

Meeting 3

FACING THE FIRST FINALS



DATE AND TIME: Monday, November 30th at 4:00 PM
LOCATION: You will receive an e-mail from your Advisor

ALREADY INCLUDED:

- Wrap-up for the Semester and the purpose of Course/Instructor Evaluations
- Tips for finals
- Important Dates for December and January

HOMEWORK:

- Consider how your first semester at UMW went. What were your strengths? What were your weaknesses? High points? Low points? Did you address situations as they arose? These issues will be addressed at your next meeting.

Semester Wrap-Up

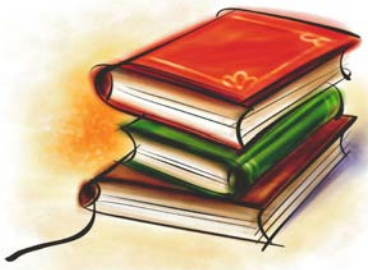
1. Figure out your current grades based on the grading criteria outlined in each syllabus. If you aren't where you want to be, meet with your Advisor and/or Academic Services to formulate a plan. You should also:
 - a. Talk to the individual professor/instructor!!!
 - b. Draw on support services – Academic Services, Psychological Services, Writing Center, Speaking Center, Study Skills Workshops, Tutoring
 - c. Plan – What do you have left to do? Break it down in to smaller, manageable parts. For instance, if you have a paper:
 1. Gather information on one day
 2. Create an outline the next day
 3. Write one section at a time
 4. Edit
2. Focus your attention where it is going to make the greatest difference.
3. Schedule your time.
4. If you have a special situation (i.e. illness) that interferes with completing end of semester classroom assignments or finals, go to Academic Services (Lee Hall 206.8, x1010). Collect appropriate documentation. The last day to withdraw from the University (i.e. ALL classes for the semester) is the last day of classes.

Course/Instructor Evaluations

Near the end of each course, students will have the opportunity to evaluate the course and the instructor. This process provides the Dean and Department Chairs with objective and anecdotal data on course and instructor effectiveness. Detailed directions are provided at the time the evaluations are distributed to students and each faculty member receives a summary of the findings after the end of the course.

You will have two forms for each course. One is a rating form which will yield quantitative information about the course and the instructor. The other is a comment sheet. This is where you can go in depth, make suggestions, and tell your instructor what you thought of the course. This form will help the instructor develop the course around what works, and learn what might not, for future students.

The evaluations are anonymous. Instructors leave the room while you fill out the forms and a student in the class will collect them and take them directly to the UMW administration in an envelope. The instructor will not receive the results or the comment sheets until after the semester is over and grades have been reported.



It's Study Time!

Tips to Making Great Study Habits

1. **Location** is very important. Try to study in the library where there are few distractions. Your bed is not a good place to study – it's almost impossible to be alert and comfortable at the same time and you'll start associating the bed with studying which could cause sleep problems.
2. **Get Organized.** Before starting to study, make sure you have all the supplies you need. Remove any unnecessary objects from your study area to avoid distractions.
3. Take a **ten minute break** for every hour of study to refresh yourself. Do something you enjoy during this time. Before starting again, take a couple minutes to review. **Avoid studying for more than three hours at a time because your brain really does slow down and any studying will be a waste of time.** Do something else for an hour to relax.

Some Great Studying Techniques:

1. **30-3-2 Schedule**

Study for 30 minutes

Take a 3-minute break, let the break be a time to think about other things;

Upon returning, take an extra 2 minutes to mentally review what you have just read and do a quick preview of what is coming up next

Study- Break- Review- Preview- Study

2. **5-Day Study Plan**

You can use a 5-day study plan to help you organize your materials and tie to review for a major test. Using this plan will help to reduce tendencies to procrastinate, cram, or suffer test anxiety.

Step 1: Set specific goals:

Be specific and realistic by making a list of all of the topics you will need to review such as chapters, lecture notes, homework assignments, lab reports, projects, or any other materials covered in class.

Step 2: Set a specific target date and time:

Days 1, 2, 3, and 4 are organized as review sessions. Schedule day 5 the day before the test by dedicating all your study time to reviewing the special notes you created in step 3.

Step 3: Identify steps:

This step requires some careful planning.

First, refer to your list of materials you need to review in step 1. Group the items in four logical categories. Review one category of information each day during the first four days of your schedule.

