

## Before Exam Period

- Use a highlighter or pen to circle/underline keywords in your notes and textbook as you read: this makes them easier to review.
- Review your previous notes and/or preview upcoming readings in between classes.
  - Try showing up to class or campus half an hour early to review/preview.
  - More frequent exposure to material leads to better info retention.
- Make sure you have all the notes and slides for your course
  - ask classmates for missing lecture notes.
- Meet with peer tutors on a regular basis to review material/concepts from class and ask questions.
  - See Current Students > Academic Support for a list of peer tutors.
  - You can access up to 2 hrs/week of tutoring for FREE!
- If the professor offers extra help (e.g. practice questions, review sessions), take advantage of it.
- Show up on the last day of class: there may be a review of class material or info offered about the exam.
- Make a study schedule.
  - Retrieve your exam schedule through WebAdvisor or from the STU website under Current Students > Registrar Services.
  - Enter your exam schedule—including date, time and location—into your phone or calendar.
  - Set reminders or alarms one week before the exam date (to remind you to start studying) and on the day of the exam.
  - Add specific blocks of study time to your calendar (e.g. “Study CRIM 2pm-4pm”—not just “Study Afternoon”).
- If possible, don’t plan to study the same subject all day.
  - e.g. Study for exam 1 in the morning and exam 2 after lunch: this is especially helpful if you find yourself worrying about exam 2 while studying for exam 1.
  - If you study for a shorter period of time (e.g. 2-4 hrs), you tend to use your time more effectively.
- When prioritizing your study time, consider
  - your exam schedule: how much time do you have before and between exams?
  - your current grade in that course
  - how much the exam is worth for your final grade
  - your interest level: balance studying for subjects you’re interested in with those that interest you less.

## While Studying

- *Tell people* that you're going to study: this makes it seem like more of a commitment and it makes you more accountable.
- Choose the right environment.
  - If your room is distracting, choose a more public/less comfortable space
    - e.g. MMH study hall, JDH 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (outside Wabanaki Resource Centre), BMH 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Rotunda, Great Hall in GMH, 4<sup>th</sup> floor library, classrooms in HCH that are usually unlocked.
  - If you get fidgety sitting down, you can review your notes at the gym: increased bloodflow might actually lead to better memory retention.
- Put your phone away while studying.
  - Turn off notifications or turn the phone off entirely.
  - Put it on a shelf, in a drawer, or in another room.
  - Use peer pressure: if you're studying in group, put all your phones in a pile—the first person to reach for their phone has to buy everyone coffee.
  - Make the phone a reward: check it only during breaks.
- Treat your study sessions like shifts at work: take 10-minute breaks every 50 minutes, but don't go home or quit until you've finished your task.
- Rather than switch back and forth between sources, use your own lecture notes to study, but add extra details from your textbook in the margins.
- Condense/summarize info in your own words using bullet points (easier to review than complete sentences or paragraphs).
- Don't just read through your notes: complete practice exercises or try coming up with responses to likely questions.
  - look through previous assignments and tests (including feedback from profs) to see what kind of topics and types of questions are likely to appear on the final exam
- To help you memorize info:
  - use acronyms or mnemonic devices
    - e.g. SMART in psychology = Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound
  - use paper flashcards or flashcard websites/apps
    - e.g. flashcardmachine.com.
- For understanding concepts in math, statistics, and economics, look for other online resources like [khanacademy.com](https://www.khanacademy.com), which has video tutorials and offers Q&A with instructors.
- Use tables or charts to
  - keep track of theories (left column) and keywords or examples (right column) associated with them
  - compare and contrast related/opposite concepts from class (e.g. two theories, two phenomena, two main characters): this will make similarities and differences more visible.

