

Study Tips for Sheldon's Psychology Classes by Michelle Lyon

Many professors give out detailed study guides and tell students what material to focus on for an exam. Sheldon does not do this and he does not allow his assistants to do it. This isn't because he doesn't want you to succeed; it's because those things often work *against* real learning.

The point of tests in Sheldon's classes is to assess what material student are retaining in their memories. Tests, therefore, normally include material from all parts of every chapter studied, and from every lecture. Further, he writes his own tests, which vary in content every semester, controlling for all the "tricks" and "strategies" students try with multiple choice exams. Moreover, things like choosing the "all the above" choice automatically, choosing the longest or shortest answer if you are unsure, looking for recognizable phrases from the textbook, etc. ***do not work.***

As a student of Sheldon's classes, I have found that I do well on tests if I do the following:

- **WRITE**: Writing is such a huge help in studying. Write out both practice essays, write thoughts in the margins as you read, compare class notes with the textbooks and write comparisons in the notes.
- **DRAW**: Draw or build a model, or act out a scene, or create other visuals. Try to make the visuals from memory.
- **READ**: Here's a tricky part. Reading is important, but it is not always important to read and memorize every single word in the book. Our textbook has practice questions at the end of every chapter, little exercises throughout the chapter, vocabulary words in the margins, and other such exercises. Take advantage of those after reading through the text, and try to find the answers yourself in the text.
- **BUDDY UP**: You must have study buddies! Two or three is great, but more is even better. Even if you don't know anyone in the class, you can always turn to the person next to you and exchange contact info. Study groups give us the motivation we need to study, and also let us use the creativity and knowledge of others to help us learn. They also make leaning more *fun*, which is never a bad idea.
- **TALK**: Talk to the people in your study group to compare and debate all the stuff you're learning. In doing this, you teach one another and in teaching, you retain the material. Also, talk to your family, friends, people in other classes, or your online buddies about the things you're learning in your psychology class. Teaching people (even informally) helps you integrate the material into your mind, making it easier to remember for tests, but also helping you truly *learn* it!