

SURVIVAL STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMICS

The purpose of this handout is to provide you with the strategies to successfully complete Economics 2310/2320.

.....
WARNING: You cannot achieve this success without work. A conservative estimate is that the average student should spend 2-3 hours of quality study for every hour spent in class.
.....

You have already created many study techniques that have worked for you in other academic situations. However, you will probably have to add strategies to cope with the demands of economics. The following suggestions may help you decide how to alter your study habits *for economics*.

CLASS PREPARATION OR THE T.V.

It is essential that you prepare assignments **BEFORE** attending class so that you can understand the lecture and ask questions. The professor will not present all the material in the text. He will only explain the more complex theories and applications.

First, read any summary and/or outline in the assigned chapter of your text. Try to grasp the main point. You will not totally understand all the information, but be sure you know (i.e. knowing = remembering) it. This step should take no more than 10-15 minutes.

Next, read the introduction that usually restates topics (3 to 5 topics) and lists objectives. Then mark the objectives. Read and study one topic at a time.

The first paragraph usually introduces the topic and relates it to the rest of the chapter. Be sure you understand the relationship between this topic and others within the chapter (analysis questions).

The following paragraphs define and explain the concepts, principles, and laws of that topic. Remember, these concepts, principles, and laws are listed in the study guide as "Important Terms." As you read, mark these "terms" (usually 5 to 6 per topic).

You will notice that each topic is usually presented in three modes—verbal, numerical (tables), and visual (graphs). This variety of presentations is important since economics is communicated through all three modes, and the test questions will reflect all three.

After completing a topic, take several minutes to verify that you:

- know (i.e., remember) the topic and important terms.
- understand (i.e., comprehend) that material.
- relate the terms to one another when appropriate.
- relate the topic to the other topics in the chapter.

Complete all the assigned topics in the above manner, and write down any questions you have for the professor.

CLASS OR THE RIVER?

Frankly, economics is such a demanding course that you will need all the help you can get. A great deal of that help comes from your professor through his lectures. His style and presentation will show you not only what he considers to be important, but how he approaches this subject. Getting notes from a friend will not give you this information.

The most important strategy for learning economics, a cumulatively acquired subject, is that you must master each chapter **AS YOU GO**, in terms of knowledge, comprehension and application before the class progresses to the next chapter. Traditional "cramming" sessions simply do not work. Your study time must extend throughout all the weeks from test to test.

By the time you get to class, you will have some knowledge and understanding of the topic. The class notes you create should clarify and supplement what you already know. Be selective in what you write down. For example, do not write a definition that has been given in the text. Listen for examples which differ from those in the text, which place special emphasis on a relationship between topics, and which frequently repeat laws.

Use class time to develop your ability to comprehend and apply economic concepts. Writing down everything that the professor says will not give you time to learn anything. So the trick is to carefully combine four classroom behaviors—listening, asking questions, responding to questions, and taking notes.

AFTER CLASS, OR DO I HAVE TO DO THIS AGAIN?

Even if you have prepared meticulously for class and performed those four desired classroom behaviors, you still have one more step to go before you reach mastery level for that material. Using the Study Guide, select 2 to 3 items from each type of question (e.g., T/F, multiple choice problems) for each topic. Answer those questions without referring to the text, and check your answers with the Answer Key. If your answers are correct, go on to the next topic. If they are incorrect, go back and study the text and your class notes. Then attempt several more questions of each type. If your answers are still incorrect, either ask questions in the next class or go to your professor during his office hours.

These combined study strategies will carry you to one week before the test. At that time, refer to the SLAC handout titled "Economics: Test Preparation and Performance."