Preparing for Midterm Exams

Academic Achievement Programs
Tutoring and SI Program
What you come to class with…..

- Papers
  - Summary
  - Synthesis
- Other homework
  - Practice with ideas
- Reading assignment
What the Prof. comes with...

- Communication with experts
- Primary sources (own research)
- Obscure articles
- Other books
- Your reading assignment
Raw Materials, the sequel…

- TEST
  - Your reading Assignment
    - Primary Sources
  - Other Books
  - Obscure Articles
    - Communication With Experts
The best source of info regarding tests is........

- Your Professor
  - Class notes
  - Discussion section
  - Quizzes
  - Homework
  - Papers
  - Direct response to your inquiry
Two Types of knowledge

Knowledge

- Facts
  - ‘Ornaments on a Christmas tree’

- Concepts
  - ‘A Christmas tree’

Both go into tests, but concepts are more valued. When you cram, you get the ornaments without the tree.
# The Two Weekends Rule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekend I</th>
<th>Week Before Exam</th>
<th>Weekend II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organize/Sort</td>
<td>Daily Review</td>
<td>Heavy Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chs.</td>
<td>Review the <strong>Know</strong></td>
<td>Avoid new material at this point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Notes</td>
<td>Learn the <strong>Don’t Know</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Quizzes/HW</td>
<td>Add a Practice Step to Review Process</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Readings</td>
<td>Ask Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create Study Guide</td>
<td>Form Study Groups</td>
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</table>
Effective Review

5-7 Days Ahead: First Review

- Sort, refresh your memory
- Review what the content was
- Figure out what you “know” versus what you “don’t know”
Effective Review

- **3-5 Days Ahead: Second Review**
  (Will need to incorporate a few sessions)

  - Go over broad concepts and main points
  - Use 3x5 note cards for definitions/term to review as you go
  - Prepare exemplary problems or essay questions
    - Write them out or prep outlines
Effective Review

- **2-5 Days Ahead: Third Review**
  (Will need to incorporate a few sessions)

- Master those problems/questions
- Learn what you don’t know
- Interrelate problems/questions from different chapters or sections
Effective Review

- The Day Before: Final Review
  - Learn it cold or re-learn—do not try to learn any new information at this point
  - Recite, write
  - Get enough sleep so that you can REMEMBER!!
Strategies for Different Types of Test Questions
Strategies for True/False Questions

- Assume statements are true unless you know they are false.
- If any part of a statement is false, then the whole statement is false.
- True/false statements that give reasons tend to be false.
- A negative word or prefix used in the statement does not make the statement false, but you should make sure you understand what impact the negative has on the statement.
Strategies for True/False Questions

- Simplify the question by getting rid of double negatives.
- If general qualifiers are present (generally, probably, usually, many, sometimes), there is a good chance that the statement is true.
- If absolute qualifiers (all, always, no, never, none, every, everyone, only, best, entirely, invariably) are used, the statement is probably false.
Strategies for Multiple Choice Questions

- Realize that there is not always a perfect answer. You must choose the best answer.
- Cover up the answers and attempt to answer the question on your own.
- Cross out the incorrect answers.
- Read all possible responses
- Treat each option as a true/false question
Strategies for Multiple Choice Questions

- Use test flaws only as a last resort—as a general rule, the following types of options tend to be incorrect answers:
  - Options with absolutes
  - Options with unfamiliar terms
  - Options with jokes and insults
  - Options with highest and lowest numbers
  - Options that read “all of the above”
  - Options with more complete or inclusive answers
  - Options with one of two similar-looking answers
Strategies for Essay Questions

- Make sure that you understand what the directions are asking you for.
- If possible, turn the question into a statement that becomes your thesis statement.
- On the margin of your paper, write out an outline to help guide you in writing your answer.
- To make sure you answer all parts, underline or circle key words or phases, and number the parts asked for in the question.
Strategies for Essay Questions

- Write well-organized answers
  - Have clear, but simple, thesis statements; do not waste time with an elaborate introduction.
  - Plan your major points; do not take the chance that they will just happen.
  - Make sure your major points stand out through the use of strong transitions: first, second, most importantly, next, and so on.
  - Have support for your major points.
Strategies for Essay Questions

- Write complete answers.
  - Assume your audience is one of your peers.
  - Write more than you think you need (if you have time).
- Budget your time, but if your run out of time, ask if extra time is allowed. If not, outline what you would have written, noting that you ran out of time.
- PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD, PROOFREAD
### Types of Essay Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare</th>
<th>Emphasize similarities but also present differences</th>
<th>Compare the strategies used in taking true/false tests with those used in multiple choice tests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Give differences only</td>
<td>Contrast the functions of the left and right brain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticize</td>
<td>Give your judgment of good points; then give the limitations with evidence</td>
<td>Criticize the label in the margin system for taking lecture notes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Types of Essay Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define</th>
<th>Give meaning but no detail</th>
<th>Define objective tests.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>State particulars in detail</td>
<td>Describe your strengths of your learning style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Give reasons pro and con with details</td>
<td>Discuss what you have done to address your procrastination for studying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate</td>
<td>Discuss advantages and disadvantages along with your opinion</td>
<td>Evaluate the implementation of the online catalog in the library.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Types of Essay Questions

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Give cause and effect</strong></th>
<th>Describe the steps that lead to an event or situation</th>
<th>Give the <em>cause</em> of our forgetting what we read in text books and the <em>effect</em> it has on test performance.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Give an example</strong></td>
<td>Give a concrete illustration form your book, notes, or experience</td>
<td>Give an <em>example</em> of a reference book that you think will be helpful in other courses</td>
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Our forgetting what we read in text books and the effect it has on test performance.
# Types of Essay Questions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Justify</th>
<th>Prove or give reasons</th>
<th>Most students will not use flash cards for studying for an exam. <strong>Justify</strong> its use.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Relate</td>
<td>Show how things interconnect</td>
<td><strong>Relate</strong> the label in the margin system for reading textbooks to the label in the margin system for taking lecture notes.</td>
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# Types of Essay Questions

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Summarize</strong></th>
<th>Organize and bring together main points only.</th>
<th><strong>Summarize</strong> what you have learned in your Sociology course.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>Back up a statement with facts and proof</td>
<td>Researches say that recitation is the most powerful means for transferring information from short term memory to long term memory. <strong>Support</strong> this statement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions to Ask before an Exam

- How many questions will be on the test?
- What types of questions will be on the test?
- What material will be covered?
- How much will the test count toward the final grade?
- Will the questions come primarily from the notes or the text?
- Will partial credit be awarded for some answers?
Questions to Ask before an Exam

- How much time will we have for the test?
- Will there be any extra credit?
- What materials (books, notes, calculators, dictionaries, and so on) will we be able to use?
- What outside material (handouts, readings, and so on) will be included on the test?
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