

FUNDAMENTAL FOUNDATIONS

A PEER LED STUDY-BY-SUBJECT GUIDE

AMERICAN CULTURE, IDENTITY & PUBLIC LIFE

GETTING STARTED

"In order to maximize the potential for success, all students should enter this course with an open mind pertaining to the rich cultural diversity that characterizes public life in the United States in the 21st Century." Joseph B., Premedical & Health Studies '15, peer tutor

"This course is a necessary introduction to being able to understand the politics and laws that surround healthcare work, as well as being able to comprehend contemporary debates involving healthcare reform, so that you can make important, educated decisions regarding these oftentimes moral issues." Timothy C., PharmD '18, peer tutor

"There are topics related to healthcare under debate all the time. Through the skills learned from this class, students can think more thoroughly on issues, have a better understanding, and make better decisions in the future." Wenli L., Chemistry/Pharmaceutical Chemistry '15, peer tutor

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

- Always fill out any discussion questions before going to class. Always!
- Attend class regularly so you don't miss important discussions, videos or in-class assignments.
- Actively make connections to readings in the course by developing the ability to recognize certain overarching themes, even if they are not listed in the course syllabus.
- Relate the course material to current affairs and everyday life. An important part of success in this course relies heavily on the ability to remember and apply material and concepts from throughout the semester.
- Thoroughly read all of the assigned readings on time, and make an effort to understand everything that you read. Part of active reading involves looking up definitions of terms you may not recognize.
- Identify at least two main ideas in each article you read. Ask yourself: What is the 'big picture' that the author is trying to paint for me in this article? What are the supporting details?
- Think deeply about "why" something happened, in addition to "what" happened.
- Utilize different learning strategies to best understand the course material; take good notes early on, read your articles aloud, and create role plays to illustrate what you have learned.
- Create flow-charts to designate major themes, discussion topics, and related supporting evidence
- Go to your professor's office hours. Utilize peer tutors and learn in small study groups with your peers.

TACKLING THE TEST

Start writing the first draft of your exam essay the day it is assigned. The Writing Center is an excellent resource.

For exam essays, use your words wisely and efficiently and never exceed or fall short of the maximum word count assigned by your professor.

Write more than one draft of the essay before the exam; at least three drafts is a good idea.

On multiple choice sections of the exam, circle or underline keywords in each question to help you choose the best answer.

DO'S AND DON'TS

Do...

- Fully participate in class discussions from day one.
- Ask your professor, a tutor or a fellow student if you have questions about the material early on.
- Stay on track with your readings and re-read articles right after class to reinforce your understanding.
- Complete any discussion questions provided in the textbook or on Blackboard before coming to class.
- Create questions while reading and during class discussions. Compare your answers with your friends in study groups, and follow-up with your professor or peer tutors for clarification.

DON'T...

- Take the attitude that this course is a good GPA booster and assume that it will be easy.
- Wait to 'get a feel' for how the class will run before you decide to participate.
- Go into the class with a negative mindset because you are bad at history. Your success depends directly on the amount of effort you put into learning and understanding.
- Assume that attending class without reading any of the articles will result in a good grade, or assume that discussion questions contain all of the material you need to know for the test.
- Solely skim the readings and look for "what" important people did or "what" happened at certain events. You also need to know "how" and "why" the person or event is significant.

MEMORY TIPS

- Some historical information may have been covered in previous courses you have taken. Relate new information to what you already know to improve your ability to recall it.
- Make flashcards to help you recall historical people, events, and dates. Remember that you must understand the reasons why the information is important, so you must use additional learning methods.
- Relate information that you learn in class to current affairs and things that you experience every day.

FINISHING YOUR FOUNDATION

"Be curious. Life and these types of courses in general are much more fun when you accept that there is more to what is going on in the world than you can possibly recognize at any given time. Enjoy these readings." Joseph B., Premedical & Health Studies '15, Peer Tutor

"A fascinating aspect of this course is that it provides you with different perspectives and sides of sensitive issues, allowing you to make your own decisions about how you feel about the matter, whether you agree or disagree, and how significant you believe the issue itself is." Timothy C., PharmD '18, peer tutor

Please note: This handout is a compilation of resources provided by peer tutors and academic support professionals. This information is meant to supplement recommended learning strategies provided by course professors, peer tutors, the Math Center, the Writing Center, and the Academic Resource Center. They are not intended as a replacement for MCPHS University resources, faculty and staff, class attendance, course syllabi, or course materials. For additional information, please contact the Academic Resource Center at 617.732.2860.