I Need Help With...

Note Taking

Quick Tips

BEFORE CLASS

• Come to class prepared to take notes...have paper ready, pens that work, PowerPoint slides if they are provided, or a fully charged laptop.
• Have your own organization system to take notes both in class and while reading from your textbook: highlight important points, outline the chapter, write questions in the margins, or do anything else that helps you get the most from your notes.
• Always date your notes and title them with the material being read or discussed in order to keep them organized and help you go back and review.

DURING CLASS

• As you take notes, be consistent with your abbreviations and shorthand to better understand your notes when you review them.
• Be consistent with the format of your notes (indentations and bullet points). It is helpful to follow examples such as the Cornell Note Taking System.
• Focus on understanding the main concept of a lecture and chapter as you write down detailed notes.
• Focus on summaries at the end of chapters or at the end of lectures.
• Notice what information is stressed by your professor, or bolded/italicized in your book. This will be important to study when you review your notes.
• Take time to draw diagrams accurately or leave enough space to return to your drawing after a lecture.

AFTER CLASS

• Take time after class to sit down and organize your notes. This includes re-writing sloppy parts, getting pages in order, and asking for help from your professor or classmates to fill in spots you may have missed during class.
• Practice active note taking when reviewing your notes by using concept maps.
• Read and re-read your notes leading up to your exam.
• Ask questions until you fully understand everything.