

# TUCSON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Class Syllabus Pre-Seminary Class

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COURSE PROFILE	Reading, Lectures, Note-taking and Research	
ONLINE INSTRUCTION	<a href="http://www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk">www.studyskills.soton.ac.uk</a> <a href="http://www.elanguages.ac.uk/sstoolkit/index.html#learning">http://www.elanguages.ac.uk/sstoolkit/index.html#learning</a>	
ONLINE COURSE TITLE	Reading Skills, Lectures and taking notes, Gathering information and using the Library	
ONLINE INSTRUCTOR	University of Southampton - <b>EdShare</b>	<i>Title</i>



Lecture:	See below	
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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

As well as referring to books, articles and web-based material during your academic studies, you will find that lectures are a source of most information. The lectures that you attend on your courses provide important information for assignments, exam revision or simply help to extend your knowledge of your own subject area. Knowing how to read at a college level, write papers, take notes and do research for your papers are important for your studies.

TTS INSTRUCTOR	<i>Title</i>
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# Reading, Lectures, Note-taking and Research

## READING SKILLS

You are expected to do much more reading at university than at school or college; it's not called 'reading for a degree' for nothing.

Here are five tips to help you improve your reading:

1. Styles of reading
2. Active reading
3. A tip for speeding up your active reading
4. Spotting authors' navigation aids
5. Words and vocabulary

### 1. Styles of reading

There are three styles of reading which we use in different situations:

#### **Scanning: for a specific focus**

The technique you use when you're looking up a name in the phone book: you move your eye quickly over the page to find particular words or phrases that are relevant to the task you're doing.

It's useful to scan parts of texts to see if they're going to be useful to you:

- the introduction or preface of a book
- the first or last paragraphs of chapters
- the concluding chapter of a book.

#### **Skimming: for getting the gist of something**

The technique you use when you're going through a newspaper or magazine: you read quickly to get the main points, and skip over the detail. It's useful to skim:

- to preview a passage before you read it in detail
- to refresh your understanding of a passage after you've read it in detail.

Use skimming when you're trying to decide if a book in the library or bookshop is right for you.

#### **Detailed reading: for extracting information accurately**

Where you read every word, and work to learn from the text.

In this careful reading, you may find it helpful to skim first, to get a general idea, but then go back to read in detail. Use a dictionary to make sure you understand all the words used.

### 2. Active reading

When you're reading for your course, you need to make sure you're actively involved with the text. It's a waste of your time to just passively read, the way you'd read a thriller on holiday.

Always make notes to keep up your concentration and understanding.

Here are four tips for active reading.

### **Underlining and highlighting**

Pick out what you think are the most important parts of what you are reading. Do this with your own copy of texts or on photocopies, not with borrowed books.

If you are a visual learner, you'll find it helpful to use different colours to highlight different aspects of what you're reading.

### **Note key words**

Record the main headings as you read. Use one or two keywords for each point. When you don't want to mark the text, keep a folder of notes you make while reading.

### **Questions**

Before you start reading something like an article, a chapter or a whole book, prepare for your reading by noting down questions you want the material to answer. While you're reading, note down questions which the author raises.

### **Summaries**

Pause after you've read a section of text. Then:

1. put what you've read into your own words;
2. skim through the text and check how accurate your summary is and
3. fill in any gaps.



## **3. A tip for speeding up your active reading**

You should learn a huge amount from your reading. If you read passively, without learning, you're wasting your time. So train your mind to learn.

Try the **SQ3R** technique. SQ3R stands for **Survey, Question, Read, Recall** and **Review**.

### **Survey**

Gather the information you need to focus on the work and set goals:

- Read the title to help prepare for the subject
- Read the introduction or summary to see what the author thinks are the key points
- Notice the boldface headings to see what the structure is
- Notice any maps, graphs or charts. They are there for a purpose
- Notice the reading aids, italics, bold face, questions at the end of the chapter. They are all there to help you understand and remember.

### **Question**

Help your mind to engage and concentrate. Your mind is engaged in learning when it is actively looking for answers to questions.

Try turning the boldface headings into questions you think the section should answer.

### **Read**

Read the first section with your questions in mind. Look for the answers, and make up new questions if necessary.