- For processes, sequences, or chains of cause and effect:
  - try writing down the process in numbered steps (without looking at your notes!)
  - draw flowcharts and arrows to illustrate the process.
- When studying texts:
  - focus on those topics the professor has emphasized in class: remember, not all material from a textbook may be covered in the course, so check your readings against the syllabus
  - try creating a table of contents for each chapter or topic
    - list keywords/titles in the order in which they appear in your notes or textbook: this may help you see the structure of the topic and its key components
  - summarize each chapter/topic from the text in one paragraph using your own words; then summarize important ideas from your own notes, and add that to the paragraph. Use this to study.
- When preparing for an essay-format exam where question(s) have been given in advance:
  - create an essay outline – or better yet, try writing a practice essay that includes important quotations or references
  - have at least a formulaic introduction ready to use, so that it is easy to start the essay
  - if given a list of possible essay questions, study for all of them so that you feel fully prepared.
- When reviewing fiction or plays, take note of major plot points, characters, symbols, and themes
- For group studying:
  - study first by yourself to reaffirm your own knowledge
  - figure out who in the class has the same goals and study habits as you (someone you connect with—not necessarily people who are getting A+)
  - don't study with others who haven't prepared at all, or who aren't as dedicated as you; try to pair up with someone who has put in an equal amount of effort into the course
  - 5-6 group members max
  - book a group study room at the Harriet Irving Library: 1 person can book up to 2 hrs per day
    - book online at <https://www.lib.unb.ca/services/rooms/responsive.php>
  - compare notes, complete practice exercises together, quiz each other, etc.
  - explaining concepts to other people can test your own verbal comprehension
  - your classmates students may be able to explain ideas in a way that is different and easier to understand than your prof, and might show you the importance of/connections between certain concepts.

## Night Before Exam

- Sleep between 7-9 hours (helps with memory retention).
- DO NOT CRAM: it induces panic and reduces recall.

## Day of Exam

- Establish a routine/ritual before exams, so that it feels like a more familiar activity.
- Eat breakfast or lunch.
  - Your blood sugar levels affect your ability to concentrate.
  - Don't eat a large meal so that you won't feel sleepy or nauseous.
- Give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the exam room, so that you don't feel rushed.
- Instead of a last-minute review, do activities that calm you down and relax you right before the exam
  - e.g. listen to music, breathe deeply, zone out, walk to campus.
- If hearing people talk about the exam beforehand makes you anxious, walk away or show up to the exam room just before the test begins.
- Make sure you're physically comfortable (e.g. dress in layers, have lip balm and Kleenex handy).
- Bring
  - snacks (quiet, not smelly) and water
  - a sweater or hoodie so that you're not distracted by cold temperatures
  - extra writing utensils (e.g. replacement leads for mechanical pencils, erasers)
    - make sure that you can write quickly with the pen/pencil, and that it won't cause your hand to cramp!
  - a watch to keep track of the time since you won't be able to use your phone.
- Fake it until you make it.
  - Go in with confidence: visualize yourself doing well on the exam.
  - If you are nervous, admit it to yourself, but then let it go.

## During the Exam

- Put your name and student ID on the test first.
- Read through the instructions completely.
- Circle questions that you don't know the answers to or that you may have to spend more time on
- Manage your time:
  - identify the weight or worth of each section, and allot your time accordingly
  - if you're taking too long on one section, leave it and come back to it later
  - use the full amount of time: if you finish early, take the time to review your work
  - figure out which are easiest for you to answer and answer those first.

- Don't be afraid to write on your exam booklet:
  - write down questions you have
  - for essay questions, jot down an outline or list important points you want to cover
  - for multiple choice, cross out responses you know are wrong
  - if you get stuck, put a star next to that question and return to it later.
- Close your eyes when trying to recall information: it may help you remember!
- Don't hesitate to ask your professor to clarify a question: that's what he/she is there for.
- Use as much time as you're given.
  - Take time to review your exam at the end: you may have misread a question or need to clarify your language in a written response.
  - Don't get antsy if other people finish early—it's not a race!
- If you're worried someone next to you is copying you, block their sightline with a pencil case, or quietly ask the professor to seat you somewhere else.

### **After the Exam**

- Don't agonize over your performance or try to figure out whether you gave the correct answer: this can discourage you, and it won't change your mark.
- Regardless of how you think you performed, celebrate after you've finished.
  - If possible, take a break before you begin studying for your next exam (e.g. a few hours, an evening, half a day): you'll start fresher.
  - Treat yourself: go out for dinner, exercise, take a nap, or watch a movie.