

# Being a Successful Student

Tips from ENGRG 150 Engineering Seminar

## Plan to Succeed, Organize to Learn

- Use a CALENDAR to plan EACH week so that each exam, course and assignment gets attention.
- You need a balanced time schedule: recreation, study, class, social.
- Each course should be scheduled several time blocks each week.
- Don't leave it all until the weekend; you need a break!
- Don't get a week behind in a course: you may miss a whole topic and be unable to comprehend subsequent material. **Don't get behind.**
- Divide major tasks into incremental scheduled milestones: # of pages to read / day or week, stages of a report, etc.
- Learn how/where you learn best: place; time of day (day/night); time of week; groups/alone

## Study Tips

- Start homework early and as it is covered in class.  
Then you can get help and can think about problems. This is called distributing your practice.
- Don't get stuck on one point or homework problem. Go on and come back or get assistance.
- Do not try to learn by cramming at last minute. This fails in the long run.
- If you are in trouble, look for help from Prof. and TA before it's too late.

## Textbooks and Lectures

- Both are good sources of material. How do they best work together for you?
- Take notes on key points in chapters and lecture so you can review effectively before exams.
- Review and summarize your notes at end of unit and before exams.
- Most texts have more material than is covered in a course. Know what you need to know.
- Textbooks often overemphasize theory; there are supplements that stress problem solving.
- Does it help you to glance through or read text before the corresponding lecture?
- If lecture is too fast, can you compensate by reading text or lecture notes before the lecture?

## Exams

- Find out what is important
- Look at old exams.
- Start reviewing early. **Don't get behind.**
- Distribute time among questions based on point values.
- Answer the easiest questions first
- Don't get stuck. Settle for partial credit.

## How to be a Survivor:

- Cornell is different from high school. **Engineering at Cornell is hard.**
- Manage both time and material.  
**Time:** a lot of time for courses in blocks. Reserve some time for fun. **Don't get behind.**  
**Material:** Some topics or readings are extra, some essential. Get handouts and old exams.
- Develop a support group of other engineering students. Make contacts in every class. Studying in groups is encouraged; the Lone Ranger can get lost.
- **Help each other.** If you are having trouble, get someone to help. If a friend needs help, try to provide it: teaching is the best way to learn something.
- Don't keep missing sleep. Some people need 8-9 hours/day. Avoid all-nighters.
- Stress chews up energy in the body and makes you tired. Eat well and get enough sleep.
- Cornell insurance covers outside referrals to psychological services.
- See your friends an appropriate amount. **Take time to enjoy life too!** Get some sleep.