Note Taking

BEFORE LECTURE
(Prep at home or in the library)

- Have eaten something…. stomach growling distracts.
- Be there! Physically be in lecture hall.
- Sit front and center…. Not as many distractions (aids concentration).
- Identify some “serious” students; exchange phone numbers; form a network.
- Come prepared. Have “tools” with you.
- Have read the assigned reading (see syllabus).
  a. Preview chapter by skimming materials
  b. Look at pictures, graphs, new vocabulary
  c. Read study questions in back of chapter
  d. Read summary of chapter

If you prep like this, you’ll have to take fewer notes and will have a better understanding of the material covered in the lecture.

Sample lecture page – Cornell method

During Lecture

- Pay attention to non-verbal questions.
- Label, number, date all pages.
- Pay attention to and write down what’s put on the board.
- If the instructor repeats a point, it is important and will be on a test.
• Underline main ideas.
• Triple space your notes…. Leave lots of space to fill in later.
• Write single—sided copy only!
• Write what the professor says in your own words.

**Use the Organizational Format Your Professor is Using!**

5 organizational formats of a lecture:
1. **Listing format**: Ex: “5 advantages of …..are……”, actually listing 1-5.
2. **Time sequencing**: Before, during, after
3. **Compare/Contrast** (several methods/ ways are being introduced):
   a. “There are 2 schools of thoughts on this….”
   b. “The 4 theories are….”
4. **Cause and Effect**: In science and history
5. **Summary of Lecture**: “Thus in conclusion, etc.”

**AFTER LECTURE**
• Review your notes within the first 24 hours
  o aids learning and memorization process
  o should only take 15 minutes
  o do before “attacking” homework/reading assignment
  o helps you get into the learning mode
• Review and re-read materials/ chapters
  o see how notes and textbook tie together
• Reorganize your notes
  o underline important concepts
  o add headings, titles
  o try to understand most important concepts
  o expand and add definitions (take info from textbook)
  o ask study partner, group, T.A., or professor for clarification
• Recall column lists key concepts
• Recall column predicts test questions
  o Start formulating anticipated test questions:
    ◦ Ask: Who, What, When, Why, and How?
    ◦ If you can answer those questions, you have a good understanding of what’s going on
    ◦ Begin to recite comprehensive concepts
• On bottom of each note page, summarize the main idea of page (1-2 sentences)