

Study Tips

This course is very demanding and requires a serious commitment of your time and energy. Be sure that you can plan a schedule that will allow adequate study time each week for this course. You may also wish to take advantage of the study lab and the tutoring lab in planning your study time. Some additional suggestions that will improve your chances of succeeding in this course:

1. Be organized. Get a binder or file folder and keep your lecture and lab notes and all handouts from lecture and lab, *in order*, along with your syllabus. You might also want to place any outlines or review sheets you make in this same file. Keep everything in one place

2. Attend every lecture. The more times that you are exposed to a particular concept the more likely you are to remember it. Lecture attendance also gives you a good idea of which topics the instructor considers the most important or most difficult. One survey of college students showed that the only factors that correlated with good grades were attendance at every class and sitting near the front of the room during lectures.

3. Take good class notes. Taking notes helps you to focus on the main points of the lecture and text. It also allows you to put things in your own words.

4. Pay particular attention to figures and tables in the overheads and handouts, *especially* those mentioned in lecture. They can effectively summarize many of the major points of the lecture or chapter. A picture truly is worth a thousand words. Try to recreate important diagrams and figures from the text from memory.

5. Reorganize your lecture and reading notes into customized outlines of the material. Invent new ways to organize the information such as concept maps and flow charts. This can be particularly effective if you do this review after each lecture rather than saving it all until the night before the exam. This is a much more effective learning tool than using prepared study guides and outlines based on someone else's ideas of what is important and what is not. Be careful to avoid "busy work" such as recopying notes or highlighting the text if its not really helping you to learn. It's more the *quality* of time you spend than the quantity of time that is important in helping you learn the material.

6. Read and Read again. The most effective way to study the text is to read the chapter both before and after the lecture discussion. Only a rare individual can digest all the information in one reading.

7. Study for the test daily or at least two or three times each week rather than pulling "all nighters" the day before the test. It is almost impossible to absorb all that information on a test in one day, it's much better to take it in small manageable doses. Try to study by topic or chapter to keep up.

8. Make sketches of lab materials. Use separate sheets of paper in lab to take notes and make quick illustrations to remind you what you did or saw in lab. The idea isn't to render artistic truths but to jog your memory when you review what you did that day.

9. Seek additional lab time or tutoring. There is much more information in a lab period than you can learn in the short time given for lab. Some things you can study at home, others, like slides and dissections you can only get in lab. Structure your lab time wisely to make the best use of your labs. The Learning Labs at most campuses offer free tutoring services for ACC biology students. Some campuses also offer study labs in which you can dissect and review models and slides at times other than your lab time.

10. Develop your own personal style for most effectively learning the material. Some study best in quiet isolation, others learn best by studying in groups, some find value in using a 'coloring book' to review concepts, some find a formal study guide helpful, others make 'flash cards' of important terms and definitions, some tape lectures and listen to them at home while reading the book. Different methods work better for different people, find one that's best for you. If the technique you are used to using is not working, try something different even if it feels uncomfortable to begin with.

11. Ask for help! If you are having problems in the course don't wait until the day before the test or the end of the semester to do something about it. The study lab and the tutoring labs at most campuses offer help throughout the semester or see me during my office hours or by appointment to discuss the help you need.

12. Never give up! Thousands have succeeded in this course before you, If you've got the commitment, you will too.