## Recall

After each section, stop and think back to your questions. See if you can answer them from memory. If not, take a look back at the text. Do this as often as you need to.

## Review

Once you have finished the whole chapter, go back over all the questions from all the headings. See you if can still answer them. If not, look back and refresh your memory.



## 4. Spotting authors' navigation aids

Learn to recognise sequence signals, for example:

*"Three advantages of..."* or *"A number of methods are available..."* leads you to expect several points to follow.

The first sentence of a paragraph will often indicate a sequence: *"One important cause of..."* followed by *"Another important factor..."* and so on, until *"The final cause of..."*

General points are often illustrated by particular examples, for example:

**General:** Birds' beaks are appropriately shaped for feeding.

**Particular:** Sparrows and other seed-eating birds have short, stubby beaks; wrens and other insect eaters have thin pointed beaks; herons and other fish hunters have long, sharp beaks for spearing their prey.

Whatever you are reading, be aware of the author's background. It is important to recognise the bias given to writing by a writer's political, religious, social background. Learn which newspapers and journals represent a particular standpoint.



## 5. Words and vocabulary

When you're a graduate people expect you to use a vocabulary which is wider than a school-leaver's. To expand your vocabulary:

Choose a large dictionary rather than one which is 'compact' or 'concise'. You want one which is big enough to define words clearly and helpfully (around 1,500 pages is a good size).

Avoid dictionaries which send you round in circles by just giving synonyms. A pocket dictionary might suggest: 'impetuous = rash'.

A more comprehensive dictionary will tell you that impetuous means 'rushing with force and violence', while another gives 'liable to act without consideration', and add to your understanding by giving the derivation '14th century, from late Latin impetuous = violent'.

It will tell you that rash means 'acting without due consideration or thought', and is derived from Old High German *rasc* = hurried.

So underlying these two similar words is the difference between violence and hurrying.

There are over 600,000 words in the *Oxford English Dictionary*; most of them have different meanings, (only a small proportion are synonyms).

Avoid dictionaries which send you round in circles by using very complicated language to define the term you're looking up, leaving you struggling to understand half a dozen new words.

Keep your dictionary at hand when you're studying. Look up unfamiliar words and work to understand what they mean.

Improve your vocabulary by reading widely.

If you haven't got your dictionary with you, note down words which you don't understand and look them up later

## LECTURES AND TAKING NOTES

A wit once remarked that "A lecture is a process in which information passes from the notes of the lecturer into the notes of the student without passing through the minds of either." (Gilstrap and Martin, 1975)

These guidelines aim to help you avoid that dull and futile situation by helping you learn how to be a more active participant in lectures.



### 1. Making the most of Lectures

Lectures are used for two purposes:

1. to give an overview of the subject, which means you will need to fill in the detail, and
2. to give detailed information on a topic, which means you will need to fill in the background.

These guidelines cover:

- a. Preparing for lectures
- b. During lectures
- c. After lectures

#### a. Preparing for lectures

Find out how your lectures relate to your course as a whole. Do the seminars or tutorials prepare you for the lectures, or do they follow up the lectures? Will you be able to discuss the lecture content in seminars? See your course information booklet or ask your tutor.

Doing preparatory reading will make it easier for you to follow the lecture. When the lecture is part of a series, you should revise your notes from previous lectures.

#### b. During lectures

##### Listening in lectures

During the lecture it's more important to listen than to make notes. If you listen effectively, you will have a better understanding of the content, which will help you write clear, helpful notes that will make sense to you later on. If you have trouble concentrating, you should try sitting near the front, so you are removed from distractions. You may find it helpful to record the lecture on a cassette recorder, but ask the lecturer's permission first.

##### Signposts to structure

While you listen to a lecture, try to focus on its structure. Sometimes the lecturer makes it clear at the start of the lecture with a list of headings or a summary. Note this down so you have a sense of where the lecture is going.

The lecturer may use verbal signposts, for example: "I shall now discuss..." or "My next point is..." Note the change of topic in your notes. Other signposts to listen out for are phrases like: "On the other hand..." or "Turning to..."

## Using handouts

Some lecturers issue handouts to summarise important information and help you follow the lecture. To get the most benefit from them:

- Highlight key words
- Add notes in the margin
- Add colour to highlight and categorise information.

