STEPS WHEN STUDYING FOR EXAMS

I. Long-term study plan
   A. Develop a realistic weekly & daily schedule
   B. Study regularly in a place with few personal distractions
   C. Review immediately after studying & after class (most rapid forgetting takes place right after reading & listening)

II. Plan to review, both systematically and consistently
   A. Set aside frequent review time
      1. Review daily (material just learned & material to be memorized)
      2. Review every two or three days (assigned reading, lecture notes, study questions)
      3. Plan major reviews before exams (concepts & their relationships)
   B. Organize your review time (when to determine main points for study, when to write out answers to predict questions, when to work in study groups)
   C. Identify what to learn
      1. List major topics from course outline, lecture notes, & textbook markings
      2. Note specific emphases in lectures and text headings
   D. Connect & synthesize the course material
      1. Gain understanding of what is important
      2. Look for relationships among ideas, patterns of thought, progression from one concept to the next
      3. Interpret & evaluate
      4. Create study sheets (including maps, diagrams, charts, etc.) on the following aspects of the course:
         a. Theories & principles (best to learn any subject from general to specific)
         b. Complex events with many causes & effects
         c. Controversial issues, with pros & cons
         d. Summaries of concepts & philosophical issues
         e. Trends in ideas or data
         f. Groups of related facts & ideas, to be placed under broad headings
   E. Learn, memorize, & then overlearn

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1. Recite & repeat
2. Try to predict exam questions
3. Write out sample answers to predicted questions
4. Ask your professor what he or she suggests for preparation
5. Work (for only a portion of study time) in study groups (limit to 4 or 5 students).
   a. Choose involved students with whom you feel comfortable, as opposed to friends
   b. Test each other
   c. Practice teaching each other concepts, etc.
   d. Compare lecture notes, etc.
   e. Brainstorm possible exam questions
   f. Profit from group support
   g. Plan material to be covered in each session

III. Organize your pre-exam time
   
   A. Get a good night’s sleep
   B. Eat well
   C. Don’t hurry
   D. Stay calm & relaxed

Adapted from the following texts:

Becoming a Master Student, fifth edition (Rapid City: College Survival, Inc., 1985) by David B. Ellis
