

How to Do Well in a College (Philosophy) Class

- Take responsibility for all of your duties as a student.
- Record all assignment due dates.
- Get to work on assignments early.
- Seek out help and guidance on assignments from the instructor.
- Don't miss class.
- Don't skip assignments.
- Take good notes. Here are some useful suggestions for how to take good notes:
 - [Hints for Good Note Taking](#)
 - [3 Ways to Take Better Notes](#)
- Take notes by hand instead of typing on a laptop. Research shows that condensing and summarizing to write it out by hand helps learn it better than typing it out verbatim:
 - [Take Notes by Hand.](#)
- Review your notes after class.
- Do all of the assigned readings--take notes and ask questions.
- Keep an accurate record of your grades and your overall standing in the course.
- Stay attentive in class, participate in class discussions.
- Plan ahead for requisite study time, paper writing, assignments, and test preparations.
- Be realistic about how many classes and how many activities (like hours at work) you can handle.
- Make use of available resources:
 - CSUS Writing Center--[Resources for Students](#)
 - Philosophy Department [Writing Guidelines](#)
 - [Philosophy Resources](#) at CSUS Library.
- Resist the temptation to text, email, surf the web, or multi-task with other activities when you are working on readings and assignments for class. The empirical evidence clearly shows that our performance goes down on multiple tasks when we try to do them concurrently.
- Don't text, Tweet, email, or surf while in class.

There are some other more organic suggestions that will help. Consider these questions:

- Are you getting enough sleep before class and before you do important assignments and tests?
- Are you eating well and at the right times for class?
- Are you getting regular exercise?
- Are you paying close attention in class, and avoiding the temptation of distractions?
- Are you working too many hours to be able to balance school and a healthy life?

Here's some good advice about what works and what doesn't:

[Study Better: Tough Studying Makes Easy Tests](#)

- Study a little of each subject every day; space it out. Don't cram!
- Practice different types of problems in a jumbled order, so you're not doing the same kind of problem all in one go!

- Test yourself, and take as many practice tests as are available. Practice questions help too!
- While studying, ask yourself: “Why is this true? How did it happen?” Then try to answer those questions.
- Also ask, “Did I know this information already? Does it make sense to me? Is this something new?”
- To do the above, you can make flashcards. Study some flashcards for each subject every single day, and randomize the order, etc. You can also make a few "question" flashcards—i.e. "Why was the previous fact significant?" or "How does this relate to what I know?"—and toss them into the stack, to periodically remind yourself to engage in deeper thoughts about the concepts.

And here's more research about what works in learning and what doesn't. You may be surprised at some of the results of the empirical research:

[Improving Students' Learning with Effective Learning Techniques. Dunlosky, Rawson, March, Nathan, and Willingham](#)

Note: The original version of this document was created by [Professor Matt McCormick](#).