

# Test Preparation

## Tips & Strategies

# Test Preparation

- Test preparation occurs both inside and outside the classroom and should begin the first day of class  
**(Don't wait until the day before a test to study!!)**
- Doing the assigned readings before class allows you to better understand the lectures and to participate in class discussions
- Take thorough notes and highlight important information

# Test Preparation

- Use your textbook and notes to create review sheets or note cards with important information, concepts, definitions, formulas, etc.
- Budget your time so you have sufficient time to review your study materials on a regular basis
- Attend review sessions (if offered) and/or visit with your instructor during office hours for additional help

# Test Day Preparation

- Study your review materials including practice exams, homework assignments, sample problems, textbooks and class notes
- Eat a nutritious meal before an exam to provide energy to help you focus – avoid heavy foods which make you groggy
- Get plenty of sleep – if you have been studying regularly you will not need to stay up late or to pull an “all nighter”
- Show up early for the exam so you can spend a few minutes getting relaxed and focused

# Test Taking Tips

- Bring 2 pens/pencils, an eraser, a calculator and other resources that are allowed (dictionary, formula sheet, etc.)
- Keep a positive attitude and try to stay relaxed
- When you receive your exam, do a quick scan so you know how to budget your time efficiently
- Do the highest point value items first, followed by the easier items
- If you get stuck on a question don't waste time, simply move on and come back to it at the end if time remains

# Test Taking Tips (cont.)

- Pace yourself, don't rush through a test
- Read each question completely and make sure you understand what is being asked
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you do not understand an exam question
- Write essay and short answer responses legibly and erase cleanly when necessary
- Focus on your own exam – do not worry if others finish first. You are graded on accuracy, not speed!!!



# Test Taking Tips (cont.)

- Use ALL of the allotted time for the exam
- DO NOT turn in an exam without doing the following:
  - Check to make sure you put your name on the exam
  - Make sure you answered all of the questions
  - Look for careless mistakes – now is the time to correct them
  - Proofread essay and short answer responses
  - Only change an answer if you misread or misinterpreted a question – do not second guess yourself, your first “gut” response is usually the correct one

# Types of Exams

- Multiple Choice
- True-False
- Short Answer
- Essay
- Open Book/Open Notes



# Multiple Choice Test Tips

- Read the question and think of your answer before looking at the choices
- Read ALL of the choices before selecting your answer
- Eliminate answers that you know are not correct - with 4 choices you have a 1 in 4 (25%) chance of selecting the correct answer, eliminating 1 or 2 choices increases the odds to 1 in 3 (33%) or 1 in 2 (50%)
- Don't keep changing an answer or second guess yourself, your first response is usually correct
- When in doubt, make your best educated guess and select that answer

# True-False Test Tips

- Read each statement carefully and look for keywords and qualifiers
- Qualifiers such as “never, always, every and none” mean that the statement must be true all of the time. Usually these qualifiers lead to a false answer
- Qualifiers like “usually, sometimes and generally” mean that the statement(s) can be true depending on the circumstances. These qualifiers tend to lead to an answer of true
- If any part of a question is false than the entire statement is false
- Conversely, just because part of a question is true doesn't necessarily make the entire statement true
- With only 2 choices, you already have a 50% chance of selecting the correct answer, make an educated guess if you are unsure

# Short Answer Test Tips

- Use flashcards as study aids – write key terms, dates and topics on the front and definitions, events and explanations on the back
- Pay close attention to what the instructor emphasizes in class and take thorough notes
- Try to anticipate open-ended questions based on course lectures/notes
- Read every question carefully and make sure to address everything that is asked. Short answer questions may have multiple parts.
- Never leave a question blank – write down thoughts, ideas, definitions, and key concepts related to the question. Even if you don't have the exact answer you may receive partial credit
- Scan other exam question as they may contain clues or information that you can use in your answer

# Essay Test Tips

- Read the directions carefully and pay attention to whether you have to answer all the essays or only a specified number
- Make sure you understand what the question is asking and, if not, get clarification from your instructor
- Adequately address the essay by providing as many details and facts
- Budget your time so you can thoroughly address each required essay
- If the essay is asking for facts, do not provide personal opinions
- Write legibly and as neatly as possible
- Make an outline before writing the essay so your thoughts will be more organized and your essay will be more fluid
- Stay focused and stay on topic
- **ALWAYS** proofread and edit your essays



# Open Book/Notes Tips

- Open book/note exams tend to be more difficult
- Familiarize yourself with the chapter sections and organize your notes and study materials so they are easy to scan
- If allowed, create a separate sheet with formulas and/or key facts that will be easier to search than paging through your book
- Focus on the main topics and understand where to locate them
- Use highlighters, post-it notes, and/or bookmarks to identify important information
- Bring all of the resources that may be allowed such as textbook, notes, calculator, formula sheet, dictionary, thesaurus, etc.
- Answer the easy questions first and then answer the more difficult question where you may need to reference your book or notes

# Post Test Tips

- Look over you returned exam and review your mistakes
- If you are not sure of the correct answer – look it up or ask the instructor
- If the instructor reviews the test in class, take notes on what the instructor expected as the correct response since similar questions may appear on the final exam
- If you are allowed to keep the exam, use it as a study guide for cumulative midterms or finals