

Preparing for Finals

- ❖ Identify the days and times of all of your final exams and gather all materials for each course (books, syllabi, notes, etc.)
- ❖ Know where you stand in each of your courses and how much the finals are worth. Be sure to know what will be covered on the final and what form the final will take – if you don't know, ask your professor!
- ❖ Write out the topics/concepts/types of problems to be covered on the final – create a study checklist for each course
- ❖ Based on the above info, set some study priorities – figure out which finals will require more of your time/energy – and then create a daily study plan
- ❖ Start your study plan one to two weeks before finals begin (the earlier the better) concentrating on the material that is most important and starting with the more challenging and/or least familiar info in each course
- ❖ Set specific study goals for each study session and accomplish those study goals; try to work through each of the topics/concepts on your study checklist, doing a little each day or every two or three days
- ❖ Study efficiently and effectively - be disciplined! Study when you sit down to study and eliminate all distractions. Stick to your study plan.
- ❖ Choose a study strategy that forces you to test your knowledge – take practice tests, do homework problems/sample problems, quiz yourself using flashcards, etc.
- ❖ Avoid marathon study sessions, study in short blocks of time and take frequent short study breaks.
- ❖ Attend ALL scheduled review sessions for your classes and go prepared with questions; meet with your professor or TA if struggling with course material
- ❖ Form study groups – quiz each other, make up practice exams, etc.
- ❖ Stay healthy, eat well, and get sleep. This will help you to relax and stay focused.

EXAM-TAKING STRATEGIES

- ❖ Look over the entire exam before you begin - know how many sections and questions there are and what they are worth
- ❖ Budget your time wisely – start by quickly answering the easiest questions first. If you get stuck on a question, move on and come back. Always check your answers if you have time.
- ❖ Read the directions and questions carefully – know what is being asked of you and if anything is unclear, ask. Watch for key words or phrases that change the meaning of a question.

"That wasn't in our notes," or "We didn't do a homework problem like that!"

College exams are designed to test your critical thinking skills. They will often go beyond the scope of class notes and weekly assignments, and thus they require comprehensive understanding of course material.

- Seek to thoroughly understand course concepts and how course concepts relate to or build on one another
- Add an extra dimension of difficulty to existing assignments/problems/practice exams (ie. Can you work the problem backwards or if given different info/variables? Etc.)
- Can you anticipate what some of the difficult or more challenging test questions might look like? Get together with classmates to analyze the more difficult problems on previous exams and to predict exam questions (be sure you can solve them too!)
- Be sure to practice as much as possible and be able to work familiar and/or easier problems quickly and efficiently; this will give you more time during the exam to work on unfamiliar and/or more challenging problems