Finals: Stress Less!
Counseling Center

- Counseling Service
- Disability Support Service
- Research Unit
- Testing Office

www.counseling.umd.edu
301.314.7651
Using the index card, answer the following questions:

• How are you feeling about the last few weeks of the semester?
• How do you feel about your academic situation right now?
Workshop Objectives

To help you...

- create an exam study plan
- learn effective strategies for studying for and taking exams
## Rate yourself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Almost always (3)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Rarely (1)</th>
<th>Never (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I go to class, keep up with homework, and review notes regularly.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In reviewing notes, I look for main ideas and key topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The night before the exam, I get a good night’s sleep.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I get the exam, I jot down important ideas or things I need to remember at the top of the test or in the margins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>During the test, I start with the most straight-forward questions first.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I read every exam question all the way through.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I attend class when the instructor reviews the exam.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

If you earned 19 points or higher, pat yourself on the back! You are already using some key exam prep strategies!
Test taking process

- Before the Test
  - Develop a Study Plan
  - Use Effective Study Strategies

- During the Test
  - Employ Test Taking Strategies
  - Manage Stress

- After the Test
Before the test

- Go to class!
  - Preview text, lecture power points, readings, etc.
  - Take notes and review them within 24 hours.
  - Find out about test (format, length, content, etc.).
  - Complete assignments on time.

- Develop a study plan.
  - Start studying 7-10 days before exam.

- Rehearse material using effective study strategies.

- Get plenty of sleep the night before exam!
  - Importance of Sleep Video
Before the test: Develop a study plan

- Develop a plan for each exam.
- Cut back on commitments temporarily (ex. work, social life, family obligations, etc.).
- Set goals for studying.
- Break tasks down into manageable chunks.
- Study when you are most alert—your “prime time.”
- Find a place to study where you can concentrate. Library Computer Availability
### Before the test: Develop a study plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maryland Day!</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Math Study Group |  
English Draft- Writing Center |  
Math Study Group |  
GVPT Exam |  
Maryland Day! |
| May 1   | 2      | 3       | 4         | 5        | 6      | 7        |
|         |        |         |           |          |        |          |
|         |        | English Reflection Due | Math Exam 3 | Lab Report | GVPT Presentation |          |
|         |        |         |           |          |        |          |
| 8      | 9      | 10      | 11        | 12       | 13     | 14       |
|         |        |         |           |          |        |          |
|         |        | Last Day of Class | Reading Day | Finals Week | Finals Week | Finals Week |
|         |        |         |           |          |        |          |
| 15     | 16     | 17      | 18        | 19       | 20     | 21       |
|         |        |         |           |          |        |          |
|         |        | Finals Week | Finals Week | Finals Week | Finals Week | Finals Week |
## Before the test: Develop a study plan

### Weekly To Do List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Sunday 5/1</th>
<th>Monday 5/2</th>
<th>Tuesday 5/3</th>
<th>Wednesday 5/4</th>
<th>Thursday 5/5</th>
<th>Friday 5/6</th>
<th>Saturday 5/7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 101</td>
<td>Read sec. 3 Take notes</td>
<td>Write reflection paper draft</td>
<td>Writing Center-bring draft</td>
<td>Read sec. 4 Take notes</td>
<td>Edit reflection paper</td>
<td>Read sec. 5 Take notes</td>
<td>Review and annotate notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH 110</td>
<td>Webassign 3.1 Math Success Review notes</td>
<td>Review notes* Class prep Review &amp; analyze* exam1</td>
<td>Webassign 3.1 Begin practice exam 3</td>
<td>Study group Practice exam 3</td>
<td>Webassign 3.2 Review &amp; analyze exams 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>Review &amp; analyze quizzes 1-3</td>
<td>Webassign 3.2 Review notes Review &amp; analyze exam2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCI 105</td>
<td>Outline ch. 5 Do weekly assignment</td>
<td>Review notes Review &amp; analyze ch.1&amp;2 quizzes</td>
<td>Read article 4 Take notes</td>
<td>Do weekly assignment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review notes Review &amp; analyze ch.3&amp;4 quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSCI Lab</td>
<td>Prepare Lab</td>
<td>Lab report</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GVPT 100</td>
<td>Read 50 pgs. Review notes</td>
<td>Read 50 pgs. Review notes</td>
<td>Study-use <a href="#">Emergency Test Prep</a></td>
<td>Practice Exam</td>
<td>Practice Exam</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>SGA Meeting</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Plan next week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before the test: Study Strategies

- Review text, readings, power points, and class notes daily.
- Use **Deep Processing** approaches when studying.
- Take practice exams under exam conditions.
- Study with others – teach each other!
Before the test: Study Strategies

