Course Study Strategies

Now that you have summarized the main points about each course you are taking this quarter (on your “Course Evaluations”), the next step is to start developing an optimum study strategy for each class. Your study strategy for each course should depend mainly on (1) the course requirements, (2) your goals for each course, and (3) how much time and energy you either wish to spend or can spend on the course.

Using the suggestions below and any ideas of your own, write a description of your proposed study strategy for each course that you are taking this quarter.

Minimum Acceptable Level

For each course, write a definite and specific description of your study strategy, covering all the main headings given below. Include all text books and preparations for all forms of evaluation (exams, etc.)

Textbooks

Here are some options available for textbook study. The way you decide to study each text depends on your purpose, time available, etc. The options are listed in order or increasing initial time required. Keep in mind, however, that this initial time investment may save time later on. Underlining, for example, may take more time at first, but will save time during reviews.

1. Skimming only (for less important material, or for a quick review).
2. Careful reading only.
3. Careful reading plus writing a brief summary for each section covered.
5. Careful reading plus making self-test questions
6. A combination of these methods, such as skimming to preview plus a careful reading with underlining.

Courses differ as to the relationship between the assigned readings and the lectures. In some cases, text material is fairly unrelated to what is covered in class. But in other cases, the readings prove valuable background information that can help you understand what is being said in the classroom.

For each textbook, indicate whether you plan to try reading assigned material before attending the class in which that subject will be discussed.
Class Work

Attendance

1. How many classes do you plan to attend during the semester? All? Most?
2. If you miss a class, will you have a way to find out what was covered in the class?

Lecture Notes

1. How detailed will your notes be?
2. What will you try to emphasize in the notes? Factual information? Opinions? Diagrams, formulas, equations, etc.? All?
3. How much editing of notes do you plan to do?

Methods of Evaluating Your Work

1. **Exams and Quizzes.** How you should prepare for each exam is determined not only by your time available and your goals, but also by what the instructor will be testing you on. Depending upon how much you described the probable exam content in your “Course Evaluation,” you might use any of the following techniques:
   a. If the emphasis is on facts, you could make flash cards, use other memory-aid techniques, or review the material periodically.
   b. If the emphasis is on solving problems you could master the general concepts, work the practice problems assigned (if any) or work problems from the text or other sources.
   c. If the emphasis is on applying learned concepts to new situations, practice testing yourself by thinking up possible new situations on your own.
   d. If the emphasis is on evaluating something (ideas, works of literature, art, etc.); be familiar with the materials, ideas, etc. to be evaluated; write evaluative questions in the margin of the textbook(s), lecture notes, etc. and practice answering these; read what some other critics have to say on the subject; establish a definite point-of-view on each subject.

   Describe your plans for preparing for exams and/or quizzes in each class.

2. **Papers.** Describe how you plan to work the writing of any assigned papers in your schedule.
3. **Other.** Describe your plans for preparing for any other things that will be used to evaluate your such as special projects, lab work, speeches, etc.