

## **Exam Philosophy and Post Exam Review Expectations**

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#### **Exam Philosophy:**

The purpose of academic testing is to promote and document student learning. Most students need clear short-term incentives to compel them to spend the time and effort necessary to learn the immense body of knowledge and skills required to become a successful designer. Students need periodic feedback telling them to what degree their study efforts are successful and where learning has room for improvement. This will allow the student to learn the missed material and make adjustments to their learning styles so that they can become adequately prepared for their professional careers. Exams are not meant to serve as a “reward” or as a “punishment”. They are indicators of learning.

#### **Question Validity and Fairness:**

I analyze the percentage of students that correctly answer or miss exam questions. Typically test items that are missed by >50% of the student will be eliminated. Points from the eliminated questions will be added to the student's overall score and will not decrease the overall number of points on a given exam.

#### **Post Exam Review Expectations:**

The primary purpose of the post-exam review is to provide students with an opportunity to identify their areas of weakness, and receive feedback on items they answered incorrectly if they wish. It is not an opportunity to challenge the validity of test items (to gain more points). In order to provide a nurturing learning environment for the students during the post exam reviews, I expect all parties to conduct themselves in a professional manner and not in an adversarial manner. This will permit the students to fully understand missed concepts, and objectively evaluate his/her learning style to take steps to improve his/her performance on future exams. A reminder from the syllabus: Questions regarding answers of exams are acceptable in person or email. If a student would like to discuss reconsideration of any part of an exam, the question will only be accepted in written format (either paper or email) and no earlier than 24 hours after the graded exam has been returned.

#### **Exam Take-Away:**

I have several major take home messages.

- A. Have a good mindset. Do not assume that a low grade indicates a lack of ability. Look for the opportunity for growth and development. A score below your expectations means there were areas of weakness that need more attention. Learning does not stop with the exam, and students have the ability to learn missed concepts.
- B. Exams build upon each other in complexity and points so that students learn how to improve their testing skills in the course, and have more opportunities as the course develops to earn more points on exams.
- C. Lets get you on a better track as soon as possible. Visit Student Affairs and the Younkin Success Center to find learning resources.

I recommended to self reflect and consider your study habits and tools. I suggest to answering the following questions, writing down the answers for further reflection:

1. What did I do successfully to prepare for the exam? What note-taking and exam preparation served me well?
2. What note-taking and study strategies took up time but did not help?
3. Where there types of questions was I not prepared for? Did I miss and what types of material did I miss? Did I exhibit exam-taking errors? Was I rested and relaxed? Did I prepare adequately for the exam?

Consider answers above that need corrections as a design problem. Design a new study system that you will use to prepare for the next exam more successfully. Make sure this system includes the tactics you listed in your answers to #1 above, and excludes tactics you listed in #2 above. This may seem obvious but many students get comfortable with certain study rituals that it is difficult to abandon them even after they've been identified as not helping. Eliminate poor study techniques; do not use the poor study techniques more vigorously.

Most importantly, carefully consider your answers for #3. Ask yourself what would be the most effective and efficient habit you could add to your study arsenal that would fill in those gaps, and add this to your study system.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to help you learn, and be a partner in your academic endeavors. Please feel free to contact me with questions any time.