Be ready
Plain and simply put, the best way to prepare for exams is to spend time studying! By planning ahead, you can map out what your pre-exam study schedule will be in order to give yourself enough time to review course materials and be ready to write.

Keep it in perspective and focus on the present
Set a realistic goal of what grade you want to earn on your exam and then work towards it. Keep in mind that your entire future is not riding on this 1 exam – and be strategic by ensuring that the amount of time you study for an exam reflects its value in your class. And know that worrying about your upcoming exam(s) will only distract you from studying – so direct your energy on managing things that you can currently control – like studying, minimizing distractions, or talking about your feelings with a friend/parent.

Don’t cram
Simply memorizing course materials is not going to earn you a good grade. Not to mention, the pressure of an exam can limit your ability to effectively recall information. Invest the time in creating review sheets, completing mock exams, and reviewing class work – it will result in earning a good grade.

Stay calm and eliminate negative thoughts
Keep your stress level manageable by using positive self-talk or other calming exercises. It’s normal to question yourself, or focus on what you don’t know, but this just makes the situation more stressful. Instead, remind yourself of the work that you’ve done throughout the term, and reinforce to yourself that you have prepared adequately for the exam.

Be strategic
Find out the kind of exams you are writing. Ask the prof which chapters it will include and what format it will be. Once you know these things, you can tailor the content and the way that you’re going to study. For more specific exam writing strategies – check out LSS’ other Top 10 Tips cards.
Learn from your mistakes but don’t let them hinder your future performance

Taking a look back over past assignments, essays, or tests will help you identify material that you really need to review. See where you missed marks, and review feedback that you got from your prof or TA. There’s no need for you to make the same mistake twice and lose marks for it!

Know what to expect

Uncertainty about exams will only add to your stress levels. Have realistic expectations of what will be on the exam by asking your prof or TA. Obviously they won’t tell you the exact questions, but will be able to tell you which chapters and what kind of questions there will be. You can try generating a list of possible questions that you think might be included on the exam and practice them.

Know where you’re going and arrive early

The CU final exam schedule is usually released at least a month before exams start; so check it early using MyExam Schedule on Carleton Central. The CU app also has a function that allows you to check the date, time, and location of your upcoming final exams. Once you know when and where you’re going – be sure to get there early and allow yourself a little extra time for buses that might be running late etc.

Avoid stimulants and maintain your physical health

No matter how much more alert it makes you; don’t overload on coffee or energy drinks with high levels of caffeine; these will only heighten your anxiety and make you more prone to distractions. As for physical health, keep up whatever routine you currently have or create a new one that includes eating well, exercise, and getting enough sleep.

Find a study partner (or 2)

Even if you aren’t in the same classes, having a study partner can help you stay on track by ensuring that you spend all the time studying that you were planning to. A great idea is to book a group study room in the Library – it’ll be a quiet place for you to prepare for exams.