

Advice: Strategies for the last weeks of class and the Final Exam

Depending on how you're doing right now, your strategy is different:

A and B students: You're doing well and should be pretty happy with your current standing! You probably understood most things pretty well when we learned them, so studying for the final will be reviewing and remembering, perhaps asking questions about more confusing issues. (The final exam is still worth a lot of points! Don't slack off. Unless you have a very high A+, you can still lower your grade just by blowing off the final exam.)

High C students: You're passing now, but it's not a done deal. You have to pass the final to show that you know enough to be successful in the next class. The final exam is very important for you. There are topics you need to learn, that you didn't get the first time around. Everything will be on the final, so you need to go back and learn the topics you missed. Study hard, check your work carefully, and be sure to eat nutritious food and rest fully before the exam.

Low C and high D students: If you're just barely passing now, so it's not clear whether you will pass or fail the class. Be especially sure to study for the final. The advice to C students applies to you, too, except that you have an even bigger challenge: you have more topics you didn't get the first time. You have a lot to study, so you have to study a LOT. But it's worth it, and here's why: I believe that a student who earns an A on the final must know the material and deserves to pass the class, so if you're borderline going in to the final but get an excellent grade (solid A) on the final, you will pass the class. There's a chance you may not pass, so read the information in the next section, too.

Low D and F students: On the grade printout, you will know from the grade printout whether it is possible for you to pass the class. Talk to me if you're not sure what the grade printout means.

1. You will have to take the class again, so....face this fact now.
2. The longer you wait to repeat the class, the more you will forget. Don't get off the horse, so to speak. Register for the class NEXT semester and take it now while you can build on what you know. You will need an override form from me in order to register for a class you're currently taking. I have plenty. Talk to me after class.
3. You will have to take the final exam some time in the future, so take the final exam now! See what it looks like. You'll know what you're studying for when you're taking it "for real".
4. Think about what you did or didn't do this semester that might have affected your grade. Write down some resolutions about what you're going to do differently next semester. (Examples might be: "I'm going to do my homework every day", or "I'm going to ask questions in class", or "I'm going to get a tutor from the very beginning." or "I'm going to study math for one hour each day, all semester.") The simple act of writing it down makes it more likely you'll do it.

Failure isn't falling down. Failure is staying down.