Effective Note Taking

Before the lecture:

- **Preview the lecture**: Skim through the lecture to familiarize yourself with the content
- **Refresh your memory**: give yourself time to remember prior knowledge relating to the lecture as well as look up any unknown background info or unfamiliar vocab.
- **Review the Objectives**: Use the objectives as a guideline for what you will focus your notes on during class

During the lecture:

- **Position yourself in a place that optimizes your focus and attention**
- **Listen carefully**: Take notes that answer the objectives and fill in information that is not already in the PowerPoint. Try to prevent mindlessly transcribing the lecture word-for-word
- **Develop a shorthand**: use symbols or key words that can be written to signal things to yourself later about the notes. For example, if instructor says “this is very important” add a star. Or if you zone out for a bit and miss something, add a “Zzz” so you know to go back and re-listen if needed.
- **Write open ended questions over the key concepts so that you can quiz yourself later.**
- **Use abbreviations** to help with speed.
- **Pay attention and engage**: Make it a goal for yourself to take such good notes that you don’t have to go back and re-listen to the lecture later.

Following the lecture:

- **Summarize facts and ideas concisely**: Using the objectives, condense the lecture into a single-page review sheet. Include key words, diagrams and questions that give you the high yield content of the lecture. **This summary can be used as a very effective method of review.**
- **Within 24-36 hours of the lecture**: quiz/review the content using the objectives in order to ensure retention and efficiency.