Strategies for Taking Exams
Econ 100B

1. **Come prepared.** Most questions are model based so be sure you know how to set-up, manipulate, and explain the model and its dynamics.

2. **Preview the entire exam** before you start writing. This will give you an idea of what you will need to do overall and allow you to allocate your time efficiently.

3. **Prioritize the questions by which seem easiest to you and answer those first.** Answering some questions well will help you relax and build confidence that will allow you to focus on the harder questions more clearly. Don’t miss out on easy points by spending too much time on the harder questions so that you have to rush to complete the exam.

4. **Allocate your time to each question in proportion to the available points.** Spend most of your time on the questions that give you the most points.

5. **Read through each question, twice if necessary, and underline key words and list major events.** Be sure to understand what the question is asking and to answer the question that is being asked. Pay particular attention to negative words or descriptive words.

6. **Take the questions at face value.**
   a. I do not try to be “tricky”. However, the questions may extend or modify what we have done on problem sets or you have seen on previous exams.
   b. I try to include all of the information you need to answer the question correctly.
   c. Don’t bring additional information into the question—even if you know something else actually occurred. These are stylized questions; answers should be based on the given information.
   d. Don’t leave out or ignore relevant information that is in the question.

7. **Immediately ask for clarification if you really don’t understand a question.** Time is very tight so you should ensure you understand the question as quickly as possible.

8. **For multiple choice questions:**
   a. **Use your economic knowledge to answer the questions.** Don’t just guess. The correct answer is in front of you; you can figure out which it is.
   b. **Use a process of elimination to narrow down the possible correct answers.** If you can dismiss a couple of possible answers, your chances of success are significantly improved.
   c. **Then re-read each remaining option.** Having eliminated a couple of answers may allow you to look at the question more clearly.

9. **For the essay questions:**
   a. **Use your economic knowledge to answer the questions.** Don’t just guess. All of the relevant information needed to answer the question is there.
   b. **Your answers should be concise and to the point.** In general, you should draw all the diagrams first, then write your explanations.
   c. **You should use mnemonics, symbols, arrows and abbreviations;** these will make your answers clearer and save you time.

10. **Write legibly.** If we can’t read it, you will not score well.

11. **Relax, it is just a test.** If it were a real emergency, …