

Test-Preparation Tips

I. **General Tips**

- A. Ask your instructor about the format of the exam, if it is not already in the syllabus or announced in class.
- B. Ask your instructor if old exams are available for you to study. (Don't use old exams as crutch. Use them for practice and to identify style of questions/concepts that might be included on the test).
- C. Begin scheduled, purposeful, intensive study for an exam about 5-7 days in advance.
- D. Avoid cramming and marathon study sessions. You learn more effectively when you study in frequent, smaller chunks of time throughout your study week.
- E. Predict test questions from your notes, homework, study group, old exams, etc., and practice explaining or teaching to a study partner and answering questions.
- F. Attend review sessions if offered.
- G. Review notes from class and notes in margins of text. (Remember to review class notes regularly throughout the semester. Strive to learn and understand, not just memorize for each test. This practice makes studying for exams much easier.)
- H. Use study groups or study partners and a variety of study strategies, not just re-reading material over and over.

II. **Essay Exam**

- A. Before the exam, predict test questions and practice outlining answers. *Read directions* carefully; scan exam; note how much questions are worth and use time accordingly.
- B. *Read each question* carefully. Note key words in questions (e.g. compare contrast, apply, explain, evaluate, determine, discuss, etc.)
- C. Outline your answer in the margin of you test paper. Why? Your answer will be more organized, less likely to leave out information, and you may get partial credit if you run out of time.
- D. Give specific examples when appropriate.
- E. Check work—complete sentences, spelling, grammar—if you have time.

III. **Multiple Choice Exam**

- A. Before the exam, study for breadth—cover a lot of material. Utilize notes, text, homework, etc. Read directions carefully. Note if you are supposed to choose the *best* answer or the answer that is *false*, or the *first* in a series of steps, or the *most* likely...etc.
- B. If you do not know an answer, skip the question and come back to it later. Be sure to check that your answer sheet corresponds to the test questions.
- C. If you do not know the answer, eliminate choices that you know are wrong and make an informed guess from remaining choices.

IV. **Problem-Solving Exam**

- A. Before the exam, *practice, practice, practice*. Use examples in text, homework, quizzes, study groups, etc.
- B. If you are feeling at all anxious about taking the exam, set a timer while you work on practice problems.
- C. During exam, jot down formulas at top of exam.
- D. Check your work!