

chapter 7 PREPARING FOR FINALS:



THE 2 MINUTE WARNING...

# chapter 7

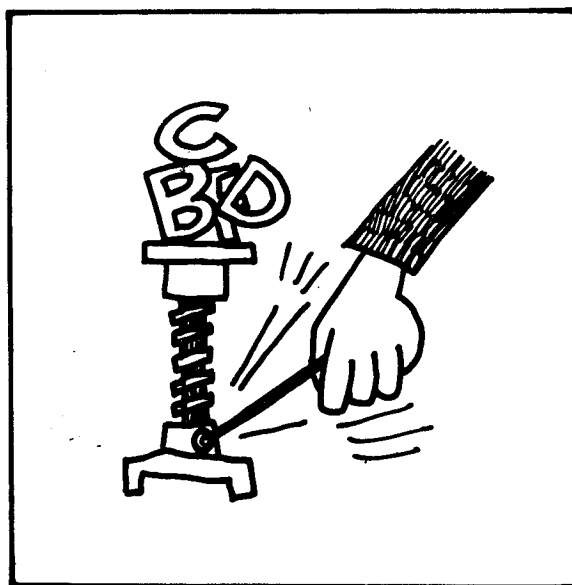
## PREPARING FOR FINALS:

### The Two Minute Warning

There once was a time in each class  
When the students could lie in the grass.  
But procrastination is **DONE**.  
There's no more time for fun.  
Or you'll get booted out on your *gluteus maximus!*

#### 7.1 PREPARING FOR FINALS IS DIFFERENT

The object now is to pump as many extra grade points into your total as possible. The real "learning" time was mainly during the term, but now you can still improve the **GRADE**. Start with an analysis of where you are and what is **REALISTICALLY** possible. This is done by listing the **COURSES**, the **CREDITS**, and your **CURRENT LEVEL**, using the same Analysis Chart used in Chapter 6, but with slightly different determinations. Study the example in Table 7.1. Notice that this is the same student we used for our example in Chapter 6, but after a modest improvement. (He *must* have been using at least a portion of this book.) *Then* use a blank chart from the back of this book to analyze your own situation.



Since we are now within the "final warning", we use 90 for an A (versus 95 when a margin-for-comfort was wiser), etc.

This analysis clearly shows that if this student stopped studying for every other course to concentrate on history, he *still* couldn't pass it. In addition, extra study could *not* raise his chemistry or math grades to A's, but a modest increase in study effort could *raise* his grades in chemistry and math (and possibly in psychology). Reducing study time for other courses (except history) is neither necessary nor wise. Now he can plan for improving some grades and *forget* about history.

Table 7.1. Analysis Chart

(FOR DECISION-MAKING NEAR "DROP DEADLINE" and IN PLANNING STUDY FOR FINAL EXAMS)

COURSE	DATA						CALCULATIONS						INTUITIVE FACTOR (What do you really think you can do if you honestly try?)
	CREDIT HOURS	GRADE			PRESENT AVG. STUDY TIME [hrs/wk]	FRACTION** OF GRADE ALREADY DETERMINED*	GRADE AVG. NEEDED** ON REMAINING WORK FOR:		NEW STUDY TIME NECESSARY FOR:		Desired Grade	Minimum Grade	
		Desired	Minimum Acceptable	Present			Desired Grade	Minimum Grade	Desired Grade	Minimum Grade			
CHEMISTRY	3	A 90	B 80	C 76	4/5	8	(145)	95	X	X	10.8	CAN GET B. INCREASE WORK TO 11 HRS/WK!	
CHEM LAB	1	A 90	B 80	A 94	11/12	2	48	[72-10]	0.5	0.5	0	DON'T STOP. (IT'S FUN!)	
ENGLISH	3	B 80	C 70	B 81	4/5	4	75	25	3.5	3.5	0.8	CAN KEEP B. CONTINUE AT ABOUT 4 HRS/WK.	
HISTORY	3	B 80	D 60	F 37	5/6	0	(294)	(174)	X	X	X	STOPPING WORK WAS WISE!	
MATH	4	A 90	B 80	C 78	4/5	10	(140)	90	X	X	11.5	CAN GET B. INCREASE WORK TO 12 HRS/WK!	
PSYCH	3	B 80	C 70	C 75	2/3	3	90	60	4.2	4.2	1.8	MIGHT GET LUCKY. TRY FOR B WITH 4 HRS/WK!	
PHYS. ED.	1	pass	pass	pass	100%!!	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

