

Exam Prep: Cramming

Academic Success Center

The ASC does not recommend cramming for exams. However, if you find yourself in that situation, here are some strategies:

What to do

- a. Accept the fact that you cannot study everything. Give up the goal of perfect studying; it's too late this time. You must make hard choices.
- b. Relax... As best as you can. You will remember more when you are relaxed. Breathe deeply and think calming thoughts.
- c. Start by thinking about your instructor. What knowledge do they value most? Definitions? Principles? Facts? Solving problems? Get those things as clear in your head as you can.
- d. Look for important knowledge in books or notes. Skip less important or supplemental information. Scan pages to find what you want. Use clues like chapter sub-headings, boldface type, summaries, etc.
- e. When you find something important, try this:
 - i. Read the section slowly and give yourself time to understand it
 - ii. After you understand, memorize this way
 1. Read the line
 2. Look away
 3. Look back and check your accuracy
 4. Repeat until you get it right twice
 5. Mark the place for review if there is time
- f. Continue skimming pages and hunt for more information.
- g. Try to study some important things for each chapter assigned. Why? Because teachers usually try to balance the question among all parts of the material covered.
- h. If you face an essay test rather than an objective test, you must usually memorize the material more completely because there won't be any clues available on the test.
- i. Final advice. Study in advance next time and you won't need emergency studying!!!!

What not to do

Don't waste your time trying to read everything! You may be tempted to try to read everything and try to read it fast because you are afraid of being asked about a topic you haven't looked at. Don't! Why not? Because if you read a large amount of material too fast, you will not have a good memory for it and you'll be confused. You'll waste your time trying to do it all.

Academic Success Center Oregon State University, 2012
--