

# Academic Skills

## Lecture Notes

### Use your Pen

- Lecture notes should be as **specific** and **concrete** as possible: Be **precise** about the lecturer's key ideas. It makes them easier to understand, remember and apply.
- Take **selective** notes. Don't try to copy information verbatim. Write down **ideas** from the lecture that are most **salient**. If you get stuck or desperate, write down single **cue words** to help remind you of the topic, then go back and fill in your blanks later.
- Pounce on lecture information that **ties together** or explains important themes. Use **comparison** and **contrast** to find relationships and to create "mental filing systems" to organize information.

### Use your Ears

- Develop the **intention** to learn while you are in a lecture. You've made the effort and taken the time to come to the lecture. Make the most of your time by learning the information as you receive it. The more information you understand, the less you'll have to memorize.
- Listen for **clues**. When the speaker takes a deep breath, changes her intonation, puts down the chalk, big things are coming.

### Use your Body

- **Get involved** in the ideas and information being presented. Rather than thinking of yourself as "attending" (in the passive sense of "being at") a lecture, think in terms of "participating in" the lecture (the way you would participate in a conversation.)
- Sit up front to hear better, see better, avoid distractions.
- Compare notes with fellow students to get their strategies for good notetaking.

### Use your Mind

- Take a minute before class to anticipate what the instructor is likely to present based on:
  1. the **syllabus**
  2. what has been presented in the course thus far
  3. a quick **review** of your notes from the last lecture
  4. a quick glance at the **readings** assigned for the current class
- What is the **relationship** between information presented in lecture and information presented in the readings, in section, in the written work, in the problems assigned?
- Anticipate the ways you may be tested on material presented in lecture. Give yourself a pretest to help you to identify areas of strength and diagnose areas of weakness.