Studying Using the Cornell Method

Why use the Cornell Method?
- Simply put, the Cornell Method is regarded as the simplest and fastest way of taking notes while still retaining the most amount of information
- The contrasting colours and summary box help to keep information organized and easily accessible
- The format makes it easy to pull out major concepts and ideas
- This method is ideal for people who take notes by hand, but can be modified for people who type their notes as well

You Will Need…
- Loose sheets of paper/notebook (as per your preference)
- Highlighters in varying colours
- Pens/pencils in varying colours (as per your preference)
  - It is a good idea to use grid paper, a blue or black pen, two highlighters and three coloured pens – two of the same colour but in different shades and one in a contrasting colour. If you are already acquainted with colour coding, go ahead and use a few more, but this is the best scheme for basic colour coordination.

The Basics:
- Don’t write everything that your professor says – focus on the key points and relevant information
- Reference your material throughout, using page numbers, quotations, and charts and tables
- Use topics and titles for a quick study guide
- Don’t rewrite your notes – save this time to study the material instead!
- The Cornell Method uses a special format designed to condense and organize notes without a lot of recopying. Your paper is divided into three parts: a 2″ column on the left side; a main note space; and a summary space at the bottom of the page.

Setting Up Your Paper (see graphic, below):
- This method will be using the triple division system
- In the left column, you will write the topics/titles of your material
- After you write your notes in the main space, you can use the left-hand column to label each idea and detail with a key word or “cue.” After class, use the space at the bottom of each page to summarize the notes on that page.
  - You can also write notes such as the professor’s recommendations, tidbits that don’t fit in the general notes column, reference articles, or reminders about due dates in the left column
Method (adapted from “Cornell Notes,” 2013):

- **Record** – During class, use the notetaking column to record the lesson using simple sentences that express ideas using only the most necessary words.

- **Question** – After class, formulate questions based on the notes in the notetaking column. Writing questions helps to clarify meanings, reveal relationships, and strengthen memory; as well, by writing questions, you leave yourself a good tool for later review and study.

- **Recite** – Cover the notetaking column with a sheet of paper. Then, looking at the questions or cue-words in the left column only, say aloud, in your own words, the answers to your prompts.

- **Reflect** – Reflect on the material by asking yourself questions, for example: What’s the significance of this information? How can I apply what I’ve learned? How does this learning fit with what I already know? What should I investigate next?

- **Review** – Spend time each week reviewing all your previous notes. Frequent review is much more powerful than a long cramming session.

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**References:**
