

The Key to Success: Study Time

▶ The single most important key to success in any college course **is to spend enough time studying**. A general rule of thumb for college classes is that you should **expect to study about 2 to 3 hours per week outside of class for each unit of credit**. For example, based on this rule of thumb, a student taking 15 credit hours should expect to spend 30 to 45 hours each week studying outside of class. Combined with time in class, this works out to a total of 45 to 60 hours spent on academic work—not much more than the time a typical job requires, and you get to choose your own hours. Of course, if you are working while you attend school, you will need to **budget your time carefully**.

General Strategies for Studying

- ▶ Don't miss class. Listening to lectures and participating in discussions is much more effective than reading someone else's notes. Active participation will help you retain what you are learning.
- ▶ Take advantage of resources offered by your professor, whether it be e-mail, office hours, review sessions, online chats, or simply finding opportunities to talk to and get to know your professor. Most professors will go out of their way to help you learn in any way that they can.
- ▶ Budget your time effectively. Studying 1 or 2 hours each day is more effective, and far less painful, than studying all night before homework is due or before exams.
- ▶ If a concept gives you trouble, do additional reading or studying beyond what has been assigned. And if you still have trouble, ask for help: You surely can find friends, peers, or teachers who will be glad to help you learn.
- ▶ Working together with friends can be valuable in helping you understand difficult concepts. However, be sure that you learn *with* your friends and do not become dependent on them.

▶ Be sure that any work you turn in is of *collegiate quality*: neat and easy to read, well organized, and demonstrating mastery of the subject matter. Although it takes extra effort to make your work look this good, the effort will help you solidify your learning and is also good practice for the expectations that future professors and employers will have.

Preparing for Exams

▶ Study the Review Questions, and rework problems and other assignments; try additional questions to be sure you understand the concepts. Study your performance on assignments, quizzes, or exams from earlier in the term.

▶ Study your notes from lectures and discussions. Pay attention to what your instructor expects you to know for an exam.

▶ Reread the relevant sections in the textbook, paying special attention to notes you have made on the pages.

▶ Study individually *before* joining a study group with friends. Study groups are effective only if every individual comes prepared to contribute.

▶ Don't stay up too late before an exam. Don't eat a big meal within an hour of the exam (thinking is more difficult when blood is being diverted to the digestive system).

▶ Try to relax before and during the exam. If you have studied effectively, you are capable of doing well. Staying relaxed will help you think clearly.
