How to Form a Study Group

Who to Ask and Who Not to Ask:

- Be on the lookout for students in your courses who ask questions and take notes during class.
- Your friends may or may not be good choices. If your friends share similar academic and/or personal goals, they might make good study partners. Beware of studying with friends who are mainly social friends for you. You may too easily distract each other.

How to Form a Study Group:

- Ask some people like those mentioned above if they want to meet over lunch or coffee to discuss forming a study group. No one has to commit at this point.
- Write a note on the black board asking interested students to contact you, or pass around a sign-up sheet in class.
- Limit the group to 5 or 6 members. Larger group meetings are difficult to conduct. Try a one time only session. If that works, plan another. If that works, set up a time to meet at least once per week for the rest of the semester.

How to Conduct a Study Group:

- Set an agenda for each meeting and decide how long each meeting will last in advance.
- Rotate leadership. Each week select a person who will guide the discussions for the next week. It is their job to keep the group on task. This person does not do the work for the group, but serves as the facilitator.
- Leave at least 5 to 10 minutes at the end of each session for brainstorming possible test questions. At the next meeting, go over these questions and brainstorm solutions and answers to the questions together. Figure out where in your notes, handouts, and books that the answers can be found. Identify someone to serve as the group’s secretary that week and write down the questions along with a list of places to find the answers to the possible questions. Photocopy the list for all members of the group.
- Compare lecture and/or lab notes to see if you all recorded the same important points so that each of you can fill in missing information. Make note of information that was confusing for many members of the group. Ask a volunteer from the group to speak to the professor on behalf of the group. The volunteer reports back to the group on the professors response. You are still responsible for learning the information on your own and if you still don't understand, go to the professor yourself.
- Group members prepare for group each week by reading all the material. It is recommended that your group cover what has happened in your course over the most recent week rather than covering what will happen in the next week. Your study group is only one aspect of each individual member’s review process.
- If your book or lab manual has questions at the end of each chapter or section, divide the questions among members each week and have one person explain that section to the rest of the group. The other group members help by clarifying ideas of the speaker and by correcting any misinformation.
- End each meeting with each member assignments for each member for the coming week.