

Study Tips for Economics Courses

(a condensed summary)

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

- ▶ Before class: At least pre-skim related readings and review lecture notes from previous class; look at problems in the study guide; make note of new terms, concepts, measures, models, graphs, and theories; formulate questions.
- ▶ Before class: Draw each of the graphs in the chapter paying particular attention to the labels and shifts I lines. Do not worry about making your graphs too “pretty”.
- ▶ During class: Have questions in mind as class begins; adapt a format which allows a wide left-hand margin for summarizing and editing your notes plus a narrow right-hand margin for recording your own insights, questions, etc.; be alert to assumptions underlying hypotheses and note how hypotheses are tested against observational data.
- ▶ During class: If the Instructor gives you a chance to work on problems in class, take advantage of this
- ▶ During class: If something is unclear during class, ask for clarification. Remember to be tactful.
- ▶ After class: Review and edit your notes; use the left-hand margin to summarize material and list key terms; “test” yourself as soon as possible to recall lecture highlights.

READING THE TEXT

- ▶ Preview the material: Look at sub-headings, graphs, questions at the end of chapter; note new terms.
- ▶ Read actively: Formulate questions before you read (from lecture notes and preview) and then read to answer those questions; translate abstract concepts to specific instances; know what every term and symbol means.
- ▶ Analyze graphs thoroughly: What “economic story” is being told? what are the assumptions?; note units of measurement on each axis; note direction (positive or negative) of the relationship.
- ▶ Recall: Test yourself immediately and cumulatively at the end of each section; then use a combination of marginal notations and underlining to summarize.
- ▶ Reflect: Set aside time to question and criticize what you've read--then make notes of those thoughts.
- ▶ Draw all graphs as practice for class and tests.

PREPARING FOR EXAMS

- ▶ Integrate and review lecture and text notes; make a list of key topics, concepts, problems, theories, models, and terms.
- ▶ Review via ACTIVE RECALL rather than just passive re-reading.
- ▶ Find a study partner who is doing well in the class. Try to teach the materials to one another, practice graphs together and compare class notes.
- ▶ Re-work homework questions and workbook problems.
- ▶ Practice using the information in the form that will be required by the test format; predict test questions and problems and practice answering them.
- ▶ Realize that various test questions will ask you to know, comprehend, apply, and analyze what you've studied.

TAKING EXAMS

- ▶ Glance over the whole exam quickly, assessing questions as to their level of difficulty and point value; set time goals for each section accordingly.
- ▶ Begin to work the questions which are easiest for you; the others come after you've “warmed up.”
- ▶ Maximize partial credit possibilities by attempting all questions.
- ▶ Save time at end of exam for re-reading and editing.
- ▶ Analyze returned tests to prepare for future ones.

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