

## Lecture Note-taking

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- Taking lecture notes, like virtually everything else in university, is a skill which you may not have developed well up to this point in your academic career. However, it is an important and often undervalued skill, which you should master. In the “real world,” you likely will be involved in numerous meetings, conferences, presentations, and so on, where you will be required to keep accurate and relevant notes for future reference. For the time being, taking good notes will prove invaluable as you study for your exams.
- There is a generally accepted view that students, who have grown up around computers and video games, have difficulty concentrating on a single task for more than 15 minutes. Many lecture courses, however, run for almost three hours (with a brief break in the middle). This means that, for you who are new to university, it will be necessary to *learn* how to listen (and concentrate on what you are hearing) for longer stretches of time. Like any skill, though, it becomes easier the more you practice it.
- You need to be an “active” listener. In order to do this, you have to pay attention. So don’t doodle or check your Facebook page. Your “ink art” or your new “friends” won’t help you pass the course or obtain a good grade. Also, don’t gossip/whisper/giggle with your neighbours. Aside from being incredibly rude, and readily observed from the front of the class, it means that you are not concentrating on class activities. If you are easily distracted, it is a good idea to sit up front, in the first few rows.
- In order to keep up with a lecture you should develop a system of short-hand. Use the “Hints for Creating Your Own Abbreviations and Symbols” included in this course package. Be careful, however. Make sure you are able to understand your shorthand a few months down the road, when you are re-reading your notes.
- The type of notes you take will depend on how you learn. Some people prefer to process and synthesize information as they go along; others need to take what amounts to a verbatim transcript of what was said. You will need to judge what works best for you.
- At the very least, write down everything written on the blackboard/overhead/Power Point. This will give you a solid record of the main points raised in class as well as an indication of what information the instructor considers most important.