### c. After lectures

#### Ask

Don't be afraid to ask the lecturer for clarification either in the lecture, or afterwards.

#### Clarify

Use seminars and tutorials to clarify material from the lectures.

#### Review

Review your notes while the lecture is still fresh in your mind.



## 2. Taking notes

You will have to do a lot of note-taking at university, much more than you have ever had to do at school or college.

Note-taking is a skill which you will need in order to be a successful student. It's also a skill which your future employer wants you to have: to be able to summarise what has been said or written, in a clear, concise form, with no important facts left out.

We cover six aspects of making notes:

- a. Be selective
- b. Mind maps
- c. Cornell system
- d. Recording lectures
- e. Using notes
- f. Making notes as you listen

### a. Be selective

Note-taking does not mean writing down everything you read or hear. Your notes should be a clear summary of essential points in a text or lecture. Be selective about what you write down.

Notes should help you to:

- Fix information in your mind, and
- Revise.

Here are two ways of taking notes. Which do you prefer?

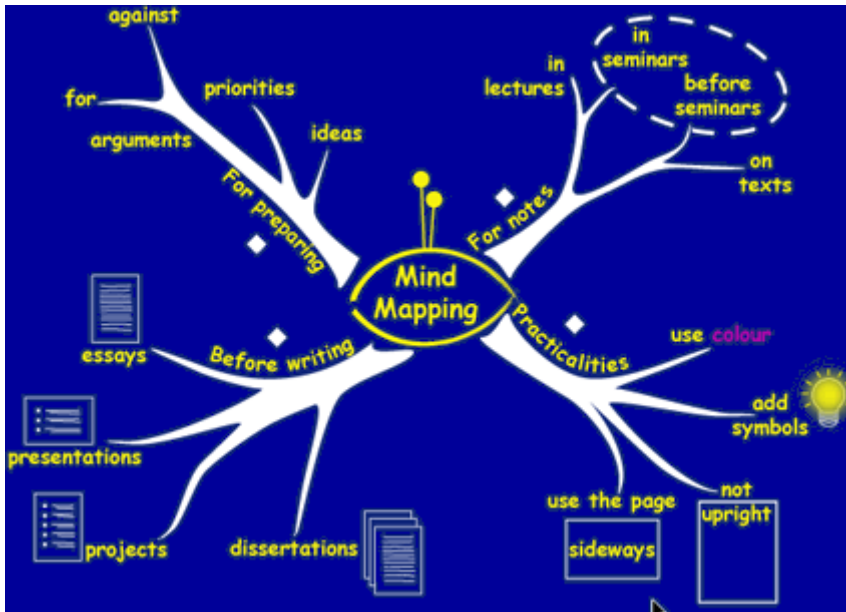
### b. Mind-mapping

If you're a Visual Learner you'll find patterns easier to use than lists of ideas, so you may want to use mind maps (which are also called spider diagrams).

Mind maps can help you to connect information in a variety of ways. You can use them for:

- Making notes,
- Planning essay answers and
- Revising.

Start in the middle of a page with the subject title or topic, and add major points along a line from the centre, with additional ideas branching out from the main points. Use connecting lines to link up ideas/points from different branches. Like this:



There are dedicated software packages (e.g. [Inspiration](#) and [MindManager](#)) which you can use for mind-mapping on your computer.

### c. Cornell Method

If you are an Auditory Learner, you may prefer to use a system like the Cornell Method, an example of which is given below:

Cornell Method      Use large loose-leaf notebook

Write legibly

Capture general ideas not illustrative ones

Leave blank lines to show end of topics

Use abbreviations to save time

summary column      leave a 7cm left margin

key words            after the lecture, go over your notes and jot down key ideas or key words in the summary column

#### **d. Recording lectures**

You may find it easiest to record lectures on audio cassette and make your notes from the tapes afterwards. Audacity is a free computer recorder, record right onto your computer!

Get permission: most lecturers will let you record, but it's a courtesy to ask first

Put your cassette recorder near the lecturer: you won't get clear sound if you put your cassette machine at the back of a large lecture theatre.

#### **e. Using your notes**

Whichever method you use, it's important that you do something with your notes. You need to go through them while the lecture is still fresh in our mind, within 24 hours, and make sure you tidy them up and summarize them.

