**Multiple Choice Question Exams**

**A Checklist Preparation**

* Bear in mind the purpose of this type of exam! Contrary to popular opinion, multiple choice questions are not designed to torture you or make you confused about your field. Actually, they are intended to ensure that you have key vocabulary and concepts clear in your mind and ready for use.
* Anticipate questions: what terms/definitions/concepts (1) were in the course title or used frequently by the professor; (2) gave students problems or generated debate during the course; (3) were noted in comments on assignments? These are likely to be on the exam.
* Prepare for the exam by making a list of key terms, concepts and definitions. Look up any that the professor uses in class but hasn’t discussed. Cross-check the material on your list with class notes, textbooks, etc. to ensure accuracy.
* Based on your list, make flashcards with (1) the official definition of a term quoted from the text or another source; (2) a paraphrase in your own words; (3) a definition by example. This technique will ensure that your knowledge is based on understanding, not memorization: if the question is posed in an unexpected way, you can still cope! Flashcards help the mind to learn how to switch between topics quickly and recognize material out of context.
* Think about where you will complete the exam;
  + Choose somewhere quiet where you will not be disturbed for the duration of your exam. Clear any distractions from the area; keep your desk free from clutter and clear away any things that may distract you e.g. photographs, mobile phone etc.
  + Limit the number of different windows/programs running on your computer at the same time during the exam.
  + If possible, try to solely connect to the internet via an ethernet cable directly from the modem/router to your computer, such that you are accessing the internet via a direct connection instead of through Wi-Fi. Make sure that small devices like mobile phones/tablets are not connected to Wi-Fi during the interview. If possible, try to make sure that devices like smart TV’s, video game consoles or smart speakers like google home or Alexa are fully powered off during the interview.

**During the Exam**

* Read the directions carefully. Work out how much time you have to answer each question and how you are supposed to register your chosen answer -- circling letters, underlining, blackening, etc.
* Always cover up the list of suggested answers while considering the question. Try to answer each question in your head before deciding between possible solutions.
* Rule out impossible answers so they don’t distract you when choosing between likely looking solutions e.g. the correct response is definitely not a or c but may be either b or d etc. Once you rule out certain responses, re-read possible answers in further detail to help you find the correct answer.
* Try not to get stuck on any question when all are worth the same marks. Don’t linger, but either guess or mark the question number with an X and come back to it later -- working on other questions may help you get the right idea.
* Translate the word or concept into an example if you can’t decide between possible answers.
* Watch out for double negatives. If your study led you to believe that historian AJP Taylor thought that Stalin was partially guilty for the outbreak of World War II, then answer a), which states that Stalin was “not without blame for World War II,” could be the correct one.
* If the instructions pertaining to any question are particularly complex, cross-check that your answer is possible by referring to the rules only after having answered the question in your head.
* If you have time at the end, look back over each of your answers. Again read the question first and try to think of the answer before checking whether you have selected the right option.

**When you have to guess....**

* Answers that include absolute terms (“always,” “never,” etc.) are less likely to be right than those that don’t.
* If two possible answers are similar, then the correct answer will likely be one of them rather than another option that is completely dissimilar. Take your time to read these carefully to identify what separates them in order to help you identify the right answer.
* Process of elimination; there may be responses that you know are incorrect and this will help you limit your responses and increase the likelihood you will choose the right answer.
* If you are completely baffled, your first guess is often right. Don’t overthink your answers too much and move on to the next one.

**After the Exam:**

Relax! Remember that you have done the best you could with the time and resources available. Even if the exam didn’t go quite as you’d hoped, the work you have done on key definitions and concepts will stand you in good stead for the future.

Don’t do the exam post-mortem! Plan something nice for after each exam even if you have exams the following day- it is important to take a little breather even if it just a short walk, fresh air or a nice coffee! After this break or treat you will feel much more revived and will be able to re-focus on your next exam or assignment.