

# TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES I

## Preparing for Tests

### OVERVIEW

1. Gather all materials for each course.
2. Concentrate on one course at a time and decide how the notes, text, etc., relate to each other. How important will each be on the final? (There is a great difference, of course, between comprehensive finals and tests which simply cover the last part of the course.)
3. List remaining study tasks for each course. Estimate (over-estimate) time required for each task.
4. Determine priorities. Decide which course(s) deserves more time. Sometimes, it is better to let one course go in order to salvage passing grades in others.

### SCHEDULE

1. How much time do you have? Divide your remaining time among your courses. (Remember, daily physical exercise and brief breaks will help you concentrate.)
2. Take the allotted time for each course and decide how much of it you will spend in outlining, studying class notes, rereading the text, and reading unread material. Give more time to those tasks that are difficult for you. An excellent aid in helping you determine how to spend your time is anticipating the questions that will be asked. Refer to earlier tests, the table of contents in the text, or to the syllabus handed out at the beginning of the semester. Make sure you know the format of the test—objective, essay, or a combination.
3. Use a calendar or chart to schedule your time.

### STUDY

1. Do difficult tasks first, then easier ones.
2. Use long study periods to grasp total relationships and concepts; use shorter ones for memory tasks, review, and reinforcement.
3. For unread material:
  - a. Divide it into parts and set time limits for reading.
  - b. Preview and skim if necessary.
  - c. THINK while you read.
  - d. Review. Test yourself at the end of each page or section to increase retention.
4. Notes:
  - a. Rework (underline, summarize, critique), but don't reread or recopy. Formulate an outline for the course.
  - b. Recall important points without looking back.
5. Already read material:
  - a. Don't casually look over or reread material (you'll only casually remember it).
  - b. Test yourself as you review. Put important points from the text into your own words.
6. Aids to memory:
  - a. Combine notes and text into a whole; see the forest before the trees.
  - b. Predict test questions; practice answers.
  - c. Overlearn—practice any memory items (theorems, definitions, etc.).
  - d. Review with others, but only after you've studied alone.