



Me giving you sound advice—I'm
live from the Writing Lounge.

*"Instead of asking
what to major in, I
asked myself
'What contribution
did I want to
make to the
world?'"*

— Liz Kosik, 2025

Liz and I enjoying a warm day outside Humanities



How to Choose Yourself By France Jimenez

Full disclosure: college is not as challenging as you think it'll be, unless you're a STEM major, in that case, brace yourself. I'm kidding, of course. I only say that from the perspective of someone who prefers the humanities. I'm not writing this to coerce you into choosing the same major as me. That would be juvenile. Instead, I'm going to give you a few pointers on how to choose the one for you, and yes, there are many tricks.

Ready?

1. Be open.

"Pffft!"

I swear I just heard you roll your eyes to the back of your head, but it's true.

It's common to come to Loyola telling yourself that you know who you are, someone you've groomed your entire life. But, if you're the person who has absolutely no idea yet – believe me, I have been there – it's fine. Take my word for it. This coming year (along with the other three) is your chance to do what your heart wants. You name it, Loyola's got it: philosophy of gender and nature classes, education society, a theology major. I think you're picking up what I'm putting down. Now is the time to try that thing you were afraid to pursue or dip your toes in before college. News flash: you're on your own time.

2. Change is okay.

I know it sounds like I'm pulling these off your mom's Facebook page but hear me out.

I came to Loyola declaring political science because that reoccurring email about declaring was irritating. When I think about it now, I can't help but snicker because boy, was I delusional. I don't say that to dissuade anybody from choosing poli-sci because if you can do it, I adore you, but I say that because after completing one politics class, I knew then and there, politics had no home for me.

To the left are wise words from Liz Kosik, someone who also declared poli-sci before college, but switched to philosophy after her first semester. The reason her quote is in that bold box is to elucidate the idea of change. A major part of Liz's being is her passion for helping people who are underprivileged and advocating for philanthropy. While a change in major was a big decision, it did not affect the many things she'll give to the world. With a philosophy major, she actively serves as a senator in SGA (Student Government Association) and volunteers with DSS (Disability Support Services).

This leads me to...

3. Listen to yourself.

Prepare for this soliloquy.

My parents have buttered me up about pursuing law since I was three years old because I argue like nobody's business. I mean it. In addition to the obvious prospect of a promising and prestigious career, I could naturally talk my way out of any debate, punishment, accusation; an essential skill, but it doesn't necessarily mean I'm meant to attend law school and work in court houses. You are made up of so many parts (interests, talents, people you love, etc.) and believe it or not, you do know yourself best.



My favorite study spot on campus: Level I of Knott Hall.

I entered my fall semester convinced that a law career was in place for me, but the more time I spent at Loyola, the more Loyola exposed an unknown version of myself. The very first event I attended, Fall Welcome Weekend, ignited a fire within me, teaching me a value I have never heard of before:

Vocation. According to Oxford's watered-down definition, "a type of work or way of life that you believe is especially suitable for you" (Oxford)

Essentially, vocation is what you are called to do, the voice, whether loud or whispered, telling you what it is you desire and know you can impact the world with. For me, this is expressing myself through writing.

This is the back story.

I came to the United States when I had just turned seven years old. I wasn't the typical child who enjoyed exploration and new experiences. Instead, I was the child who clung to her grandmother every hour, never greeting people I was introduced to, and hated events that disrupted normalcy. Basically, moving to the United States, at least for me, was equivalent to being pried off your parent's leg as you hold on for dear life.

Starting school here was no different. Prior to it, the school required me to take a placement test. Lo and behold, I failed terribly because I was unintentionally rude to the test proctor. I say unintentionally because I couldn't help it that the only word I practiced was "No." Fast forward three months into the school year and I was reading at a high school level at the age of seven. I'm serious, ask Mrs. Harbula (my first-grade teacher) and the very first American woman to attempt decoding the confusing and horrified child I was. By the end of first grade, I was writing reflection papers on every single book I read.

This sliver of who I am, I overlooked for years. It was in the first few days of my college career that I was reminded of this lost memory, and I realized that none of my supposed greatest achievements— becoming valedictorian, purchasing my first car at 17, working a full-time job – have brought me joy the way writing does, and who showed it to me? A teacher.

4. Everything follows.

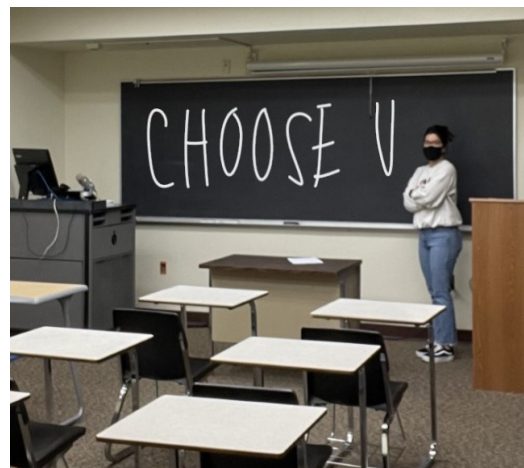
Upon declaring, life didn't instantly get easier. In fact, it got about 12 times harder because now I know my destination, I have to take the right turns to get there.

In summation:

a never-ending desire to express herself (in writing)

+ teachers who did more than just teach me

a student inspired to show other children how to do so, ergo an interdisciplinary writing major with an education minor.



Me teaching an empty room life advice that I hold dearly.



Introducing my one-man play,
featuring: reassurance you need.

Luckily enough, it was all laid out for me in a helpful list that defined all the required courses (via [academic catalogues](#)). What I mean by everything follows is that the moment I knew, all of it clicked: English classes, writing assignments, learning about historical figures, even knowing how many joules are in a single gallon of gasoline. I knew they all had a purpose, making it just a little easier to gain perspective when I'm bombarded by 11:59 deadlines left and right.

My friend Jalen knew he always had a passion for the sciences, but he came into Loyola not knowing what major he'd ultimately declare for: "I didn't wanna do a science major because I thought it would be challenging for me" (Jalen Taylor, Class of 2025). When he finally made his choice, he unexpectedly became more confident in himself. This confidence didn't root from college magically easing up; rather, as the byproduct of the reassurance that came with deciding and thus, exposing a clearer path.

Last, but not least...

5. These aren't answers.

As wise as I may sound, I don't have it all figured out.

Does it sound easy enough? Great.

Not as easy? Even better.

You have time. When interviewing one of the most profound professors I've had in my short time at Loyola about what she thinks her largest contribution to the world is, Dr. Michelle Gawerc replied, "It's still a work in progress." With a Ph.D. in sociology, a masters in Peace Studies, and having done work with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and close research with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As accomplished as she is, her largest contribution (according to herself) is still in the making.

You're allowed to be a work in progress. Find reassurance in the fact that life rarely has tangible answers. Be patient with asking questions about yourself, explore all of you, and then decide. Understand that a career and academia is a process that doesn't have definitive ends. The good news is Loyola will give you what you need in that process, just ask. It will get unbearable sometimes, as with anything in the world that's worth doing, but I guarantee the most rewarding experience you'll ever encounter in your life.