

Final Exam Preparation



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Yikes! I have finals coming up soon, and I don't even know where to start!



First, let's review UMass Lowell's policies on final examinations.

- The final exam schedule can be found on the registrar's website at www.uml.edu/admin/registrar
- Exams are given in three hour blocks, but the actual length of the exam is up to your professor
- If you are scheduled for three final exams on the same day, you may move one exam to a different day and/or time. You must inform your instructor.
- If you are scheduled for more than one exam on the same day and time, you must inform your instructors and have one of the exams moved.

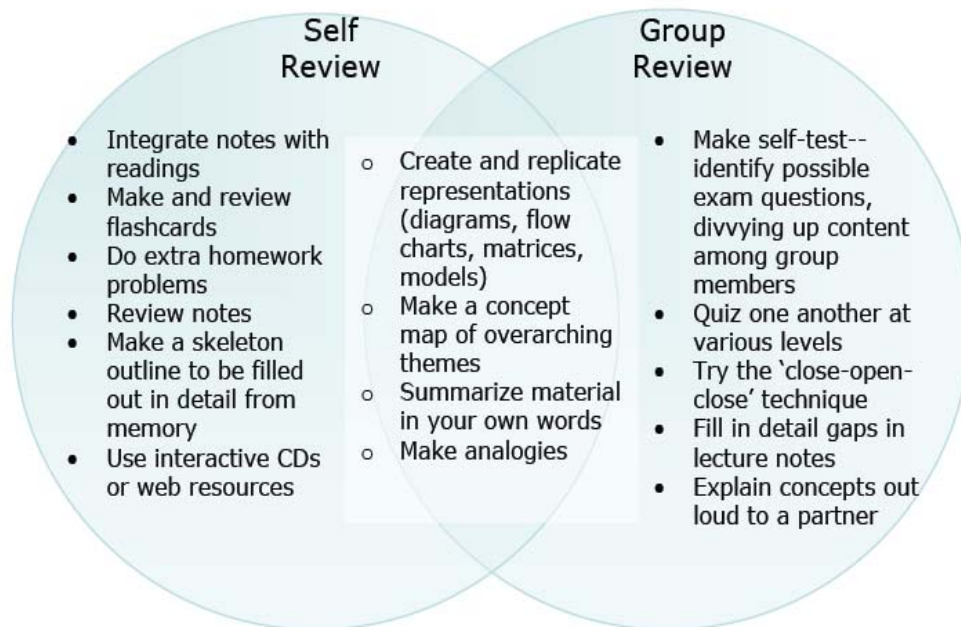
Second, let's assess how your semester has been going so far...

Courses:						
How many units/chapters in this course?						
How many hours (avg.) do you spend on this subject per week?						
Is this subject difficult for you? (y/n)						
How important is this subject on a scale 1-5 (5 = most important)?						
Rate your performance on a scale 1-5. If unclear, ask instructor						
Are you satisfied with your performance? (y/n)						
What percent of your final grade is your exam worth?						
What is the date/time of the exam?						
Does this exam occur 1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th ...?						
How many hours did you prepare for earlier exams in this subject?						
Are you satisfied with your previous exam preparation? (y/n)						
How many hours would you ideally like to spend preparing?						
How many hours can you realistically spend given the time remaining?						

Information adapted from Massachusetts Institute of Technology at web.mit.edu

Third, let's develop a study plan!

- 1) Determine the content coverage and question format of the exam. Ask your professor if you don't know!
- 2) Organize and separate the content into parts.
- 3) Identify specific study strategies, making adjustments to fit your unique learning style and the nature of the material (see diagram below).
- 4) Estimate the amount of time needed to study each part.
- 5) Allocate time for each study strategy, spread out over time. Don't cram!
- 6) Modify the plan as needed – more time for a subject, or asking a professor or tutor for help.



Finally, let's review the process for good exam prep.

- **Express your needs:** For each course, you need to sit down and assess how much of the course material you have read, how you stand going into the exam, what percentage of the final grade the exam is worth, how much of a priority the class is, and what format the exam will take. Review your term assessment on page 3. Those answers will determine how much intensity and time you must put into your preparation. At this time, collect any class notes you are missing from others in the class - do this politely and gratefully, as offenders tend to get remembered.
- **Organize & schedule:** First, decide how much time you need to study for each course, and when you intend on studying for them. You can make a study schedule that dictates by which dates you need to have finished studying particular sections of individual courses. Include time for breaks, exercise, meals, and sleep. Decide which sections need more emphasis, and which can be skipped if you are crunched for time. Avoid studying for similar subjects back-to-back as it will create confusion in your head, and you can get bored VERY easily.
- **Read & review:** After all this organization, it's finally time to study. First, finish any readings you have skipped and review your notes, picking out key concepts and listing important terms. Review any old assignments as they will help anticipate the type of questions that will be asked on the exam. While doing this, make a new set of study notes, as you will retain more by writing it down.

Information adapted from

http://www.campusaccess.com/campus_web/student/s3acad_exam.htm

- **Test yourself:** ... in a way related to how the course and exam are structured. Create generic and detailed questions to ask yourself. When testing yourself, sort through your study guide to answer each question. On a separate piece of paper, you may want to copy out fuller answers, referring back to your notes and the text to find further examples or details to fully support your answer. WRITE your answers. It's very easy to cheat yourself if you're answering questions in your head with "Oh, I would have gotten that!", or "I knew that" fallacies.
- **Seek out other study aids:** After you feel satisfied with the studying you have done on your own, seek out other study aids - go and ask the prof questions, talk to the teaching assistant, become the smart guy's best friend, or join a study group. Be warned that these avenues are not useful as starting points, as you will feel as if you know nothing, and won't be able to ask intelligent questions or provide insightful commentary into a discussion. Also, study groups can also become social (read unproductive) or highly competitive, so avoid them if you think this will bother you.

UMass Lowell's tutoring centers provide study sessions during finals week. The tutoring centers are located on North Campus in Southwick 321, South Campus in O'Leary Library 3rd Floor, and East Campus in Fox Hall 6th Floor. You can view the tutoring schedules online at <http://www.uml.edu/class/Tutoring/tutor.html>

- **If you are feeling overwhelmed:** Take a break! Also consider visiting the UMass Lowell counseling center. They are located in the McGauvran Student Center, Room 363, South Campus. Their phone number is 978-934-4331. Their services are free and confidential.

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GOOD LUCK!

