

Using Lecture Slides and Notes

Instructors may provide lecture slides and/or their lecture notes to students to facilitate the learning process. These lecture slides and notes can be very helpful when they are used effectively by students to:

- guide their note-taking process,
- add their own notes while attending class, and
- understand information when it is first encountered in class.

Simply having the lecture slides and notes does not guarantee that the information will make sense when it comes time to review for a test, so it is *not* advisable to use them as an alternative for attending class.

Before class

Often instructors will post materials for students on UM Learn (the UM's learning management system). Make sure that you access any course resources that are available at the beginning of term and spend some time familiarizing yourself with them. In particular, if the lecture slides or notes are available before class, it is important to print them or prepare them on your device so that they are ready for the lecture.

- Prepare your note-taking documents before class.
- Preview the lecture slides or notes and familiarize yourself with any new vocabulary by looking up new terms in the textbook or in the dictionary.
- Formulate possible questions that you might ask in class based on your previewing.

During class

- Add additional information beside the lecture slides or notes.
- Focus on any new ideas or examples that the instructor provides that add meaning, rather than rewriting what is already on the lecture slides or notes.
- Add meaning by using your own examples and by putting information into your own words.
- Listen for the answer to the questions that you formulated before class.
- Predict and mark possible questions that might appear on future tests/exams or be relevant to upcoming assignments.

After class

- Take some time to summarize or edit the information in the notes.
- Get clarification from the instructor or review the information in your textbook if any slides are confusing or unclear.
- Review the questions that you wanted to ask in class; if some of them went unanswered, reach out to the instructor or make a note to ask them during the next lecture.
- If the lecture slides or notes are only available after class, print them and add ideas that are important from your own notes.
- Review all class materials frequently to keep the information fresh.
- Find ways to engage and interact with the material as much as possible by reorganizing the information graphically, summarizing and rewriting it in your own words, noting key words, or testing yourself from memory.

References

Pardini, E.A., Domizi, D.P., Forbes, D.A., and Pettis, G.V. (2005). Parallel note-taking: A strategy for effective use of webnotes. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 35, 38–55.