EFFECTIVE NOTE TAKING AND LISTENING

Developing effective note-taking and listening skills will help you attain your desired grade in a class. Many exams and assignments are based on information presented in lectures. Effective note-taking involves action before, during, and after the lecture as listed:

BEFORE LECTURE:
- If possible, print off the professor’s lecture notes for the next class.
- Preview the text and notes (if given) and identify main ideas.
- Make predictions and develop questions based on information.

DURING LECTURE:
- Be an active listener, try to make sense of what you hear; focus on the speaker; and look interested. Pay attention to repeated terms, ideas, and themes. Do not try to write down every word said.
- Keep track of notes by recording a date, heading and topic.
- Develop abbreviations or symbols for words used often.
- Write down everything written on the board and questions asked by the instructor.
- Write legibly and keep all notes together in one notebook or binder.
- Take accurate notes. You should usually use your own words, but try not to change the meaning. Quotes, formulas, definitions, specific or key facts, and dates should be recorded exactly.
- Don’t worry about missing a point. Make a notation so you can refer to your text or discuss missed information with your instructor.
- Participate in class. Be involved in whatever is happening in class. Ask questions and contribute to the discussions.

AFTER LECTURE:
- After the lecture, your goal is to process what you have seen, heard and written down.
- Read over notes as soon as possible after class. Make corrections and additions.
- Summarize what you have learned in notes to establish a firm basis for future understanding.
- Cross-reference notes with reading assignments.
- Underline or highlight important ideas and concepts.
- Compress and summarize your notes as you study removing non-relevant information.
- Formulate questions you think might be on an upcoming test, and take time to develop answers by talking with your instructor, the course TA, or fellow classmates.
- Recite major points covered in lecture (verbally or written).
- Review notes regularly. This is the only way to achieve lasting memory and eliminates the need for cramming for exams.
- Type or re-write notes to utilize another learning style. This is very helpful when preparing for the test.