Second, create a plan for how you will review the information. You may want to begin by reading the chapter summary, reviewing your textbook notes, reviewing your class notes, reviewing your homework assignments, and reviewing terminology.

Third, create summary notes to use as you review each chapter. Summary notes are special notes that you make for only the materials that need to be reviewed one final time before the test.

Examples –

- Lists or categories of information to remember
- Charts that compare or contrast different subjects studied
- Chapter outlines
- Flash cards of categories or terminology

Fourth, indicate on your five day plan what you will review each day.

Step 4: Plan a reward:

Choose a reward for yourself after you have completed your five day study plan and after you complete the test.

Example of the five day study plan:

Step 1: Specific goal:

Prepare for the midterm in Sociology scheduled for Monday by reviewing:

Chapters 1-4	Textbook notes
Terminology (study guides)	Homework Questions
Lecture Notes	Notes from video
Papers	Notes from guest speakers

Step 2: Target dates and times to study:

Mon	8-9:00 am	Sat	10-12:00 pm
	3-4:00 pm		4-6:00 pm
Wed	8-9:00 am	Sun	2-4:00 pm
	3-4:00 pm		7-9:00 pm
Fri	8-9:00 am		
	3-4:00 pm		

Step 3: Identify the specific steps involved:

Review class work first, then textbook work. Make flashcards for the things I need to review again.

Step 4: Reward

Go out to dinner with friends after the exam

Example of a five day study schedule:

Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
8-9:00am Chapter 1 class study guide homework questions handouts	8-9:00am Chapter 2 study guide homework questions video notes	8-9:00am Chapter 3 class study guide handouts homework ques- tions	10-12:00pm Chapter 4 study guide homework ques- tions 2 short papers	2-4:00pm Review summary notes Self quiz on chap- ter 1 & 2
3-4:00pm Chapter 1 Lecture notes Textbook notes Notes-guest speaker	3-4:00pm Chapter 2 Lecture notes Textbook notes	3-4:00pm Chapter 3 Lecture notes Textbook notes	4-6:00pm Chapter 4 Lecture notes Textbook notes	7-9:00pm Review summary notes Self quiz on chap- ter 3 & 4

Exam Preparation and Test-Taking Tips

Plan ahead

- What topics will be covered – cumulative or just the material since the last test?
 - a. Make a list of the broad topics that will be covered and then fill the list in with more details as you study.
- What type of test – multiple choice, fill-in the blank, essay?
 - a. Knowing what type of test will help you to focus your preparation
- From what course material will questions be drawn?
 - a. Lectures, Textbook/Assigned Reading, All? This helps you to prioritize your studying – honing in on what you don't know first, followed by material you are more familiar with if you still have the time
- Use prior exams as a guide to the types of questions that will likely be on the final and what the instructor thinks is important
- Check the date and time of the examination and [plan to] get there a little early so that you have a chance to relax before the exam begins.
- Be sure that you have the appropriate type of answer sheet [or blue book], if one is needed.
- Find out if the instructor subtracts for wrong answers or just counts up correct answers. Some instructors do not want you to guess, but others [hope that by process of elimination you can narrow down your choices and reason it out].
- **Overprepare.** It's much wiser to take an exam too seriously and find it easier than you expected than to wish–when it's too late–that you'd studied more. **Don't confuse overpreparing with cramming.** If you overprepare, do so in advance, so that you can get a good night's sleep before the exam.

Taking the Test

- **Bring several writing instruments.** If your one pen or pencil fails and you need to borrow a replacement, you'll lose time, annoy others, and look silly.
- Read through all of the directions for each section before starting the exam.
- **Use your time wisely.**

Wear a watch so that you can manage time on your own terms. Some professors and proctors will mark the time on the blackboard, but glancing at a watch is better than depending upon the click of the chalk–distracting at best, stressful at worst–that lets you know that another chunk of time has vanished. Try and relax, and keep an eye on the clock without checking it every five minutes. You need to leave time to complete each question and to read through your answers before the end of the exam.

Structure your answers by making an answer plan; writing this down will help.

Map out your work. When your professor talks about the exam, make sure that it's clear how each part will count toward the whole. If, for instance, you have two hours and an essay that's worth half the exam, give yourself an hour to plan, write, and review your essay.

