

**GCTS Student Success Department**

*Test-Taking Tips & Strategies*

**Preparing for a Test**

* Paying attention in class is key to understanding and comprehending the material. It is very common to have trouble focusing in long class sessions therefore it is important that you minimize any and all distractions.
* For an upcoming exam, make sure that you clearly understand the scope, identifying what topics/lectures/readings will be covered. Do not be afraid to ask your professor questions about the material to prepare.
* Know what type of test you are preparing for: Is it multiple choice? Are essay questions involved? How long will the exam be? Do not be afraid to ask your professor what the format of the exam will be or what percentage of your grade the exam is worth. This information may already be in your syllabus – check here first!
* Establish a preparation schedule. Record all dates on a calendar and start studying one to two hours a day a week before the exam.
* Study strategically. Do not just simply look over your notes to prepare. Below are several studying tips that students find to be helpful:
  + Build a study guide of all material. Create a summary or crib sheet for each major topic/concept covered in class that includes both lecture and reading notes.
  + Use quiz and recall method: review your notes, then try to explain it, unaided, in your own words. Do this repeatedly until you are confident with all the material.
  + Notation-reduction: gather all your lecture notes and summarize them onto a single page, then a 5x8 card, then a 3x5 card. Finally, quiz yourself.
  + Quiz Notes: platform for creating online flashcards that you can use to study, take practice tests, and matching games.
  + Use mnemonic devices to improve memory.
  + Review all highlighted texts and notes.
  + Participate in study groups with classmates and friends.
  + Split your studying up into several days. Each day add on more material.
  + Take breaks. Use the method of studying for forty minutes then take a break for 10 minutes. Repeat.
* Separate information you know well from information less familiar to you. Prioritize learning new information while also continuing to review more material.
* Check your learning using:
  + Self-testing with friends
  + Team up with classmates or friends to “teach” each other specific material.
* Get a good night’s rest the evening before your test. Do not pull an all-nighter or stay up late cramming.

**Taking the test**

* Read all directions thoroughly and carefully, then briefly read through the entire exam.
* Know how much time you have to complete the exam and tackle the areas that will take longer to complete first.
* Multiple choice exams:
  + Read every option and select the best answer.
  + If you have trouble with a question, reword it, then eliminate obviously incorrect choices.
  + Only change your answer if you know another alternative is absolutely correct, or you know your initial choice is absolutely incorrect.
* Read essay questions slowly and jot down a quick outline before you start. This will help you to know where you are going before you start writing.
* Answer the easiest questions first. Skip ones you do not know so as to get maximum points in minimal time. Return to the skipped questions once you have finished going through the whole test.
* Check and recheck your work with any remaining time.