

How to Study for CS3398

Tips from the following book:

Cal Newport, How To Win At College: Simple Rules For Success From Star Students, Three Rivers Press, 2005

26. Start studying two weeks in advance

In CS3398, by the midterm exam there will be:

- 14 hours of lecture covering:
- 5 book chapters

How many hours will you need to study for the midterm? It depends on how well you understand the material now, and how long it takes you to learn new material.

Even if it's 5 hours (one hour per book chapter) you do NOT want to do that on the night before the exam (unless your goal is to get a C- in the class).

Break the hours up into one or two hour chunks, spread them out over two weeks.

Once you get started you may realize you need more time than you thought.

It's not too late to add some extra time in the second week.

70. Study with the Quiz and Recall Method

Making yourself recall specific information is the absolute best way to learn.

As you review the material, draw up a quiz for each main concept. For example:

"List the four main stages of Requirements Development, the main goals of each, and the methods/tools used for each."

Your final study goal is to ace these quizzes without peeking at your notes.

If the material involves how to solve problems, put a sample problem to solve on your quiz. For example: "Write a user-level or system-level requirement for a feature of your favorite mobile phone app".

Study process:

- Step 1: **Review** all the material and write down quiz questions, including the source of the information (which lecture, which slide, or which page in the book).
- Step 2: **Quizzing**: You don't need to write the answers down (except for problems). For concepts, state the answers out loud, completing all your sentences. This helps to articulate your thoughts.

Doing just the review step does not force your mind to actually remember anything.

32. Don't study in groups

Do your own review and quiz and recall.

After that you can do more quiz and recall with other people.

If you are confused about a specific issue, then find someone to help you understand it.

57. Always go to class

"Lectures are the source of the most important material covered by any class. The professor is telling you what he or she feels is necessary to know about a subject, what is not necessary to know about a subject, and what is the right way to approach, analyze, or discuss a subject. The best way to engage this important material is for you to be surrounded by your peers, sitting in a lecture hall, the professor at the blackboard, and you asking questions when you don't fully understand topics. In short, you need to be there."

"Attending class is not the same as reviewing the PowerPoint slides you downloaded from the internet, or going through the barely legible notes of a friend. The specific cadence of the professor's speech, how he or she structures and clarifies the information during the lecture, the collective answers to the questions asked during class, these are all important elements to helping you cement an understanding of this crucial material."