- **Don't rush.** This advice is especially important if your exam falls late in [the] exam week, when many students have already left campus. Just take your time; your vacation will be waiting for you when you're done
- **Don't panic.** In the worst-case exam scenario, an exam-taker goes on automatic, misreading questions, skipping key directions (e.g., "Choose only one"), and producing verbal babble as the time zooms by. It's important to stay calm enough to focus on the work there is to do.
- **Elaborate.** If you have a choice between making a point briefly and elaborating, choose to elaborate.

This suggestion assumes that whatever you're elaborating on is relevant to the question at hand. Irrelevancies won't help your case. Nor will faking it, which does not demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

Multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, etc. are an opportunity for the instructor to see what you don't know; essays are a chance for you to show him/her what you do know.

- Don't forget to refer back to the question to help ensure that you answer the question asked. The professor can't give you points for your knowledge and understanding of a topic if you don't answer the specific question properly (i.e. don't answer the question you wish you'd been asked rather than the question in front of you). Try and read your answer through before moving on to the next question.
- Concentrate on your punctuation, spelling and grammar. Remember that, while you will not be penalized for bad handwriting specifically, if the professor cannot read what you have said, then he/she can't give you the points you deserve.
- When writing an essay, use an erasable pen. Fixing sentence and paragraph structure or grammar with a regular pen will end up making the essay look messy and disorganized.
- Jot down the points you want to make on an essay in the margin. You can erase them later, but if a thought pops into your head that will end up fitting into an argument you want to make three paragraphs later, you may forget by the time you get that far.
- Try to leave some time at the end to read through the essay and edit.

How to Find a Good Studying Environment

You need a good study place to be prepared to study. You should be able to answer YES to all of the following questions:

1. Is my Study Place available to me whenever I need it?

Your Study Place does you little good if you cannot use it when you need it. If you are using a Study Place that you must share with others for any reason, work out a schedule so that you know when you can use it.

2. Is my Study Place free from interruptions?

It is important to have uninterrupted study time. You may have to hang a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door or take the phone off the hook.

3. Is my Study Place free from distractions?

Research shows that most students study best in a quiet environment. If you find that playing a stereo or TV improves your mood, keep the volume low.

4. Does my Study Place contain all the study materials I need?

Be sure your Study Place includes [reference sources](#) and supplies such as pens and pencils, paper, ruler, calculator, and whatever else you might need. If you use a computer for your schoolwork, it should be in your Study Place.

5. Does my Study Space contain a large enough desk or table?

While working on an assignment or studying for a test, use a desk or table that is large enough to hold everything you need. Allow enough room for writing and try to avoid clutter.

6. Does my Study Place have enough storage space?

You need enough room to store your study materials. Be sure you have enough storage space to allow you to keep your desktop or other work surface clear of unnecessary materials that can get in the way.

7. Does my Study Place have a comfortable chair?

A chair that is not comfortable can cause discomfort or pain that will interfere with your studying. A chair that is too comfortable might make you sleepy. Select a chair in which you can sit for long periods while maintaining your attention.

8. Does my Study Place have enough light?

The amount of light you need depends on what you are doing. The important thing is that you can clearly see what you need to see without any strain or discomfort.

9. Does my Study Place have a comfortable temperature?

If your Study Place is too warm, you might become sleepy. If it is too cold, your thinking may slow down and become unclear. Select a temperature at which your mind and body function best.



Essay Question Key Task Words



Analyze To divide something into its parts in order to understand it better. To show how the parts work together to produce the overall pattern.

Compare To look at the characteristics or qualities of several things and identify their similarities or differences. Do not just describe the traits; define how the things are alike and how they are different.

Contrast To identify the differences between things.

Criticize/Critique To analyze and judge something. Criticism can be positive, negative, or both. A criticism should generally contain your own judgments (supported by evidence) and those of other authorities who can support your point.

Define To give meaning of a word or expression. Giving an example sometimes helps to clarify a definition; but an example by itself is not a definition.

Describe To give a general verbal sketch of something, in narrative or other form.

Discuss To examine or analyze something in a broad and detailed way. Discussion often includes identifying the important questions related to an issue and attempting to answer these questions. A good discussion explores all relevant evidence and information.

Evaluate To discuss the strengths and weaknesses of something. Evaluation is similar to criticism, but the word *evaluate* places more stress on the idea of how well something meets a certain standard or fulfills some specific purpose.

