

Higher Level Thinking & Notes

Taking good notes is important in college and vital to getting the most out of your learning experiences in this course. Notes are an opportunity to move from lower level thinking to higher level thinking. Effective note-taking is NOT a 'one-shot' deal; reviewing required materials and your notes MULTIPLE TIMES, as well as adding notes as you do so, gives your brain time to integrate new information and make connections to your knowledge base to get to higher level thinking (see the Bloom's images in the Welcome Discussion).

Guidance below is based on The Cornell Note Taking System (<https://lsc.cornell.edu/how-to-study/taking-notes/cornell-note-taking-system/>).

Handwriting notes is better than typing notes BECAUSE there is a direct connection between a pen/pencil on paper and your brain that does not exist with fingers on a keyboard; research suggests remembering (the basis of Bloom's taxonomy of knowledge) is optimized with handwritten notes.

Start notes with source information; since we live in a digital world, 'attaching' notes to their sources is an essential record-keeping strategy. Urls as well as full references is an important part of good notes.

Use PRINT copies (that you can mark-up) whenever possible; research suggests that physical marking up of documents improves recall of the information. Whether you are using paper copies or an online system, NOTE-TAKING steps/stages are listed below:

1. MARK UP – either by highlighting or underlining – key ideas, phrases, terms, issues, in your sources
 - a. If you are highlighting / underlining whole paragraphs, you are not finding KEY information; look for introductory OR summary sentences – and the crucial information that supports those.
 - b. Highlight/underline information that is NEW to you OR that you do not immediately understand – this is information you'll need to go back to.
2. COMMENT ON EACH highlight or underline; use comments to:
 - a. Connect to course information, previous readings/class discussion/your knowledge base
 - b. Keep comments FACTUAL; avoid using comments to express your opinion or feelings
3. INCLUDE QUESTIONS –
 - a. Questions indicate you are searching for connections and/or identifying information that is not clear to you.
 - i. see Kaufman's "Asking Sociological Questions" (<https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2013/02/asking-sociological-questions.html>)
 - b. If you are not generating at least one question per source/section of textbook chapters, you are not investing sufficient intellectual energy in reviewing materials and preparing for class.
 - i. FACTUAL questions based on required materials (what does this quote mean, for example) will be discussed in class IF YOU SHARE THEM. Discussing these with classmates is always a good idea.
 - ii. The BEST questions are discussable; interpretive, about understanding the implications of information in the source, about the connections you are making or think you can/would like to make. I will have some of my own to encourage discussion during class; adding yours to the mix is always welcome.
4. BRING NOTES TO CLASS so you can add to them during discussion, share your questions, and benefit from your classmates' interpretations, questions, and work.