Preparing for exams

Language and Learning Advisers
Learning and Teaching Unit
EASS Division
Overview

For the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

1. Time management
2. Knowing your exam
3. Revising actively
4. Remembering information
5. Applying information
Reflections

For the Division of Education, Arts and Social Sciences

What have your previous exam experiences been like?

What are you most concerned about in your exams?

What areas would you like to improve on?
Long term preparation

Ideally, preparing for exams starts early in Study Period

- Make sure you understand key concepts and topics
- Try to revise throughout the Study Period
- Keep up with lectures, notes and readings so that you have a compete set
- Keep a healthy mind and body
What to do before the exam

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• Attend final lectures for exam and revision information
• Ensure you have all your PPTs and notes from all the course’s lectures and tutes
• Check course homepages/outlines for:
  – which course objectives are being assessed in the exam
  – course themes and sub-themes
  – past papers/practice questions. These can help identify weak areas or help when reviewing
  – if all topics covered in course or just some
# 1. Time Management – Sample Exam Prep Planner

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>29 Attend final lecture for exam/review info</th>
<th>30 Assignment Due 9:00pm</th>
<th>31 Final Assignment Due 11:00pm</th>
<th>8 Have study space ready! Organise course readings &amp; notes for revision, Write planner</th>
<th>3 Topics 1, 2 &amp; 3</th>
<th>4 Topics 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWOTVAC &amp; End of Year Exams</td>
<td>5 Past Paper Topics 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>6 Topics 1, 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>7 Topics 4 &amp; 5</td>
<td>8 Topics 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>9 Topics 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>10 End of Year Exams begin Topics 5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Year Exams</td>
<td>12 Review wobbliest bits Past Paper</td>
<td>13 9.00-12.00 Exam Relax!!!</td>
<td>14 Topics 9 &amp; 10</td>
<td>15 Topics 11 &amp; 12</td>
<td>16 Review wobbliest bits Past Paper</td>
<td>17 9.00-11.00 Look over brief notes 2.00-5.00 Exam Relax!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of Year Exams</td>
<td>19 10.00-1.00 Exam Relax!!!</td>
<td>20 Topics 9, 10 &amp; 11</td>
<td>21 Review wobbliest bits Past Paper</td>
<td>22 9.00-10.00 Look over brief notes 1.00-4.00 Exam PARTY!!!</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample daily planner

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Get up &amp; get ready</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td>Revise lecture notes of Topic 4 – note down tricky bits for emailing study group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(break 9.30-10.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Revise lecture notes of Topic 5 – mind-map concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(break 11.30-12.00: walk round block then lunch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-1</td>
<td>Revise summary of lecture notes of Topic 5 – practise short answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(break 1.30-2.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Revise lecture notes of Topic 6 – make flashcards &amp; practise question analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(break 3.30-4.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Catch bus – review study guide &amp; tutorial questions for Topic 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Work (take dinner)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Bed !</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Keep in mind

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• Which topic/course is your weakest? When would it be best to revise this one?

• When are you at your best at remembering information?

• What feedback have you had about your assignments?

• Before you end the day, think about what you want to start with tomorrow and make a note.
  – Be specific where possible.

• What’s your distraction? How will you avoid this?
2. Know your exam - Exam venue details

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Check date, time and place of exam. Find out when and where your exams are.


Exam timetables

Please be aware there may be last minute changes to the exam timetable, therefore ensure you check this website regularly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam type</th>
<th>Exam period</th>
<th>Exam timetable</th>
<th>Exam venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Period 5</td>
<td>10 November - 24</td>
<td>SP5 2012 Exam Timetable (XLS 96KB)</td>
<td>Adelaide Showgrounds, Wayville (PDF 165KB download Adobe Reader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exams</td>
<td>November 2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work out how you will get there and how much time you should you allow.
2. Know your exam

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• Length, format and type of exam
  – What kind of questions?
  – How many sections and questions?

• Attend lectures/ tutes for more information

• Look for details on your course home page

• What are the ‘rules’ of taking an exam?
  – See Exam Procedures
3. Revise actively

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• Use lecture/tutorial notes to identify main themes/topics in course and look for connections between ideas

• Revise notes, add to any gaps in knowledge/topic content

• Practise analysing questions

• Practise to time using past or sample exams if available on course homepage

• Other ideas?
4. Techniques for remembering

You will tend to remember material better by:
• revising it regularly over time
• taking regular breaks/exercise
• eat healthily

Talk about ideas with others or out loud
- helps learn the material
- helps learn the specific language of course

• Get someone to test you with questions.
Make summaries – reduce topics to a number of key points

Recall cards – small cards to develop a glossary of terms – one side for definition the other for description, definition, example or diagram

Mnemonics – make a connection e.g. ROY G. BIV

Mindmaps
Recall/ flashcards

• Make your own using index cards

• Create free flashcards online
  http://www.proprofs.com/flashcards/
Mindmaps

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5. Applying information

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• Exams assess how well you can select relevant information you have remembered, and **apply it** to a task

• Revision needs to include practice at applying information – use recent past exams if available

• Some exam tasks require you to connect or synthesise a number of ideas and apply them

• Practise writing to time *and* by hand so you can keep your handwriting legible
During the exam

- Use reading time (10 minutes) to choose questions
- Write an exam plan – include prep time, writing time and reviewing time
- Start all questions where possible
- Never answer more questions that you are asked – extra questions are not marked
- If run out of time copy plan and/or finish in note form
- Cross out material you do not want examiner to mark.
General tips ...

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• Start with easiest questions first.

• Keep in mind marks and how they are allocated to the question you are working on.

• Skip hard questions - go to the next. Other questions may jog your memory.

• If you go blank or forget things – stop, breathe, relax and tackle something else.
Exam preparation resources

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Exam forum – where you can post questions

The $L^3$EASS site has resources specifically dealing with exam tasks and questions.
For further information

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• Check your course homepage
• Contact the LTU for appointments with:
  - Counsellors
  - Language and Learning Advisers
  - Disability Advisers
• Access exam strategies information on the L3 EASS website.

LTU ph: 8302 0022     email: ltu@unisa.edu.au