Explain To clarify something. Explanations generally focus on why or how something has come about.

Interpret To explain the meaning of something. In science, you might explain what an experiment shows and what conclusions can be drawn from it. In a literature course, you might explain-or interpret-what a poem means beyond the literal meaning of the words.

Justify To argue in support of some decision or conclusion by showing sufficient evidence or reasons in its favor. Try to support your argument with both logical and concrete examples.

Narrate To relate a series of events in the order in which they occurred. Generally, you will also be asked to explain something about the events you are narrating.

Outline To present a series of main points in appropriate order. Some instructors want an outline with Roman numerals for main points followed by letters for supporting details. If in doubt, clarify with the instructor whether he or she wants a formal outline.

Prove To give a convincing logical argument and evidence in support of some statement.

Review To summarize and comment on the main parts of a problem or a series of statements. A review question usually also asks you to evaluate or criticize.

Summarize To give information in a brief form, omitting examples and details. A summary is short yet covers all important points.

Trace To narrate a course of events. Where possible, you should show connections from one event to the next.

A Strategy for Reading Textbooks

SQRW is a four-step strategy for reading and taking notes from chapters in a textbook. Each letter stands for one step in the strategy. Using SQRW will help you to understand what you read and to prepare a written record of what you learned. The written record will be valuable when you have to participate in a class discussion and again when you study for a test. Read to learn what to do for each step in SQRW.

Survey.

Surveying brings to mind what you already know about the topic of a chapter and prepares you for learning more. To survey a chapter, read the title, introduction, headings, and the summary or conclusion. Also, examine all visuals such as pictures, tables, maps, and/or graphs and read the caption that goes with each. By surveying a chapter, you will quickly learn what the chapter is about.

Question.

You need to have **questions** in your mind as you read. Questions give you a purpose for reading and help you stay focused on the reading assignment. Form questions by changing each chapter heading into a question. Use the words *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, or *how* to form questions. For example, for the heading "Uses of Electricity" in a chapter about how science improves lives, you might form the question "What are some uses of electricity?" If a heading is stated as a question, use that question. When a heading contains more than one idea, form a question for each idea. Do not form questions for the Introduction, Summary, or Conclusion.

Read.

Read the information that follows each heading to find the answer to each question you formed. As you do this, you may decide you need to change a question or turn it into several questions to be answered. Stay focused and flexible so you can gather as much information as you need to answer each question.

Write.

Write each question and its answer in your notebook. Reread each of your written answers to be sure each answer is legible and contains all the important information needed to answer the question.

As you practice using SQRW, you will find you learn more and have good study notes to use to prepare for class participation and tests.

HINT: Once you complete the Survey step for the entire chapter, complete the Question, Read, and Write steps for the first heading. Then complete the Question, Read, and Write steps for the second heading, and so on for the remaining headings in the chapter.



Test Taking Strategies: DETER

To do well on a test, you must have good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do.

D = Directions

- Read the test directions very carefully.
- Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand
- Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.



E = Examine

- Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.
- Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.



T = Time

- Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.
- If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.
- Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

E = Easiest

- **The second E in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.**
- **If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.**

R = Review

- **If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.**
- **Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.**

Using the DETER strategy will help you do better on tests and get better grades.



Important Dates December - January

December

3rd, Thursday	Test Taking Strategies Seminar , 5:00 p.m., Chandler 202
4th, Friday	Classes end; Last day to withdraw from the University
5-6th, Saturday-Sunday	Reading Days
7th through the 11th	Final Exams
12th, Saturday	Residence Halls Close at 10:00 a.m.

January

4th, Monday	Add/Drop Begins (Online registration opens again)
7th, Thursday	New Student Orientation; Residence Halls open 9:00 a.m.-12:00 noon for new students
10th, Sunday	Residence halls open 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. for returning students
11th, Monday	Classes begin 8:00 a.m.; Late Registration
15th, Friday	Last day to add courses (by 5:00 p.m.)
18th, Monday	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no classes)
21st, Thursday	Major Declaration cards due (for students who have completed 28 or more credit hours); Note Taking Strategies Seminar , 7:30 p.m., Room TBA
25th, Monday	First-Year Advising Meeting 4, 4:00 p.m.
28th, Thursday	Time Management Seminar , 5:00 p.m., Room TBA
29th, Friday	Last day to drop course(s) without academic penalty (by 5:00 p.m.)