Preparing for Exams
Organise the material you need to study:

i. Gather lecture & tutorial notes.

ii. Make sure they correspond to the course outline.

iii. Divide your notes into topics covered each week.

iv. Write summaries.
Remember…

Exams test your *understanding of the course contents*, not your ability to memorise lectures & textbooks.
So...

 ✓ Draw up a study planner (*and stick to it!*)

 ✓ Prioritise the hardest subjects:

  * More time is needed for the harder subjects
Getting focused…

✓ Set study goals:

~ I will read chapter 3 & / or work through 5 equations & / or learn main concepts discussed in lectures from weeks 1-3

✓ Set study periods:

~ Short focused sessions (50 minutes)
Take notes...

- Course outline
- Chapter from textbook
- Lecture tutorial notes
- Quizzes assignments readings

TOPIC A

TOPIC A

CONDENSED FOR EACH MAIN TOPIC

Summary Sheet for each Main Topic

TOPIC B

TOPIC B

MASTER SUMMARY SHEET FOR SECTION x OF THE COURSE

SECTION X
If possible, review old papers...

- **Analyse** the wording of questions
- **Analyse** the nature of questions (descriptive, critical, etc)
- **Practise** under exam conditions
Form a group...

- Review past exams together (brainstorm answers)
- Try explaining concepts or quiz each other
Get to know the terrain: different exam formats…

For **essay** exams:

✔ If there are 4 questions, study 4 topics in detail + 2 backups.
Get to know the terrain: different exam formats…

For *multiple choice* exams:

- MC exams usually only cover material discussed in lectures & tutorials *(NOTE: MC questions can test your knowledge AND your ability to apply that knowledge).*

- Look at the main ideas/concepts for each week & create flash cards.

- Write definitions, main ideas & supporting information on one side of the cards with prompts on the reverse side.
Remember: for multiple choice exams….

- Make a time plan.
- Read the questions carefully.
- Be alert for words commonly used in MCQs.
- Answer easy questions first – harder ones later.
- Try to think of the answers before reading the choices.
- Make sure to answer in the proper space.
Writing short answer exams...

✓ Determine the key concepts (the topic) in the question.

✓ Determine what the question is asking you to do (i.e. the purpose of the question)

✓ Concentrate on giving the answer in the first sentence and then using details & facts to demonstrate your understanding.

✓ Keep it short and to the point.
Question: How does this still reflect the themes of the film *Vertigo*?

Response: The layout and perspective of this still reflect *Vertigo*’s key themes of ...., ...., ....
Example exam essay question

**Question:** Identify three major forces that have shaped the modern world and explain why you see them as important.

**Response:** Three of the major forces that have shaped the modern world include …; …; ….

**Point 1:**

**Point 2:**

**Point 3:**
Essay Questions: how much do I write?

*Depends on the time available*

Single-spaced, medium-sized writing

- **20 minutes** ~ 2 pages (x2 spaced 4 pages)
- **30 minutes** ~ 3 pages (x2 spaced 6 pages)
- **40 minutes** ~ 4 pages (x2 spaced 8 pages)
In your exam: be kind to your marker ...

✓ Write legibly: bigger is better

✓ Write in pen

✓ Double-space your writing

✓ Begin each question on a new page label it quickly & clearly at the top of the page/ box provided: e.g. Ques. 1 / Q 1

✓ Leave line spaces between your paragraphs

✓ To cross out, draw 1 line through your text
Keep regular patterns

- **S**leeping
  - 8 hrs/day

- **E**ating
  - Mostly healthy

- **E**xercise
  - Walk 30 min/day
  - With a friend

- **R**ecreation
  - With friends
The night before ...

1. Glance through your summaries/cards.
2. Gather exam materials – ID, pens ...
3. Check transport arrangements.
4. Use relaxation techniques.
5. Have adequate sleep.
The morning before ...

- Eat a good breakfast/lunch
- Arrive 20-30 minutes early
- Avoid nervous classmates
- Glance through summaries/cards
- Take deep breaths, think positively
General tips…

- Check the time and place of the exam.
- Read over the exam paper carefully.
- Plan your time wisely.
- Plan each answer.
- Answer your best questions first.
Specific tips…

Decide *which* questions to answer.

*Allocate time evenly* to each question.

Look *carefully* at instructional words.

*Draft* a rough essay outline before beginning to write.

Answer the question *explicitly* in the first sentence.
Deep breaths.
Plan your study approach.
Good luck!