

Study Methods (Stephen John McQuoid)

This course is all about getting the most out of your study. It incorporates everything from classroom behaviour to the presentation of academic work.

In the Classroom

A successful academic career begins with the right attitude in the classroom. Without this, your study will be hampered.

1. Be on time.
2. Be positive and alert.
3. If the lecturer is boring and concentration is a problem read notes so that the time is well spent.
4. Copy down everything on the board and make as extensive notes as you are able.
 - Some of the information given will only be obtainable in the lecture.
 - Some lecturers will give out few handouts, but anything covered in class could be on a class test.
 - All assignments will be given out in class, so this is the best time to note down anything that is said about the assignment.
5. Never be afraid to ask or question anything.
6. Always be quick to participate.

If your writing is messy you may need to re-write notes at the end of the day. Ensure that you keep all your notes in an orderly fashion so that you can retrieve them easily. It is also a good thing to read over your notes at the end of a week to get it into mind.

Essay Writing

Much of the homework done will be in the form of an essay. The following are some of the basic rules that govern the preparation for and presentation of an essay.

Preparing an Essay

1. Always read the question carefully. Remember that most mistakes begin at this stage. An excellent essay which does not answer the question is no good.
2. Note carefully exactly what the question is asking you to do. Be particularly aware of words and expressions like “compare”, “review”, “to what extent” and “contrast”.
3. Give yourself a reasonable amount of time to work on each section of your essay.
4. Draw up an initial outline which will give you the skeleton of your essay.

5. Find as many books and magazine articles on the issue as you can. The more you read the better your end product will be. Skim read the salient parts and make brief notes as you go along. Always record the page number and source of any relevant passage.
6. Amend your outline as appropriate.
7. Write your essay and refer to your source books more carefully.
8. If you have any doubt about an issue, use vague language. For example if you do not know the precise date of an event it is appropriate to say “towards the end of the 19th century”.
9. When your essay is finished, read it over carefully to cheque for any mistakes.

N.B. All essays should be presented typed.

Essay Presentation

1. All essays should be typed.
2. A word count should be included at the end of your essay.
3. The question must be included on the first page at the top as well as the name of student.
4. Any quotations must be numbered in a small font and referenced at the bottom of the page. The same applies to information gleaned from another source.
5. A complete bibliography must be included on the last page. Note only include books that you have actually read.

Exam Preparation

1. Find out everything about the exam beforehand. You need to know **what kind of an exam it is**, the issues which might come up and the best way to prepare. You also need to find out if you can have a bible in the exam.
2. Decide how you are going to study eg. Will you work in a **study group** or will you **work alone**.
3. Collect all your notes on the subject and reduce them for ease of memory.

4. Utilise devices that will help you memorise eg. Flashcards, nemonic devices and word associations.
5. Study early to prevent cramming.
6. Get enough sleep and nutrition before the exam.
7. Relax before beginning the exam.
8. Make sure you read the questions thoroughly before beginning. Feel free to ask the examiner about anything you don't understand.
9. Answer easy questions first.
10. Allocate time for each question before you begin and do a **rough outline** of your answers on a scrap of paper.
11. Read over your answers before you leave the room.

General Study Guidelines

1. Get a suitable environment for study.
2. Don't spend more than two hours at a time on any one subject.
3. Keep alert by taking regular short breaks.
4. Study at a time when you are alert.
5. Commit as much to memory as you go along.
6. Spend as much time as you can reading.
7. When making notes underline or highlight salient parts.
8. Learn to be disciplined.
9. Remember that your study is an act of worship.

Stress-busting Strategy

1. Pray frequently as Jesus did.
2. Learn to support each other.
3. Get some exercise.
4. Measure and learn to control your emotions.
5. Protect your personal space.
6. Find a hobby.