COUNSELING & CAREER DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
MASTERING TESTS

BEFORE THE TEST

➢ Establish a study strategy.
➢ Organize your notes.
➢ Follow the course syllabus and consider the objectives for the examination.
➢ List the major concepts to be covered.
➢ Identify specific vocabulary for the major concepts.
➢ Meet with your study group and try to predict test questions.
➢ If applicable, consider the format of your last test in that course.
➢ Consult with former students.
➢ Learn the material like you were going to teach it.
➢ Explain the material to an 11 year old. If they get it, you’ve got it.
➢ The night before, review before going to sleep.

MANAGING ANXIETY BEFORE THE TEST

➢ Plan your approach to studying → taking control.
➢ Learn the material.
➢ Monitor caffeine intake.
➢ Have a night of quality sleep.
➢ Exercise moderately the morning before the test.
➢ Plan an enjoyable treat for after the test (Ex. nap, milkshake).
➢ Practice relaxation techniques and use a phrase that helps you relax.
➢ The phrase that accompanies your relaxation techniques can be used to help bring you back to a relaxed state during the exam. (Ex. Before the test, use a progressive relaxation technique while saying, “I am at peace,” or “calm and collected.” Then, when taking the test, repeat the phrase as needed to facilitate stress reduction.)

DURING THE TEST

➢ Be on campus early.
➢ Do not enter the classroom too early, discussion may be distracting or confusing.
➢ Carefully read all directions.
➢ Plan your time – allow more time for high value items.
➢ Immediately write memorized material (Ex. formulas) on the test.
➢ As you read questions, underline all key words such as, “never,” “not,” “how.”
➢ Interpret questions literally.
➢ Answer easy test items first.
➢ In your responses, use examples and phrases from the lecture and text.
➢ Use as much available time as needed.
➢ Restate difficult questions in your own words.

MANAGING ANXIETY DURING THE TEST

➢ Breathe deeply.
➢ Use your “mantra” (Ex. “I am prep’d and adept!”)
➢ Notice bodily tension and relax that area.
➢ Disregard others who complete the test earlier than you.
BEFORE HANDING IN THE TEST

- Place your name in the indicated space.
- Make sure you answered all items – unless there are deductions for guessing.
- Avoid changing answers unless you are very well prepared for that test.
- Consider where most of the questions came from (text, lecture, study guide).
- Decide where you need to focus more attention when studying for the next test.

AFTER THE TEST

- Organize the study materials you used – you will probably need them again.
- Plan out what you need to do to learn the upcoming material.
- Determine the correct answers to the items you missed.
- Know the rationale for the right answer.
- Find out where the answers were that you missed (text, notes).
- Avoid the ever-common desire to miss the class after a test.
- Acknowledge that a grade attempts to rate knowledge, not self-worth.
- Avoid the popular slacking-off period after earning a high test score.
- Did you misread any questions?
- Determine the role anxiety played in your performance.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Answer the question in your head before looking at the selections.
- Read all of the responses.
- The first option listed is usually not correct.
- The right answer will be grammatically correct.
- Try-out each option before selecting.
- Your first answer is the best.
- Is your guess relevant to the material covered by the test.
- Underline words like “not,” “but,” and “except.”
- “Always” means 100% of the time.
- Does your choice make sense?
- Pick the familiar over the unfamiliar.
- If you have to guess, try and narrow it down to two.
- Of two choices, go with the one that gives the most complete information.

TRUE AND FALSE

- Read the questions very carefully.
- Typically, more will be true than false.
- Look for “always” and “never” – These are usually false.
- In order for a statement to be true, it must be true 100% of the time.
- Look for mixed details (mismatched places and events).

ESSAY

- Read the directions and questions very carefully.
- Assess point value, begin with highest valued question.
- Use a pen.
- Write legibly.
- Make an outline of your answer in the margin.
- Do not give vague answers and assume the grader knows what you mean.
- In your answer, convince the grader that you know what you are talking about.
- Be specific, concise, complete, and clear.
- Use vocabulary from the material covered.