Use highlighters and colored pens to highlight key points and to link relevant facts and ideas.

Make it a rule after each lecture to:

- Tidy up your notes
- Make them more legible if you need to

#### **Summarise your notes**

Write down the main points to make it easy to revise for exams later.

If you use the Cornell system, you can overlay your pages so you only see the left-hand margin, and read the essentials of the lecture from your summary notes.)

#### **Fill in your notes**

Fill in from memory examples and facts which you didn't have time to get down in the lecture

#### **Clarify your notes**

If any parts of the lecture were unclear, ask the lecturer, tutor or a fellow-student about them, or check your text books

#### **Highlight your notes**

Make the key points stand out:

- Underline them,
- Highlight them in a bright colour, or
- Mark them with asterisks.

#### **f. Making notes as you listen**

Apart from the date and title (if it's given) don't try to write anything at the start of a lecture.

Listen to find out what the content is going to be.

Write down key words / ideas. You don't have to write in complete sentences.

## Use abbreviations to help you

The most common abbreviations are:

**eg** for example

**nb** note well

**ie** that is

**cf** compare

**etc** and the rest

**&** and

**=** equals

**>** greater than

**<** less than

**C19** nineteenth century

•  
+ • therefore

• •  
• because

## GATHERING INFORMATION AND USING THE LIBRARY

There is more to gathering information than a quick Web search using Google and cutting-and-pasting some of the text you find. In fact, that method counts as plagiarism (copying other's work) if you submit it for an assignment.

Read on to learn how to make the most of the Library and the printed or online information that you find.



### Gathering information

You will spend a lot of time gathering information for use in essays and dissertations. We offer tips on:

- a. Where to start gathering information
- b. Is this text relevant?
- c. Finding information again
- d. Making notes to help you select important information
- e. Making notes to help you understand
- f. Making notes to help you remember
- g. Further tips on making notes to help you remember
- h. Organising your notes
- i. Key points and detail

#### **a. Where to start gathering information**

You will start your course with a Reading List of books and articles.

## **Buying second-hand**

You can buy some books second hand (make sure they're up-to-date).

## **Buying new**

You can buy books new (make sure they'll be useful to you).

## **Library**

Most of the books you will come from the library.

## **b. Is this text relevant?**

When you know the essay question or topic, check that possible texts are relevant by examining:

### **Date**

How up-to-date is the information?

### **Contents**

Are there specific chapters devoted to your topic?

### **Index**

Are there specific references to your topic?

### **Introduction**

Does it give a promising overview of the text?

### **Chapters**

Scan the beginnings and endings of likely chapters: do they seem to be worth reading?

## **c. Finding information again**

When you do research reading it's crucial that you're able to find the information again.

**Top tip: Note the sources of quotations as you find them.** You don't want to be running around looking for references when you should be finishing your essay. Once you've decided that a particular text has the information you need, start by recording the details you will need for your bibliography.

For a quick overview, here is an example of bibliographic details for a book:

Author(s)	Turk, C. and Kirkman, J.
Date of publication	1989
Title	Effective Writing
Place of publication	London
Publisher	Chapman & Hall

This will make it possible for you to give a correct reference to the work when you quote the ideas in it:

Turk, C. and Kirkman, J. (1989) *Effective Writing*, London, Chapman & Hall.

#### **d. Making notes to help you select important material**

Once you have noted bibliographic details, you can make notes on the text.

##### **Relevant**

Note down points that are relevant to what you're working on.

##### **Where**

Note the chapter and page number so you can reference the material in your essay, and retrace your steps if you need to.

##### **Quote**

Write down all quotations exactly, using inverted commas. Check that the quotations are accurate.

#### **e. Making notes to help you understand**

##### **Your own words**

Putting the information into your own words helps you to understand it.

##### **You understand?**

Compare your notes with the original text to check that you have understood it.

##### **Your comments**

Add your own comments to any quotations you write down, to remind yourself, possibly in six months time:

- why you think they were important, and
- if you agree with them.

#### **f. Making notes to help you remember**

When you're revising for exams, you'll want to make sure you remember the information.

##### **Help your memory**

Don't try to learn whole sentences: use keywords to represent the facts.

