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Studying for Final Exams

Studying efficiently requires organization of time and resources. Ideally, you should begin studying about 4 weeks before your exams. You can pick up a Weekly Schedule from CWL and use it to organize the time remaining before finals. The following points are a general set of guidelines to help you prepare for exams.

Organize the Subjects You Need to Study

Do this by gathering together all your class notes and required readings for each course. Once you have organized all your material, you are ready to choose which topics you need to study for the exam.

- **Essay Exams**

Find out how many questions you have to answer. If, for example, you have to answer 4 questions, choose and study 4 in detail and 1 extra as a backup topic.

- **Multiple Choice/ Short Answer Exams**

Multiple Choice exams will usually only cover what has been discussed in classes and assigned as reading. Use the course outline as a framework for study. Look for the main ideas and concepts and then find details to support them. Use Flash Cards to help you memorize the information. On small cards write down definitions, main ideas and details. You can carry them with you and study them when you have spare time.

Draw up a Study Planner

Blank out the times when you are at class, sports, or working. Are you more alert in the morning or evening? Schedule study times that suit your personal rhythms.

Prioritize the Hardest Subjects

You may need to spend more time studying the subjects you find most difficult.

Make a Study Area

Choose a quiet place for study where you won't be easily distracted. Always study in the same place. Make sure you have good lighting. Don't try to study the entire course in one sitting. Divide the subject up into topics that you need to know for the exam.

Set Study Goals

Set yourself a goal for each study session. This will help you keep track of what you are learning. Write them down as soon as you begin your study session, or set them at the end of the study session for next time. Some examples could be:

I will read through and summarize chapters 3 and 4.

I will work through 5 equations.

I will learn the main concepts that were discussed in class from weeks 1-3



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Set Study Periods

Don't study for longer than 50 minutes. It is better to study for a short intense period of time with sustained concentration than long periods of time when you are tired and not really engaging with the study material.

Use the SQ3R Method of Study

- **Survey:** Before you begin to study, survey the material to get an idea of what it is about. Look at tables of contents, chapter summaries, graphs and tables. Skim through lecture notes to get a picture of the main ideas.
- **Question:** Your reading is more active and memorable if you look for specific answers to questions. If there are headings in the material turn the heading onto a question, e.g. if the heading is Organizational Theory, your questions might be "What is organizational theory and where did it start?"
- **Read:** Read through the material once, without making notes. On your second reading, make notes of the main ideas.
- **Recite/Recall:** With the book shut, try to recall what you have read. Make notes of what you remember and check their accuracy against your study material.
- **Review:** Review all your notes at the end of the study period. This is an important part of the study process because it can prevent forgetting. You can also try summarizing your notes down to key words that will act as memory triggers for related ideas. Also, set review times separately from your study times. Read through your review notes and then try reciting them back.

Review Old Exam Papers

If possible, get hold of old exam papers and work through them. Look at how they fit into the course. Look at the wording of the questions and familiarize yourself with the clue words. Practice doing the papers under exam conditions and carefully review your answers.

Form a Study Group

Get together with others in the class to look at your practice exams and give feedback.