Successful Transitions

Learning Seminar Program
Weeks 11: Autumn, 2013

Examination Techniques
Today’s seminar will... 

 ✓ give some tips about how to study for exams 
 ✓ what to do on the day 
 ✓ explain types of exam formats
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Assessment 1</th>
<th>Assessment 2</th>
<th>Assessment 3</th>
<th>Assessment 4</th>
<th>Assessment 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUST101</td>
<td>Week 4 Annotated readings X 3 1000wds. 20%</td>
<td>Week 13 Research essay 1500wds.</td>
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<td>Exam Period Final exam 2 hrs. 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELL182</td>
<td>Week 3 In-class quiz 5%</td>
<td>Week 6 Report 500+400wds. 20%</td>
<td>Week 10 Report 400+600wds. 25%</td>
<td>Week 13 Persuasive text 800+600wds. 30%</td>
<td>Week 14 Portfolio / Participation 20%</td>
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<td>ENGL120</td>
<td>Week 6 In-class test 15%</td>
<td>Week 9 Close Reading Essay 1200wds. 35%</td>
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<td>Ongoing Tut. Participation 10%</td>
<td>Exam Period Final exam 1500-2000wds. 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDS150</td>
<td>Week 4 Reflective Essay 1500wds. 30%</td>
<td>TBA in class Group presentation 30%</td>
<td>Week 13 Essay 2000wds. 40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOC103</td>
<td>Weeks 1-3 Reading summaries X 3 (400 words)</td>
<td>Week 11 Essay 1500wds. 20%</td>
<td>Ongoing Tut. Participation 10%</td>
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<td>Exam Period Final exam 1 hr. 30%</td>
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</table>
Common problems ...

- Too little revision / time for revision
- Lack of practice at type of exam
- Learnt by rote and unable to apply it to new context
- Examiners changed the nature of the question
What we’ll cover …

- **F**ind past exams
- **O**rganise
- **R**evise
- **K**eep Sane

Adapted from:
Find past exams
When do I prepare?

- From Day 1 (for next time)
- After the first month
- 3-5 weeks before
- The night before
- The morning before
- After the exam

- Past exam papers at UoW library
ACCESSING PAST EXAM PAPERS

- View released past exam papers from the last 3 years, arranged by session year and subject
- OR
- Search for specific papers using a keyword search on "exam" and a subject code (e.g. exam econ309)

PLEASE NOTE

- Not all past UOW examination papers are released by Faculties
- In most cases, the content of older papers is no longer relevant to the subject

HELP

- Ask us!

Last reviewed: 19 February, 2013
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>SUBJECTS (1-7 of 7)</th>
<th>Entries</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Exams Autumn 2011</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Exams Autumn 2012</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Exams Spring 2009</td>
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</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Exams Summer 2010/11</td>
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MATE202 Spring 2011 exam [electronic resource]

MATE422 Spring 2011 exam [electronic resource]

MATH142 Spring 2011 exam [electronic resource]
ORGANISE!
3-5 weeks before ...

PAST PAPERS

- Give time to each subject that has an exam – up to 8-10 hours each/week
- Allow time to complete final assessments
- Organise by the examinable topics
- Give extra time to difficult subjects
- Aim to revise as least twice
### Break it down before you do!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td>A w1</td>
<td>A w2</td>
<td>A w3</td>
<td>A w4</td>
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<td>B w4</td>
<td></td>
<td>B w5</td>
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<td>A w7</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>assign</td>
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<td>B w7</td>
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<td>assign</td>
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<td>A w1-3</td>
<td>A w4-6</td>
<td>A w7-9</td>
<td>B w10-13</td>
<td>WORK</td>
<td>B o/view</td>
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<td>assign</td>
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<td>B EXAM</td>
<td>break/WORK</td>
<td>A o/view</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>WORK</td>
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</table>
REVISE
Set study periods to **PASS** ... 

Work only in 45 min chunks

- **P**lan: ~5 mins
- **A**ct: ~25 mins
- **S**ummarise: ~10 mins
- **S**top: ~10 mins

Couchman 2011
How can I remember it all long enough?

✓ Notice
✓ Understand
✓ Technique
✓ Test
Notice what’s important

✓ Lecturer/tutor hints
✓ Subject Outline
  ✓ Topics
✓ Readings
✓ Past papers
Understand it

- Be ACTIVE!
- Definitions in own words
- Examples
- Diagrams/tables/graphs
- What are the parts of this & how do they fit together?
- Summaries of summaries
- STUDY GROUP

Couchman 2011
Use a Technique to remember

- Convert to tables, diagrams, mind maps
- Practise exercises/examples
- Memory techniques
  - Chunking
  - Mnemonics
    - Acronyms
    - Acrostics
  - Explaining to your pet – or anything that will listen!

Couchman 2011
Motivation

- Autonomy, self control
  - Making own choices
  - Stimulation
  - Challenges – sense of achievement

- Self motivation
  - Interests
  - Ambitions
  - Improve status
  - Personal sense of uniqueness
  - Desire to improve

- Rewards & motivation
  - Carrot & stick
  - Money
  - Other factors

- Internal forces
  - Basic existence
  - Social acceptance
  - Team
  - Growth through achievement

- Theories
  - Maslow
  - McGregor
  - McClelland
  - Vroom
  - Locke

- Definitions

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Test yourself

- Reproduce revision notes/diagrams
  - Without prompts
- Answer past exam questions
  - Note form only for essays
- STUDY GROUP
  - Critically discuss answers
  - Test each other
Active or Passive?

