### Preparing for an essay exam
- Essay tests focus on the themes and concepts in a class
- Identify reoccurring themes in your notes and readings
- Create concept maps to represent relationships between the concepts
- Compare and contrast concepts by looking at their similarities/differences

### Anticipate the essay questions
- Look for sample questions in your study guide, readings, online sources
- Create questions from the themes in your notes/reading (see CFAR's question generating handout)
- Read a syllabus’ course objectives to understand professor’s expectation of what you will learn in the class
- Ask yourself what kinds of questions you would ask to test your knowledge
- Brainstorm with classmates possible essay questions
- Review past exams to see how your professor formulates questions

### Practice, Practice, Practice
- Anticipate possible essay questions and prepare outlines and answers
- Discuss course content with a study buddy or in a study group to identify important information pertaining to possible essay questions
- Write thorough responses to essays professor provide in advance of an exam
- Share rough drafts with your professor before an exam to get feedback
- Before the exam, spend some time writing about the content to warm up your brain and get your ideas flowing

### Taking an essay test
- Read the directions to know if you need to answer all essay questions
- Circle the key words (see CFAR's Essay Question handout) and write the answer according to what the question asks
- Identify how much time you have for each essay
- Start by answering the easiest question to get your brain focused
- Jot down a list of topics/ideas before you start to write your response
- Create a main thesis statement from your topics
- For each topic, write a general statement and support it with details/examples to form an outline
- Always start an essay with your introduction (thesis statement) and end your essay with a conclusion
- Leave time to review your essay. Your brain works faster than your hand. Make sure your essay makes sense, answers the question, and that your grammar and spelling is correct