

Introduction: Hacking College Starts With Degree Requirements (and Only Degree Requirements)

The premise that makes this book possible is that I have hacked college. Well, I haven't done this myself, I have worked closely with my Co-founder, Josh Stanley, on an online university and educational platform called Newlane University.

I promise you don't need to register with Newlane to benefit from this book. Though the lessons I have learned that sparked this book came in large part from my work developing Newlane, I'm mentioning my work now because I don't want you to get surprised when I talk about some aspects of Newlane later to explain or give context to the ideas I present.

The reason this is a book and not just an orientation for registered Newlane students is that the lessons we've learned apply even outside of our University and platform. True, we feel that Newlane is uniquely suited to help people earn a college degree for a fraction of the cost, but that's just part of it. Our key overarching lesson and message is: we've hacked college, and you can too. And it's never been easier. If this is something that interests you, lucky you! The world has bent in your favor.

In this book, I'm addressing the essential aspects of a college degree. I'm not talking about the entry to adulthood that college represents for many young Americans--learning how to live independently from parents (learning how to shop and prepare meals, do laundry, etc.), learning how to budget, how to get along with roommates, etc.

I'm also not talking about the many extracurricular activities that often accompany a college education--e.g., activities and clubs that students can join, support, or follow. I'm actually a big fan of these roles that college has come to take on, and I have encouraged my own

children to take advantage of the opportunity to live independently with lower stakes than when they fully move out, to participate in lots of extracurricular college activities, and to join a variety of college clubs. Though these activities can provide a lot of social, emotional, and even academic value, they are not the main rationale for college.

Instead, I'm focused on what is essentially involved--what are the necessary and sufficient criteria--to earning a degree. After all, you can still get a degree even if you don't join the debate, film or dance clubs, or you don't participate in intramural bowling, flag football, or archery; but not if you don't complete the required coursework to earn the degree. And in this simple contrast lies a world of possibility. But how do we connect the dots from this understanding of the difference between school clubs and college courses to a \$1500 degree? Let's start with some basics.