##### **Keywords**

Choose keywords which you will associate with the main facts and central concepts.

##### **Practise**

Practise using some keywords and remembering the facts they represent.

#### **g. Further tips on making notes to help you remember**

##### **Visuals**

Visual images and colours will help trigger your memory, particularly if you're a Visual Learner. Use diagrams and pictures to represent facts.

## **Funny**

You'll find it easier to remember images which are funny or which mean something to you personally.

## **Mind maps**

You can use mind-mapping when you are summarising information.

## **Index cards**

Copy the most important information onto index cards which you can carry around and refer to at any time.

## **h. Organising your notes**

### **Organise**

Organise your notes to help you understand the material.

### **Headings**

Use headings and numbered lists to organise your notes.

### **Keywords**

Write keywords in the margin to summarise each point.

### **Highlight**

Highlight and underline your notes in colour to make key points stand out, and to show links.

### **Key points and detail**

One of the skills which is essential to success both in studying and in most careers is distinguishing between key points and details: *'seeing the wood for the trees'*.

A tree is a good analogy for acquiring this discrimination:

- the trunk - represents the key central concept
- the branches - are less fundamental concepts
- the leaves - are the details

At the end of listening to a lecture, or reading a chapter of a book, you should know what is important (the key points), what is just detail, and how the two relate together.



## **Using the Library**

The [Seminary Library](#) contains millions of books and learned journals and provides access to a huge range of online journals and other academic resources.

The Library has an excellent website data and printed guides which will help you make the most of the information and resources available.

<http://www.elanguages.ac.uk/activities/1SSK/1/cdu2s30103K.htm> You may wish to go to this website directly to be interactive.

## Activity 1: What makes a good set of lecture notes?

Think about the features that distinguish a good set of lecture notes.

Look at each of these statements about good notes and decide if they are true or false. Select your answers from the drop down box and then read the comments.

1. Good notes are legible and include a title and date.

**True False**

**True** *If you cannot read your own notes they are useless. **Details of the title, the lecturer's or presenter's name, the date etc.** are essential if you wish to use them and, in the case of a lecture, reference them for an assignment. These details also help you to place them in a context if you are using them at a later date for revision purposes.*

2. Good notes should not be more than one page in length.

3. Good notes are well spaced out on paper and make use of lists.

4. Good notes do not contain all words and sentences written in full.

5. Good notes should always be written in one colour (preferably blue or black).

## Activity 2: Techniques for note-taking



Claudia

Claudia is a student on an online course in Business Studies. She made some notes while watching a recorded lecture on B2B Enabling Technologies. Part of the lecture focused on problems concerning the use of the Internet for business to business transaction purposes.

Study Claudia's notes on this part of the lecture and then look at the list of note-taking techniques below. Select the techniques that she used in her notes. Then check your answer.

### **Claudia's notes:**

#### **B2B enabling technologies & their problems - Prof. Lewis 14/3/07**

Internet made automat'n of B2B transact'ns poss.

BUT some probs. linked to ->

1. SCALE

E.g. Large orgs. needs integrat. + many B partners (= e.g. extern. suppliers)  
so [interoperable applics.](#) required

2. INTEGRAT. OF SERVICES

a) some servs. autonomous -> diffic. to make [transactional](#)

b) many servs. that change need integrat. -> so [flexib'y](#) needed

3. SECURITY & PRIVACY

Bs. need confid. that transactions [safe](#)  
At pres. only large orgs. do this because [time-consuming](#) proc.

**Notetaking techniques:**

- spacing between points
- abbreviations
- symbols
- underlining/capital letters
- indenting
- ordered points
- different colors
- keywords only

**Activity 3: Practise note-taking**

You are now going to practise making notes while listening to an extract from a lecture given by a university lecturer in chemistry. You do not need to be studying chemistry to understand the lecture.

The title of the lecture is 'Making an invention: The Hot Drink Can'

First prepare to take notes using either a pen and paper or by recording them in the box below. Then listen once to the extract and produce your set of lecture notes.

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Compare the notes that you have taken with the example notes below. Check that you have included the main points, and used similar techniques to save time and present information clearly.

Here is a transcript of the lecture extract:

[Transcript](#) (pdf, 60KB). You may wish to print this document.