

Exam Preparation: Longwood University Center for Academic Success

Cramming

The Center for Academic Success strongly advises against cramming for exams. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you have not devoted enough time for exam preparation, below are a few suggestions when you are faced with this scenario:

What to do:

- a. At this point, you must make some hard choices. Accept that it's too late to study everything, and perfect studying is virtually non-existent.
- b. Relaxation is critical. At most, try to relax the best that you can. Try to take deep breaths, and think calming thoughts. We perform at our best when we are relaxed.
- c. Meet with your professor ASAP! Please keep in mind that they are also busy, and the sooner you meet with them, the better. Find out the format of the exam and the types of questions (multiple choice, true/false, open-ended, etc.) What knowledge do they value most? (Definitions? Principles? Facts? Solving problems?) Is the exam cumulative or does it just focus on the last few chapters? Get those things as clear in your head as you can.
- d. Review important key points in your book/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 concepts for each chapter assigned. Most professors typically try to balance the question among all of the 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: It is important to spend more time on material that you are not familiar with. Don't be tempted to re-read *everything*, or too fast. If you read a large amount of material too fast, you are less likely to remember information correctly. You will become confused.