## Table 1: Rote Method Makeover

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common rote strategy</th>
<th>New and improved strategy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying definitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing definitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copying notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rereading the text or your notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking notes focused on the professor’s words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparing your notes with a classmate to make sure you “got everything down”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Before the test: Study Strategies

**TABLE 1 Rote Method Makeover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common rote strategy</th>
<th>New and improved strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Reading                       | • Previewing each section before you read, and writing questions  
• Using questions to think while you read, and to test yourself after reading |
| Copying definitions           | • Writing definitions in your own words                                                                                                                                 |
| Memorizing definitions         | • Stating definitions in your own words, as though you were trying to explain the terms to someone else                                                  |
| Copying notes                 | • Elaborating on your notes  
• Noting connections between your notes and your past knowledge or experience  
• Making connections between terms and concepts within the material |
| Rereading the text or your notes | • Processing your notes or the text in different ways  
• Self-testing with questions you wrote or those provided in the text  
• Testing yourself to see if you can repeat in your own words the material you have just read |
| Taking notes focused on the professor’s words | • Writing down not only what is on the slide, board, or outline, but also supplementing with your own words  
• Marking spots of confusion and asking the professor for clarification later |
| Comparing your notes with a classmate to make sure you “got everything down” | • Discussing your notes with a classmate; explaining to each other the material in your notes  
• Filling in any gaps with your own words |

*Taken from Amy Himsel’s *A Practical Guide to Study Skills*
Use Effective Study Strategies

● Flashcards
  o Active way of memorizing definitions, concepts, etc.

● Rehearsal strategies
  o Webs, charts, outlines, questions/answers

● Study groups
  o If you can teach it to someone, you know it!

● Analyze old exams
  o Do this with your professor; understand your errors to fix for next time
Self Test

• **Interact with material** – Organize, develop concept maps, charts, tables, or diagrams, summarize, process, re-read, fill in notes, reflect, etc.

• **Rehearse** – Do practice problems without looking at the steps in your text or notes, boost memory with repetition, use mnemonic devices, or flash cards.
Self Test Continued

- **Elaborate** — Explain ideas aloud (to self or others), write and answer practice test questions.
- **Apply** — Challenge yourself to apply the knowledge to problem-solving, or real-world situations.
- **Retrieval** — Put material away and practice retrieval by recalling as much information as possible.
Study Groups

• An effective group has 3-4 members and meets at least once a week. Get classmates’ numbers or email addresses at the start of the semester.

• Have a group leader that keeps the group on track and on task.
  – Decide as a group what material will be covered that week
Study Group Session

• **Structure of the group:**
  – In the first ½ hour review and discuss the prior week’s concepts. Bring up any confusion or share knowledge.
  – The rest of the time work on problems or questions.
  – The last 10 minutes do a quick review/summary of the session and assign any tasks or responsibilities for the next session.
Staying on track

● Avoid time wasters
  o Phone calls, Facebook, video games, friends who aren’t focused
● Enlist the help of your friends
  o Tell them you aren’t able to do anything until after finals and stick to it!
● Avoid negative thinking
  o You CAN do this! Believe in yourself!
● Take care of yourself
  o Get enough sleep and exercise so you don’t get sick
● Reward yourself when exams are over
  o Believe that you are making a temporary sacrifice that will pay off
During the test: Test Taking Strategies

When you get your exam:

- Give yourself a mental “pep talk”!
- Carefully read the directions.
- Survey the test and budget your time.
- Do a “mind dump”— write key definitions, formulas, key terms, at top or in margins of test.
During the test: Test Taking Strategies

- Answer what you know FIRST.

- Translate questions into your own words and underline key words.

- *Multiple Choice Tip:* Cover-up answers and try to determine the correct answer before you read the choices. **Read all choices** before making your selection.

- Leave 3-5 minutes at the end to check for mistakes.
  - Do answers make logical sense?
  - Do they answer the question that was asked?
During the test: Managing Stress

- Causes of test anxiety
- Effects of anxiety on learning and testing
- Be in control of test situation
- Positive self talk
During the test: Managing Stress

Relaxation Techniques

- Deep breathing
- Tense and release muscles throughout your body
- Be aware of your Self Talk
After the test

- Celebrate your success!

- Analyze Your Answers
  - Identify the sources of your errors
    - Do you understand the material?
    - Did you make computation errors?
    - Did you show your work/follow all directions?
    - Did you study the “right” material?

- Analyze the Test Itself
  - Did questions come from lecture, book, homework?
After the test

- Identify strategies for improvement
  - Modify note-taking strategies
  - Create a study plan
- Meet with professor or TA to go over exam or for clarification.
Questions?