

Preparing for Midterms and Finals

To help you prioritize before beginning to study, gather details about your exams: How much is it worth? How long is the exam, and is it cumulative? What marks have you earned in the course thus far? What is the difficulty level of the course?

Gather information about your exam

- Use the course syllabus, lecture slides, your notes and your professor or TA to determine which topics will most likely appear on the exam.

Organize your notes

- As you review your notes, decide on what material you understand well, understand a little, and understand the least. Study the material you understand the least first.
- Evaluate the likelihood of information appearing on the exam. Consider if the information is certainly, probably, possibly, unlikely, or impossibly going to appear on the test. Study the certain and probable information first.

Review past tests and test yourself

- Look at any tests you've previously taken in this course to determine your professor's testing style. Try to figure out why you lost marks on these tests to avoid making similar mistakes in this exam.
- Try to find any old exams from the course, whether from the department or the library, or make your own tests and share them with other students. You can also find questions in your textbook. Read them over and test yourself.

Create a schedule

- Rather than planning a long, marathon study session, divide your material into smaller sections spread out over an extended period. Cover one section in each study session.
- Schedule time for fun and rest to avoid burnout. Knowing you have an upcoming break will also help you focus on the current material and avoid wasting time.

Set goals

- Know what material you wish to cover during each study session. Set a specific time by which you want to accomplish your goals.
- Strive for your goals rather than studying aimlessly. You will be more motivated to start studying and less apt to spend time on meaningless activities.
- Reward yourself for accomplishing your goals to reinforce your positive study habits.

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