Questions to Ask Before an Exam

1. How many questions will be on the exam?
2. What types of questions will be on the exam?
3. What material will be covered?
4. How much will the exam count toward the final grade?
5. Will the questions come primarily from the notes or the text?
6. Will partial credit be awarded for some answers?
7. How much time will we have for the exam?
8. Will there be any extra credit?
9. What materials (books, notes, calculators, and so on) will we be able to use?
10. What outside material (handouts, readings, and so on) will be included on the exams?

Exam Preparation (in Mathematics)

- Many professors allow students to look at sample tests from previous years – take advantage of this and use them to study.
- Review as many sample problems as possible. Do not just read the problems; practice solving them. Anticipate variations that may appear.
- Identify problems that are most characteristic of the techniques presented in the chapter. Record these on a study sheet, and summarize in your own words how you worked them out. Compare with someone from the class.
- As you solve homework problems and review returned exams and quizzes, search for a pattern of error.
- If you are having trouble with your course, get help immediately. Consult with your instructor and/or check with the Center for Academic Services for tutoring.
- Work in study groups.
- Obtain additional study aids. Check with your instructor for recommended references.
- When an exam is returned, rework the problems on which you lost points to find out exactly what you did wrong.

Useful Terms for Exams

<u>Directional words:</u>

Analyze: break the topic into its separate parts and write about (discuss, examine, or interpret) each one.
Criticize: evaluate the positive and negative effects of what is being discussed.
Define: provide the exact meaning of a word, concept, etc.
Describe: make the topic clear by giving the major details and supporting facts.
Discuss: consider and debate or argue the pros and cons of an issue.
Enumerate/list: recall and specify items in the form of a list.
Evaluate: give your opinion about the value or worth of something; include supporting evidence.
Explain: make an idea clear; show how a concept is developed or give reason for an occurrence.
Illustrate: explain by giving concrete examples.

Interpret: clarify the meaning or paraphrase the information; comment upon, give examples, describe relationships, explain the meaning (describe & evaluate).
Justify: explain the purpose behind or reasons for a statement.
Outline: describe the main ideas or points.
Prove: use evidence and arguments to support assertion.
Relate: reveal connections between subjects or ideas, often by putting subject into a larger context.
State: explain precisely.
Summarize: give a condensed account without unnecessary details.
Trace: show the development, history, order, or progress of a subject or event (often by showing cause and effect).

The Final Countdown

- Take care of yourself. Sleep and eat well. Cold, flu, mono, etc. will knock down your GPA. Avoid aggravating people and situations.
- Take care of your work. Set up a study group if not already working with one. Articulating your ideas to others will ensure you know yourself. Create practice tests. Do not assume multiple choice or true-false formats will not demand true mastery of the material.
- Take your time, but keep an eye on it too. Dedicate time according to point value. Leave nothing blank (unless you are penalized for guessing). In the exam, if you start to panic, take a deep breath, refocus, and start again. Take the full time to go over your work. You have put in 15 weeks, why save 30 minutes?
- Take advantage of Hamline's resources. See your professors for any last minute questions.

Information for this brochure was adapted from Mc Whorter, Kathleen T. *Academic Reading*. Addison Wesley Longman, 2001.