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**History Exams** – **Helpful Hints**

**Preparation ahead of time**

\* **Do not cram!!**

**\* Know the format of the exam/test**

* Is it comprehensive?
* Will you have choices as to which questions you answer?
* What types of questions will you see on the exam?
* How much time will you have?
* The answers to these questions will likely be on the syllabus. \* **Organize study materials**
* Group your notes into like sections
* Use a study guide (if provided) to help you prepare
* Do NOT try to memorize everything
* Look at the main ideas
* Link information in your mind \* **Try to anticipate questions**
* If the professor provides sample questions answer those fully
* Write the answers out – it will help you remember better
* If the professor does not provide sample questions try to anticipate possibilities
* What are the course themes?
* On what did the professor spend a lot of time?
* Try to figure out what is most important – your professor/TAs can help with that \* **Study with a group**
* Talk through questions
* Work with people who have similar study habits
* You can always work with someone to study before an exam
* **Check with your professor before working with others on a take-home exam!!!**

**Just before the exam**

\* Get a full night’s sleep – staying up late to cram does not help

\* Put your notes away at least a half hour before the exam – give your brain a rest

\* Bring an extra blue book (if blue books are required)

\* Bring extra writing tools (sharpened pencils, extra lead for mechanical pencils, pens)

\* Bring a watch

* Do not count on an accurate clock in the room

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* You will probably not be allowed to check your phone

**Time of the exam**

\* Relax

* You prepared, so no need to panic
* Take a couple deep breaths \* Plan
* Look at which questions are worth the most points
* Spend more time on questions worth more points \* Read the questions carefully
* Answer the question asked \* Develop a thesis before you write anything
* Think about the question
* Write down relevant points in an outline
* Carefully construct your argument/thesis
* Use terms, dates, and explanations to prove your thesis/argument
* This few minutes can improve your answer immensely \* Use the entire time provided
* The professor has timed the exam to take all or most of the time available
* If you finish early reread your answers – make sure they are complete

**Things to avoid**

\* Vague Answers (Fuzziness)

* Use simple, direct language
* Say what you mean \* Skipping questions altogether
* A partial answer is better than none at all \* Assume the facts speak for themselves
* Use details, dates, descriptions, etc. to illustrate your points \* Spending too much time on any one question
* Spend more time where you are less comfortable
* Spend less time on questions of which you are sure