

# **TEST-TAKING TECHNIQUES**

## **LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES**

### **ERROR #1. ANSWERING WITH THE WRONG LIST OR THE WRONG CONCEPT.**

**CAUSE:** Memorizing material as separate lists and ideas rather than getting an overall view of the material by organizing it on study sheets and learning it as an organized mass of material.

**AVOID:** Make study sheets with clear titles and topic headings.

### **ERROR #2. WRITING A SKETCHY ANSWER.**

**CAUSE:** Skimpy lecture notes and skimpy study sheets.

**AVOID:** Take complete lecture notes and make complete study sheets.

### **ERROR #3. ANSWERING A QUESTION IN THE WRONG WAY.**

**CAUSE:** Careless or hasty reading of the question and the desire to write about what you have studied, whether or not the professor asks it.

**AVOID:** Read the question well, mark and number its parts, and refer to it from time to time as you write. Ask the professor to clarify a difficult question, if this can be done without giving away the answer.

### **ERROR #4. NOT KNOWING THE KEY TERMS EITHER AS THEY APPEAR IN THE QUESTION OR AS THEY ARE NEEDED IN THE ANSWER.**

**CAUSE:** Neglecting to isolate and learn key terms throughout the semester.

**AVOID:** Write key terminology on lists or cards and learn what these terms mean before the exam.

**ERROR #5. NOT KNOWING HOW TO APPLY THE MATERIAL FROM THE COURSE TO NEW SITUATIONS (OCCURS IN MATH AND SCIENCE AS WELL AS IN LIBERAL ARTS CLASSES).**

**CAUSE:** Not thinking enough about the material being learned during the semester.

**AVOID:** Invent original examples, apply what you have learned to new situations, look for fresh relationships and write your insights and ideas in [square brackets] in lecture notes, textbooks, and on study sheets.

**ERROR #6. LEAVING OUT IMPORTANT MATERIAL SUCH AS PARTS OF THE QUESTION, SUPPORTING DETAILS, OR RAMIFICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS.**

**CAUSE:** No reading the question well enough and not knowing how much information to include in an answer.

**AVOID:** Write all you can that is relevant to the question. Use plenty of detail and examples. Reread the question when you finished writing your answer to check whether you have answered all parts.

**ERROR #7. WRITING LONG, RAMBLING ANSWERS THAT ARE INEFFICIENT, REDUNDANT, AND FULL OF IRRELEVANT MATERIAL.**

**CAUSE:** Neglecting to plan and make brief outlines of answers before beginning to write.

**AVOID:** Make brief outlines next to exam questions, add to them as thoughts occur to you during the exam, and follow them when you compose your answers.

**ERROR #8. FAILING TO PROOFREAD ANSWERS BEFORE TURNING THEM IN.**

**CAUSE:** Neglecting to plan and make brief outlines of answers before beginning to write.

**AVOID:** Leave enough time at the end of the exam to edit your answers. Cross out material that does not contribute to the answer. Neatly add material that does. Make sure you have written complete sentences and that your handwriting is legible.