Mr. Austin’s Exam-Time Tips

4 Weeks Left – Make a Plan...

1. Identify the class that you need the most time to study for. That’s your “hard” class.
2. Identify the one or two classes that you need the least time to study for. Those are your “easy” classes.
3. List all of your classes, grouped into hard, medium, and easy categories.

Mr. A says: if more than two of your classes fall into the “hard” category, you should talk with your advisor about your schedule. If more than two of your classes fall into the “easy” category, either you should take your studies more seriously or you should talk to your advisor about your schedule.

4. For your hard class, make a list of the topics you expect to see on the exam – note that this should include topics that you haven’t seen yet, as you still have a month until exams. Show this list to your teacher and ask for their feedback.

Mr. A says: do not underestimate the value of that last step – done correctly, you will help determine what will appear on your exam!

Aim for this list to have 20-25 topics on it. If you need to, gather small topics under a more general heading or break large topics into sub-headings to get to that range.

From this list, identify the few topics that give you the most trouble: these will get double-treatment. Go to your calendar and start writing topics in on the days between now and the start of exams (leave the day before each exam blank). Spread around hard and easy topics, give the hardest topics two looks – one early-on and one nearer to the exam. Play around with it.

5. Repeat for the medium classes, but break those into a dozen topics. Spread them through the whole month, also.

6. Repeat for the easy classes, but pick a half-dozen topics: maybe full chapters, maybe just the few topics that gave you trouble the first time ‘round. Parcel them out through the two weeks leading up to the exams.

... And Execute It.

Your calendar should now have a month of studying indicated on it. For the first two weeks there should be 2 topics indicated per day, for the last two weeks there will be three or four topics indicated per day. Plan to spend half an hour per topic: this means that you need to carve out an extra hour to two hours per day for studying as exams draw near. Find one of them in the academic day: start bringing books to lunch, use free periods more efficiently (sit in an empty classroom rather than going to the dorm, for instance), &c. The other hour comes from your afternoon/evening.

And now it’s exam week. You’re well-prepared. You have nothing you must study on your calendar (remember those days you left blank?). Rest well, eat well, exercise well. Use the day before each exam for touch-up review. Enjoy.

Mr. A says: If you’ve prepared properly this will be the easiest week of the term, not the hardest.