Preparing for Finals: The Dead Week Countdown

Reviewing your mountain of documents from the semester is easier if you create a plan to make the most of your time during dead week. Modify this plan accordingly.

Things to do NOW:
- Find out the day/time for your final exams.
- Make a master to-do list of all academic assignments remaining.
- For each final exam, review course syllabi, Websites, WebCT, etc to determine which information will be covered. Try to answer the following questions:
  - How much information will the exam cover?
  - How many items or questions will be on the exam?
  - Which exam questions will be objective? Subjective? Essay? Problem-solving?
  - What level of questioning will be asked?
    - factual/memory level,
    - inferential level,
    - application, etc.
  - How much does the exam count toward your grade?
  - What is a realistic goal for your grade on the exam?
  - How much effort will you need to spend studying, rehearsing, and reviewing for the exam?
  - How will this amount of effort needed affect your scheduling?
- Maintain your regular daily routine, or establish one if needed.

Saturday and Sunday (Before Dead Week):
- Divide your course content into five categories of subject matter.
- Determine the 3-4 main ideas for each category.
- Review all your notes, circling/highlighting concepts you do not understand.
- Get answers to any dangling questions (ask peers, professor, TA, refer to the book, etc.)

Monday of Dead Week:
- Study the first category of subject matter.
  - Review notes.
  - Scan the textbook.
  - Create notecards for names, examples, key concepts, etc.
  - Write at least 10 potential exam questions for the first category.

Tuesday:
- Review your notecards during the day when you have small amounts of time.
- Using your potential exam questions, quiz yourself or a partner on the first set of subject matter.
- Study the second category of subject matter.
  - Review notes.
  - Scan the textbook.
Create notecards for names, examples, key concepts, etc.
Write at least 10 potential exam questions for the second category.

Wednesday:
- Review your notecards during the day when you have small amounts of time.
- Using your potential exam questions, quiz yourself on the first two sets of subject matter.
- Study the third category of subject matter.
  - Review notes.
  - Scan the textbook.
  - Create notecards for names, examples, key concepts, etc.
  - Write at least 10 potential exam questions for the third category.
- Reward yourself if you “passed” your quiz.

Thursday:
- Review your notecards during the day when you have small amounts of time.
- Using your potential exam questions, quiz yourself on the first three sets of subject matter.
- Study the fourth category of subject matter.
  - Review notes.
  - Scan the textbook.
  - Create notecards for names, examples, key concepts, etc.
  - Write at least 10 potential exam questions for the fourth category.
- Reward yourself if you “passed” your quiz.

Friday:
- Review your notecards during the day when you have small amounts of time.
- Using your potential exam questions, quiz yourself on the first four sets of subject matter.
- Study the fifth category of subject matter.
  - Review notes.
  - Scan the textbook.
  - Create notecards for names, examples, key concepts, etc.
  - Write at least 10 potential exam questions for the fifth category.
- Reward yourself with a night out if you “passed” your quiz. Do not drink alcohol!

Saturday & Sunday (Before Finals Week):
- Using your potential exam questions, quiz yourself on all sets of subject matter.
  - Tip: Study with a partner, and quiz each other based on notecards and quiz questions.
- Review all your notes and appropriate readings for key concepts/words that you might have overlooked.
- Create a list of all material you still do not comfortably remember. Re-review this material.
- Stay away from alcohol!

Day before the final:
- Review all your notecards and potential exam questions.
• Eat well.
• Do not drink alcohol!
• Relax.
• Reward yourself for being prepared with a good night of rest!

**Plan Modifications:**
• Use backtasking to schedule correct days.
• Plan for all course simultaneously.
• Use blocks of time in your schedule.
• Dead Week is designed to free up students’ time for finals preparation. Do not add commitments to your schedule!
• Target courses of greater need.
• If you will fail course regardless of your final exam grade, focus on other courses, but you must still take the exam.