CLARICE: Hey, Mike.

MIKE: Hey, how's it going, Clarice?

CLARICE: I'm a little stressed to be honest.

MIKE: I'm sorry to hear that. What's stressing you out?

CLARICE: My course load is a lot right now. I have an exam on Thursday and two major papers, both due on Friday. It's going to be a tricky balance to get everything done well and on time.

MIKE: I don't miss that aspect of student life at all. Is there anything I can do to help?

CLARICE: Well, I'd like some advice, actually. The thing is the prompts for both papers ask similar questions, I'm thinking I might be able to write a single paper that fits the requirements for both assignments. Is that shady, though? It feels shady.

MIKE: I'd advise against it. It could backfire, if your instructors found out that you've given them both the same paper. That could be called self-plagiarism.

CLARICE: That's a thing?

MIKE: Strange as it may sound, yes. And although it's not as serious as regular plagiarism, it's generally frowned upon in the academic community.

CLARICE: Well, if I tweaked one of the papers so that they weren't exactly the same?

MIKE: Well, even if you technically got away with it, wouldn't that defeat the purpose?

CLARICE: The purpose of what?

MIKE: Your education, the whole reason that you're writing the papers to begin with. If you're writing for two different classes, I would think that you're supposed to walk away from those assignments with new and different ideas, or maybe different approaches to understanding those ideas. Otherwise, they would just be one class, right?

CLARICE: I guess that makes sense, but I'm so tired.

MIKE: I understand, college can be intense, especially if you're determined to do well. But if you squander your educational opportunities, then you're squandering your own hard work as well. You owe it to yourself to get everything from this experience that you possibly can. Isn't that why you're here?

CLARICE: It is, you're right.

MIKE: If you really feel stuck, you can try and get an extension ahead of time, so that you have a little extra time for one of those assignments. Or if you have an exciting idea that truly combines the approaches of the two classes, maybe talk with your instructors about completing a broader, more ambitious project that would meet the requirements of both classes. Similarly, if you've written previously about a topic that still intrigues you, you might ask your professor if you could build on your earlier work, developing something new for your current course. This is probably more advice than you are asking for.

CLARICE: No, this is all really helpful. I have to go now, though. I guess I've got two different papers to write.

MIKE: Best of luck.