

# Getting the Most out of Attending Class

## Four Rules of Success:

1. GO to class.
2. Go to class prepared (assemble appropriate supplies, complete homework assignments/readings, prepare a list of questions you may have).
3. Participate in discussion and ask questions!
4. Change your habits

## Review your notes<sup>1</sup>

- **First review should be immediately after class.** Reviewing your notes immediately after class will help you consolidate your understanding of the material and produce notes that are more useful when studying.
- **Second review should be before the next class meeting.** Take advantage of the 5-10 minutes of dead time while you're waiting for class to start to review your notes. This will help you remember more of the material and help you prepare for the next lecture. Actively rehearsing your notes involves more than simply looking them over. You will remember more if you test yourself at the end of every rehearsal session.
- **Continue to review the material on a regular basis between the class and the exams.** Set a schedule for reviewing your notes. During these periodic rehearsals concentrate on connecting new material to what you already know and to the course structure.

## Create your optimum classroom environment

- Make sure that you sit in a seat close enough to the front so that you can hear the instructor and easily see any material that the instructor writes on the board or projects.
- If there are classmates who are a distraction - even if they are friends - choose a seat away from them.
- Have all of your note-taking supplies easily accessible. Bring extra pens so that you do not have to search around if ink runs out.
- If you are using your laptop, do not let it distract you. Disconnect (or disable) your wireless access. If you need PowerPoint slides to follow the lecture, download them to your computer before class.

## Create a structure for every class meeting

- You will get more out of your time in class if you plan ahead. Material covered in a lecture will make more sense to you if you can make connections to the structure and patterns of the course as you take notes. To prepare for class, follow these strategies.
- At the very least, prepare for class by reading the assigned readings and thinking about the key ideas.
- You will get even more out of class if you come to class prepared with an outline of the main ideas you anticipate the instructor will cover.
- If the instructor provides an outline or PowerPoint slides before class, print them and use them to organize your notes. If you are going to follow along on your computer, download the slides to your hard drive. You can use the note taking field in Power Point to add your notes.
- If the instructor does not provide a structure, develop one from the readings, course syllabus, and previous lectures. Do not simply read through the headings in the text for suggestions of the main ideas. Develop a written outline of the main ideas that you anticipate. If you find yourself unable to develop an outline of the main ideas, talk to the professor for his or her perspective on the course structure.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from University of Michigan, <http://www.umich.edu/~lsastudy/classtime.html>