✓ Reading through all your notes
  ✓ NO Simply reading through your notes does little to transfer them into your long term memory. This is not an active revision technique.

✓ Practising past exam questions
  ✓ YES Practising questions from past exam papers helps to prepare you for the types of questions that might be asked.
Active or Passive?

Yes Studying for at least 3 hours in 1 session

- **NO** Studying without a break is not a good practice. You should have regular breaks and time to review the materials that you have learnt. Remember PASS

Yes Memorising all your notes

- **NO** Memorising all your notes is not an active learning strategy. You must make sure they are structured, e.g. into main point and sub points. Memorising these is far more efficient. Remember **U** in **NUTT**, mindmaps, memory techniques
KEEP SANE
Study group for exams

A small number of helpful people who already have some sort of current positive relationship

Arrange the dates of the meetings well in advance
  - Start and stop at agreed times

Plan some sort of program
  - Agree on topic/s
  - Set specific topics for each meeting
  - Short talks
  - Q & A sessions/past papers

Adapted from: Habeshaw, Habeshaw & Gibbs 1995 53 *Interesting ways of helping your students to study* Technical and Educational Services Ltd.: Bristol UK. p. 182
Reward yourself

✓ After finishing final assignments
✓ After finishing sections of revision
✓ WITH
✓ Movies
✓ Dinner out
✓ ?…
Keep regular patterns

- **S**leeping
  - ~ 8 hrs/day

- **E**ating
  - Mostly healthy

- **E**xercise
  - Walk 30 min/day
  - With a friend

- **R**ecreation
  - With friends
The night before ...

- Glance through your summaries/cards
- Gather exam materials – ID, pens …
- Check transport arrangements
- Use relaxation techniques
- Have adequate sleep

Couchman 2011
The morning before ...

- Eat a good breakfast/lunch
- Arrive 20-30 minutes early
- Avoid nervous students
- Glance through summaries/cards
- Take deep breaths, think positively
IN YOUR EXAM
Be kind to your marker ...

• Write legibly, bigger is better
• Write in pen
• Double-space your writing
• Begin each question on a new page
  – label it quickly & clearly at the top of the page/box provided e.g. Ques. 1 / Q 1
• Leave line spaces between your paragraphs
• To cross out, draw 1 line through your text
Timing ...

From past papers/lecturer advice

- Work out time for each question

  \[
  \text{marks for question } X \times \text{total time for exam}
  \]

  \[
  \text{total marks for exam}
  \]

- **DO NOT EXCEED THIS TIME**

  ✓ You cannot earn more than full marks for a Q

  ✗ BUT you can earn NO marks for not attempting
Perusal time?

• USE IT
• Skim through WHOLE paper first to check format
• Read questions & choose
  – what questions do you know most about?
• If allowed, make notes on exam paper
  – analyse questions: identify keywords
  – plan essays: jot down main points
  – jot down formulae
Working time …

• Do the questions you know best first
• Plan first in your exam booklet
  – these notes may gain you marks
• Watch the time – DO NOT EXCEED TIME
• If you run out of time on the LAST question
  – write Out of time at the bottom
  – quickly bullet point ideas not covered
OPEN BOOK EXAMS
Trap for young players

- **2 sorts of material to learn, not just 1**
  - Subject
  - Where it’s found

- **Your marker expects a higher standard**

What are you allowed to bring in?

- Marked/unmarked texts

- Notes, conditions?

Prepare the same way as you have for other exams

- Mark sources for main ideas if permitted
• Step 1: Plan your essay ~ 5 minutes
  – analyse the question, plan, reread

• Step 2: Write your essay
  – write introduction, body paragraphs, conclusion using notes

• Step 3: Check (if you have time)
How much do I write?

- Depends on the time available
- Single-spaced, medium-sized writing
- 20 minutes ~ 2 pages (x 2 spaced 4 pages)
- 30 minutes ~ 3 pages (x 2 spaced 6 pages)
- 40 minutes ~ 4 pages (x 2 spaced 8 pages)
SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS
✓ How much time for each question?
✓ DON’T EXCEED YOUR TIME!
✓ How short is short?
  ✓ 5 lines (50 words) to 1 page (250 words)
✓ Lecturer/tutor
✓ Analyse the question
✓ Be precise – just answer the question
✓ Diagrams / tables
✓ Bullet points?
MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS
Step 1 ALL
- ✓ those you are sure of - DO NOT LOOK AT THESE AGAIN!
- ? beside those you are not sure of
- ✗ beside those you don’t know

Step 2 ?

Step 3 X

After the exam ...

- RELAX!
- What did you do well?
- What didn’t work?
- What can you do about it for next time?
If you want more help ...

• See Celeste on Mondays

Bring :-
  – Your questions
  – Subject Outline
  – past papers
  – (study you’ve done)
Questions?

Please complete the evaluation forms