Creating a Study Group

Study groups can help you to better understand what you are learning by providing an opportunity to discuss class material and clarify areas of confusion. If used effectively, study groups can help you to get better grades.

How to Form a Study Group

**# of Members:** 4 to 6 is optimal

**Who to Ask:** Ask classmates who are doing well in the class. Look for people who stay alert in class, take notes, and ask questions. Try not to form a group with just your friends – odds are it will turn into a social session instead.

**Where to Meet:** Hold study group sessions in a place that is free of distractions and has room to spread out books, notes, and other class materials (library, study lounge, living room, etc.)

**How Long to Meet:** Study groups should meet for no more than 2-3 hours at a time.

**When to Meet:** Try to meet at the same day(s) and time(s) each week.

Activities for Study Groups

- Discuss readings/lectures. Define terms and concepts.
- Review and compare notes. Work on problems/questions/exercises
- Maximize your group study power by not using this time to do your homework together. Do your homework separately and bring your questions to the group.
- Take turns teaching mini-lessons on the material
- Ask each other questions on topics/concepts you are confused on
- Have each member bring practice questions relating to the section’s material for the group to practice
- Share methods you are using to study/learn the material (i.e. diagrams, mnemonics, techniques)

How to Talk to Your Instructor

*Get to know your instructors! Not only are they the people handing out your grades, they can be one of your most valuable campus assets.*

**Tips for a Successful Visit**

1. Visit your instructor during posted office hours or (better yet) schedule an appointment. Office hours are times set aside to help students - take advantage of this FREE resource!
2. If you make an appointment, show up on time.
3. Introduce yourself when you arrive and identify which course section you’re in.
4. If you’re not sure how your instructor prefers to be addressed, ask them.
5. Know what you would specifically like to discuss before meeting (i.e. questions, needing help, concerns about tests/assignments, field expertise, informational interview).
6. If you make an appointment share the reason with your instructor before the meeting so they too can prepare.
7. Be prepared for your meeting. Write down questions that you have before visiting with your instructor. Think about how to clearly convey your message.
8. Bring to your meeting: class syllabus and all graded assignments (homework, exams, quizzes)
9. Remember, instructors respond better to requests than demands.
10. Ask what resources are available and what resources the instructor would suggest for you.
11. Thank the instructor for taking the time to meet with you (regardless of the outcome).

**Conversation Starters:**

- Instructor X, I need your help.
- Instructor X, I’m not getting the kind of grades I know I can in your class; what can I change to be more successful?
- Instructor X, would you mind if I came by during your office hours to get some help?
- Instructor X, how can I best study for your course?
- Instructor X, I’m unsure how to best read the textbook. Can you help me?

*Remember, college instructors are people too!*