



STUDY SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

- A. **Set priorities**—ask yourself, “What do I really have to do to be successful in this class?” It is important to balance your schedule between your work, academic, and personal commitments. A quarter is only ten short weeks—you probably have realized that in order to accomplish everything you could possibly want to do, you probably need thirty hour days! Knowing where your priorities are will help you to manage your schedule.
- B. **Visit Professors and T.A.s in office hours**—Professors hold weekly office hours which are a wonderful resource to use. If you give them enough time, many would be willing to read an outline or rough draft of a paper. If not, and you still want to go talk to them about something else, and then consider bringing a prepared question just to get the conversation going. In large classes, visiting office hours can be a wonderful way of getting to know the professor on a more personal level. In some courses, office hours before exams may be crowded; you may learn a lot of what instructors are looking for by watching and listening to the professor talk to other students. If you live in a residence hall, talk to your Resident Assistant or Program Assistant about the specific programs that encourage faculty-student interaction.
- C. **Set realistic goals**—Break down large and overwhelming tasks into smaller portions. Most likely, you would not be able to finish a twenty page research paper in one night. If you break it down into smaller tasks throughout the quarter, it will help in avoiding procrastination and you will not have to cram at the last minute.
- D. **Scheduling**—schedule in specific study time in your day and treat studying just like any other appointment or activity that you would not miss. If you are having trouble with scheduling and pressures of last minute cramming, try giving yourself a time cushion by attempting to finish a project several days before it is due.
- E. **Overestimate time on tasks**—Give yourself more time than you think that you’ll need.
- F. **Review material (readings) before going to lecture**—while it would be especially beneficial to complete the readings before attending lecture, time constraints often prevent this. However, by skimming through the reading before attending class, it will allow you to understand difficult concepts during the lecture. Often, professors will lecture about information which may strongly overlap the required readings; if you have complete your reading the lectures will be easier to understand, and you can focus more on listening to the professor’s important points rather than furiously taking notes.

- G. **Review notes after lecture**—if you don't have time after every lecture, look over your notes at the end of each week. This will help increase your retention and when it comes time to study for exams, you will have already reviewed all of your notes. You might try highlighting them.
- H. **Do two hours of studying for every hour of lecture**—this is just an estimate—it entirely depends on the class, and also on how you best study. Although it can be time-consuming, some people find that retyping notes in their own words can be very beneficial. This allows you to process your notes which you are more apt to understand when you need to study.
- I. **Alternate subjects when studying** – Don't study more than two hours for one subject. This technique will help you to increase your retention of the material you did study.
- J. **Take study breaks**—for every hour of study, you should take a ten minute break. This will help increase your retention and reduce your burn out.
- K. **Take notes while reading** – Although this may take more time than simply highlighting, it will focus your reading towards the important information. It will also improve your ability to study for exams since you will not have to go through the entire book to study—you can just review your notes.
- L. **Try to make connections between the material**— Often, professors will have themes which connect various lectures. If you can't determine them, talk to your professor or look at the syllabus for lecture topics. Pay particular attention to material which is covered in several ways (i.e. lecture, readings, section).
- M. **Use past exams on file**— These are wonderful study tools for exams. Although the exams won't exactly be the same, many professors keep the same general format over the years. If there are none available, get together with some friends, have each person make their own practice exam; then switch exams and take the practice test. Not only will this give you an opportunity to take a practice exam, but by making your own test, it may give you a better idea of what material is most important to focus on.
- N. **Utilize study groups**—Use groups either before the exams as a last minute review of information or as a motivator before you begin to study to determine what you already know and what material you need to pay particular attention to. One of the best ways to determine if you understand the material is if you can explain it to someone else. If you know the information well enough to explain it to someone else, then you are probably very well prepared.
- O. **Tutoring**—It is important to realize that if you are having trouble, it is okay to get help.