

## Tips for Effective In-Class Performance

### A. Establish a good working relationship with your professor:

1. Attend class regularly and be punctual.
2. Always have necessary books and materials.
3. Be alert: take notes, ask questions, participate in discussion.
4. Schedule a conference with the professor if you encounter any difficulties or if you would like to discuss course material further.
5. Turn in assignments on time.
6. If you need to miss an exam or class due to a conflicting commitment (which should be rare), discuss this with the professor in advance.
7. If you miss an exam due to illness or other emergency (which should be rare), contact the professor immediately (ideally, before the exam).
8. Read course syllabi carefully, making sure you understand all requirements.
9. Accept gracefully your responsibilities as a student; don't make excuses or blame the professor or others for your own mistakes or shortcomings.

### B. Listen effectively:

1. Sit so you can see and hear the professor easily.
2. Sit comfortably erect and watch and listen to the professor throughout the class.
3. Complete reading assignments prior to class so you can better understand material which is presented during lectures and so you can participate in discussions; anticipate questions that will be answered in lecture.
4. Distinguish passive "hearing" from active "listening."
5. Learn to ignore distractions from classmates (e.g., notes, whispers).
6. Listen for key points, possible exam questions; these are often emphasized by such statements as "there are two parts," "research indicates that..." "the trend is..." notice the similarities (or differences)."

### C. Take good, complete notes:

1. Have a separate notebook or section of a notebook for each class; keep syllabi, handouts, and other supplementary materials for a course with the notes you take for that course.
2. Write notes in an organized, complete, easy-to-use format:
  - a. Outline lecture material, using major points as headings and elaboration, related points, and examples or illustrations as sub-headings.
  - b. Leave sufficient space (by skipping lines between sections, leaving wide margins on each page, or writing on only one side of a page) to add clarifying comments or additional material to your notes.
  - c. Copy diagrams, graphs, or other illustrations presented in class.
  - d. When possible and appropriate, write notes in your own words.
3. Learn to write quickly and develop a system of "short-hand"; use abbreviations for long and frequently used words.
4. If you get "behind" while taking notes, leave a blank space; after class, check with the professor or a classmate for the missing material.
5. If you don't hear or can't understand something, ask for repetition or clarification of the material.
6. Review and edit notes as soon as possible after class.
7. Review your notes periodically.
8. When preparing for an exam, study the notes and other materials (e.g., text, hand-outs) together, seeing how they "fit" together.
9. If you miss a class, get missed notes from a classmate.
10. Use a tape recorder only as a backup; do not substitute tapes for notes.
11. Do not try to take notes only in the margins of the textbook for a course.