하다: 에세이 외의 글쓰기와 문서 작성법에 대하여)

In this session, we will discuss non-essay writings and documentations. These include not only the EC section of the Commonapp but also resumes, websites, letters, portfolios, and many more.

Students often puzzle over what to write in the EC section of the Commonapp. However, more important is how to write the description of the EC section. Being strategic about the EC section helps you maintain coherence as well as showcase unique opportunities you gained from the EC activities. Every blank in the application is an opportunity for you to shine.

In addition to the EC section, we will also talk about resumes, websites, letters to admission officers, and portfolios. Do we ever need them, and if so, how should they look like? We will discuss in detail about when we need them, and how to make them.

Lecture 8 (6/28) Hackett

Recommendations, Scholarships, School Visits, Email Communications, Interviews, Building Connections: Some Things to Think About

(추천서, 장학금, 대학 투어, 대학과 소통하는 법, 인터뷰, 네트워크 형성, 등)

The final class will go beyond the immediate application form, such as the Common Application, to explore the importance of things like recommendation letters, scholarships, school visits, email communications and college interviews for being accepted to your dream school. We will consider a range of issues to consider when deciding which teachers you would ask to write your recommendation letters, which will relate to our first class concerning the “seven qualities”. Students will also understand why building a “relationship” with the university before they have ever sent an application is also important and can, in fact, impact the outcome of one’s application. To this end, we will explore some key strategies for how to build a relationship with your chosen colleges. Building on this, students will learn about how to speak to admissions officers, that is, either during campus visits or formal interviews - both of which can decide whether a student is admitted.