

TLC 199: TACKLING TESTS

CRN 15933—FALL 2014—193 ANSTETT

Nov 11-Dec 2—TR 2-3:20

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Drop in Tues or Weds 10-noon or make an appt through TLC (541-346-3226, 68 PLC)



COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Designed to help you prepare for university exams, Tackling Tests explores specific strategies for successfully absorbing, retaining, and expressing new information.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Tackling Tests helps students develop and practice skills for improved test performance. By the end of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- understand general principles of learning and memory
- know and adapt memory techniques
- practice effective listening and note-taking skills
- prepare for exams that require higher-order thinking
- utilize specific strategies for taking objective and essay tests
- identify sources and reduce effects of test anxiety
- recognize how skills developed to take university exams apply to other situations

COURSE MATERIALS:

Readings, handouts, and online resources will be available on our Blackboard course site (go to <https://blackboard.uoregon.edu> and log on with your Duck ID and password).

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS:

This is a one-credit, pass/no pass course. You must complete all requirements fully and satisfactorily in order to earn course credit. Examples and details will be provided throughout the course.

Attendance—Your presence and participation are necessary in order to make this course successful for you and your learning community. If you are unable to attend one class, please contact me as soon as possible—and remember that you are responsible for any missed work and information. If you miss more than one class meeting, you will not receive credit for the course.

Conference—Plan to meet with one of us at TLC for about 15-30 minutes to discuss your questions and feedback about TLC 199, your progress in and approach to your other courses, campus resources that may be useful to you, and/or whatever else crops up as relevant to your academic success. To schedule a conference, you can:

- add your name to a conference sign-up sheet during class
- come to TLC drop-in hours (Tues and Weds 10-noon)
- make an appointment through the main TLC office (68 PLC, 541-346-3226)

Journal Entries— Brief articles (posted on Blackboard) will provide us a shared basis for in-class discussion as well as specific information for reaching course objectives. Read through the ideas in each resource and write a summary and response (see Blackboard for details). Submit your work in your Blackboard journal prior to the deadline listed in the course schedule.

Portfolio—Throughout the course, you will learn, practice, and reflect on test preparation methods. On the final day of class, you will submit a collection of your work. A passing portfolio must contain all elements described in the Tackling Tests Portfolio Instructions. Additional details, practice activities, and examples will be provided during class time or on Blackboard.

ADDITIONAL STANDARDS:

Diversity

Open inquiry, freedom of expression, and respect for difference are fundamental to a comprehensive and dynamic education. The University Teaching and Learning Center is committed to upholding these ideals by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of divergent perspectives and diverse identities.

Academic Integrity

All students are expected to complete assignments in a manner consistent with academic integrity. Students must produce their own work and properly acknowledge and document all sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases). Students can find more complete information about the University of Oregon’s Policy on Academic Dishonesty in the University of Oregon *Student Handbook*.

Accommodations

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If aspects of the instruction or design of this course limit your participation, we encourage you to talk with us as soon as possible so that we can strategize how you can get the most out of this course. If you have a disability, you are also welcome to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu.

SCHEDULE:

Date	Assignment Due	Topic
Tues, Nov 11		Introductions, Learning Preferences
Thurs, Nov 13	Journal Entry #1	Attention, Active Listening & Note Taking
Tues, Nov 18	Journal Entry #2 Cornell Notes or Revision Cards	Study Guides & Bloom’s Taxonomy
Thurs, Nov 20	Journal Entry #3	Memory
Tues, Nov 25	Journal Entry #4	Objective Tests & Essay Tests
Thurs, Nov 27		Holiday—No Class
Thurs, Dec 2	Portfolio	Test Anxiety

TACKLING TESTS PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS

Your portfolio is a compilation of your coursework, showcasing specific strategies as well as your overall observations and progress. Your completed portfolio will contain:

- samples of 3 test preparation strategies
 - a study plan for your final week of the term
 - Test Takeaways
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TEST PREPARATION STRATEGIES

Experiment with three of the following test preparation strategies for one or more of your current courses. Please turn in copies of your work so that you still have originals for your own study time.

- A) Cornell Notes—Take lecture or reading notes in the Cornell format. Include preview questions, concluding summary, and margin review questions. Bring your Cornell notes (or revision cards) to the third class meeting.
 - B) Revision Cards—Condense notes from previous course material onto ten or more separate cards organized by topic. Bring your revision cards (or Cornell notes) to the third class meeting.
 - C) Spider/Flow/Mind Map—Organize course concepts into a visual/spatial format using one of the models described in the text (see pgs. 38-47). Include at least twenty ideas and incorporate colors, codes, or other creative elements to further organize your map.
 - D) Study Guide Chart—Create and fill in a study guide chart such as those presented in class (and on Blackboard). Use rows for topics and columns for traits/characteristics.
 - E) Bloom’s Taxonomy Study Questions—Write twenty carefully worded questions that could appear on an exam and that represent variety within Bloom’s Taxonomy. Make any 8 of these questions multiple-choice, with four choices each.
 - F) Essay Exam—Write an original essay exam question that would require about 30 minutes to answer; then create a matrix and write an essay based on the matrix. (Turn in the question, matrix, and essay.)
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STUDY PLAN FOR FINALS

Plan your final week (the last 7 days of your term counting backwards from your latest final/paper/project) using the handout provided in class. In the “Tasks” area, make sure you identify particular areas within the course content and specific methods for learning the material. Don’t use general language such as “review” or “study.” Specifics are crucial. The calendar must include all of your due dates, scheduled activities (academic, social, work), and study time.

TEST TAKEAWAYS

Create your own resource for successful university test preparation. You may choose either of the following options (or propose your own idea by the third class meeting).

*Whatever form you choose, you must use your own words (occasional, clearly cited quotations are okay) **and** provide examples from the course text and your own experiences.*

A) Consider this quotation:

“Plato defined a slave as one who accepts from another the purposes which control his conduct. This condition obtains even where there is no slavery in the legal sense. It is found wherever men are engaged in activity which is socially serviceable, but whose service they do not understand and have no personal interest in.” -- John Dewey, in *Democracy and Education*

Write a 3-page essay (typed, double-spaced, standard 12-point font) in which you explore this idea in the context of university courses and exams. Are there “purposes” in university exams that “control” you? How can you escape this kind of control and take control for yourself? In what ways are these classes “socially serviceable”? Is there a way that you can make that “service” benefit you? How can taking a “personal interest” give you power? Can you practically take an interest in and gain control over exams? Support your response with specific examples from the course text, class discussions, and your own experiences. Be sure to cite your sources.

B) Identify at least 5 pitfalls (common mistakes or challenges) of preparing for tests as a university student. State each pitfall and, for each, write 1-2 paragraphs (at least 150 words) describing why the problem is common and then providing suggestions for attitudes, behaviors, and techniques that can help avoid or overcome the problem and lead to success. Support your recommendations with specific examples from the course text, class discussions, and your own experiences. Be sure to cite your sources.