\*If in doubt, ask the PROF.

\*\*For example, number of "points" to date divided by total possible "points".

\*\*\*Calculate "GRADE AVG. NEEDED" by: 
$$\frac{\text{grade ("desired" or "minimum")} - (\text{present grade} \times \text{fraction det'd})}{(\text{fraction remaining})}$$

†NEW STUDY TIME = 
$$\left[ (\text{Present avg. study time} + \text{credit hours}) \times \left( \frac{\text{grade avg. needed}}{\text{present grade}} \right) - (\text{credit hours}) \right]$$

## 7.2 A SPECIAL SCHEDULE FOR STUDYING FOR FINALS

### 7.2a Sleep Is First

Get up **DAILY** at the normal hour. You must be fresh and alert when you take the final exam. [Also be at 100% efficiency when you do your studying. (See Chapters 1-3.)]

### 7.2b Time Blocks

Many short study sessions are more effective than one marathon grind. **DO NOT** study only chemistry until you have finished the chemistry exam, then only math until you have finished the math exam, etc. Use uncommitted study hours, and some “free” hours, to get the **EXTRA** time you want for the first final. Study time for courses that are “safe” may be cut back **SLIGHTLY** but **NEVER** eliminated.

### 7.2c Time Block Changes

As the final exam week progresses, large blocks of time appear. Because large blocks are **NOT** efficient, they will do little to improve a grade. To **MAXIMIZE** the rewards, schedule more short breaks as the week progresses and study all the remaining courses on an alternating basis.

### 7.2d “Nerves”

**NERVES** can reduce your study efficiency to absolutely *zero* (or even make it negative). The moment your mind flits to “how much you don’t know yet”, you have reached zero efficiency. Quietly close the book at this point and do something else—study for another course, take a short break or use “Brain-Flushing” (page 46). For milder cases of nerves, switch to **EASIER** material. (Nerves interfere more with difficult tasks than with easier ones.)

### 7.2e Positive Thinking

Think positively! That refers not only to your state of mind but also to knowledge acquired. Each objective you master means more points on the final exam. Concentrate on *getting more points*. **NEVER** prepare for finals on the basis of “how far you are” from 95% (or 100%) mastery.

### 7.2f “Examsmanship” Review

Reread Chapter 4 during one of your breaks before **EACH** final exam.

### 7.2g Selective Review

Plan to omit the “most difficult and most time consuming” topics from your final exam review **TO THE EXTENT THAT THIS WILL STILL INSURE THE GRADE YOU’RE SEEKING**. **ONLY** after you have mastered the *necessary* “minimum” objectives and find that you have extra time should you study “more difficult” topics.

### 7.2h Selective Exam Work

**DURING** the exam, skip those topics you omitted from your review (Section 7.2g) until you have finished and checked your other work. **THEN**, if time remains, try some of the remaining questions.

### 7.2i "Surprises"

EXPECT to find at least one question on the final exam that seems to have been put there by mistake. (Maybe it really belongs to a final examination in some advanced course—and maybe it only SEEMS to. As you work through the exam, this STRANGE question may suddenly make sense.)

### 7.2j Work Time Use

STAY and utilize *all* the allotted exam time. Those who leave early almost always get a lower score on their final exam than their average to that point. If you run out of things to do, reread the OTHER questions to find clues to that extra-tough problem mentioned in Section 7.2i.

GOOD LUCK!