Backwards Planning for Finals

GENERAL TEST STUDY PLAN

The more times you can use your brain with material, and the more different ways you can put information through your brain, the more likely you are to have good understanding and easier recognition.

➔ *With more than one test, it will be helpful to back up this calendar even more!*

ACTIVE STUDY AND PRACTICE TECHNIQUES are much more effective than passive re-view.

- Re-read to **find or write questions**
- Practice **answering** questions or **solving** problems
- **T**hen PRACTICE more **without NOTES**
- **Think** about **specific** concepts/ideas that **confuse you, write Qs**
- **Focus** your attention/time on the **hardest** stuff
- Make **connections** between material
- **Plan** for likely **test questions**
- **Recite** (**talk** through) what you know
- **Listen** to others' questions, and/or explanations; **rephrase** them!
- Practice **time limits w/ unfamiliar problems**

BACKWARDS PLANNING FOR A BIG TEST

3+ weeks before, working 1-2 hours/day

- Get ready to study using active review to identify and focus on what you need to study most.
- Survey all the course material, identify areas of strength and weakness, annotate for study: √+ √- ?
- Practice (do the problems or recite w/o notes) the easy stuff once.
- Look for patterns of mistakes in your quizzes, HW & tests. Identify WHY you got things wrong... was it lack of study? Did you study the wrong stuff? Was it something tricky in the question, or not reading the question completely? Was it timing, or overthinking? Identify patterns that will help you avoid those mistakes.
- Identify and write down specific questions that you have about problems or concepts. Use this list to get help with your areas of confusion throughout the material. Use this question list to continue to practice.

2 weeks before, working 1-2 hours/day

- You should be 50% ready for the test, with all the easy stuff firmly functional.
- Sort which 50% you know (√+) and 50% to review/learn more (√- or ?).
- Make connections between topics and continue to work on challenge/problem areas without notes.
- Make as many possible mistakes as you can now, so that you're learning from them before the exam.
- At the end of this week, you should have moved from 50% ready to 75% ready for the exam.

The week before the test, working 2-4 hr/day

- 5-6 days before the test, continue to get help as needed. Start to work with time limits. Search out new problems. Pay attention to the mistakes you make and think about WHY you are making them. Figure out what follow up questions or topics you need to ask or talk through with help.
- 3-4 days before the test, focus on the hardest/last 20% of the content. Continue to get help as needed. You should be working through material quickly and fluently without notes at this point, and focusing on making connections, and comparing/contrasting across the content.
- 2 days before = 85-90% ready
- 1 day before = 90-95% ready, focus on the hardest material, take breaks
- Test Day = 100% ready, relaxing review if any

A Writing Center Essay Calculator

http://www.utdallas.edu/studentsuccess/writing/assignment.html

Enter the day you will begin your essay and the day you will turn it in to get a great plan of attack for an academic research paper. The recommended writing process is split up into deadlines and checklists to make it easy to keep track of your progress.