Study Tips for COP 4530

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**Aim:** To suggest learning techniques that will help you do well in this course

**Solution:**
- Take responsibility for your learning
- Work hard
- Work smart
- Get help

**Additional sources of information**
- Study skills workshop at FSU’s Adult Learning Evaluation Center
  - [http://www.epls.fsu.edu/alec/studySkills.htm](http://www.epls.fsu.edu/alec/studySkills.htm)
What to do in class

• Arrive a few minutes early
  – Review previous lecture notes for a couple of minutes
  – Talk to your classmates and let them know what a smart and nice person you are
    • They may help you get a job later in life!

• Sit in the front

• Take notes
  – Make only a brief note of things from the book
  – Take detailed notes when I ask you to
  – Underline points I mention as important
  – Write down any question I say I might ask in the exam
  – Leave space for adding additional information

• Ask questions on things you don’t understand
What to do after class

• Review the lecture material for a few minutes immediately after class
  – It can even be while you are waiting for your next class to start
• Later, the same day
  – Read the learning objectives for the lecture
  – Check if you meet those objectives
  – Read your lecture notes thoroughly
  – Answer as many review questions as you can
  – Read from the textbook
  – Answer more review questions
  – Make a summary of the lecture material
  – Write down some potential questions you think that I can ask
What to do after class

• Later
  – Discuss your answers with your study group
  – Seek clarifications on the discussion board or from me
  – Post solutions on the discussion board, when appropriate
  – Practice programming some of the algorithms or data structures that you learned
  – Help others, if you can
    • Example: Answer others’ questions on the discussion board
  – Think of real-life situations where your learning can be applied
  – Use google to find additional information
Class participation grades

Class participation grade distribution from Spring 2009
Preparing for exams

• Schedule you preparation
  – Complete intensive reading of all the material more than a day in advance
    • After preparing for each topic, see if you can answer the review questions, questions I said I might ask, additional questions in the text, and homework questions
      – **Practice writing your answers**
    • Review the code for the programming assignments
    • Check the discussion board, and see if you can answer questions that others ask
  – **Read your summaries the day of the exam**
    • Answer some review questions you think might be important
  – **Come to the exam early**
    • Avoid learning things at the last moment -- you might just get more confused
    • Don’t let your friends confuse or scare you just before the exam
Managing your time

• Allocate time for studies and other activities
  – Keep the schedule flexible
  – Give different priorities for different activities
  – If you find that you do not have enough time at the beginning of the semester, expect things to only get worse later!
  – Programming assignments can require much time
  – Allocate good “quality” time for studies
    • Study when you are not tired or hungry
    • Do not allow others to disturb you then
    • Use blocks of at least one hour
      – Context switches can lower the quality
  – Give yourself an earlier deadline on assignments than what I mention
    • You will then have extra time available for unexpected problems
Programming assignments

• Understand the problem
• Create test cases that you will use to test the correctness of your program
• Design your program
  – Consider the objects that will be needed and their behavior
  – Think of how you would handle the input, to solve the problem
  – Write the program so that you communicate your solution strategy to the computer
  – Implement the interfaces as header files
• Build a skeleton code that builds as an executable
  – It will not do anything useful at this stage
• Implement features, and provide functionality to test them
  – Build and test after adding each feature
    • Enter information in your LOG.txt file
    • Document errors that you fixed, to help you later
    • Use a debugger to trace execution of your code
  – Save old copies of code, in case you need to go to an earlier version
  – Submit early
• Expect to spend considerable time debugging your code