STUDYING FOR CUMULATIVE EXAMS

When possible, use previous exams in the course as the basis for your review.

Why use old exams?
- You can familiarize yourself with the kinds of questions your professor writes.
- You can analyze your errors on previous tests and adjust your studying accordingly.
- You can determine which areas of your knowledge are the weakest.

How can you use old exams?
- Review each question, one at a time. Identify the kinds of information being tested (for example, definitions; concepts; processes; diagrams).
- Then identify what each question asks you to do (for example, apply concepts; synthesize ideas; analyze information).
- Consider how much detail the questions expect you to know.

How can you review questions that you answered incorrectly?
- Circle or highlight all keywords and phrases in the question.
- Ask yourself, “What do I need to know to answer this question?” (that is, what concepts, processes, formulas, exceptions, definitions, etc., do I need to know?).
- Focus on the correct answer. Your wrong answer may confuse you.
- Determine what you’ll need to memorize during your final review.

What can you do if you’re unable to answer the question or solve the problem?
- Don’t give up. Review relevant course materials, such as the textbook, class notes, and handouts.
- Try to put the relevant information in your own words to be sure you understand it.
- Attempt to answer the question again.
- If you still can’t answer the question, ask your professor, a tutor, or another student who understands the material. As it is explained to you, write down your understanding of the explanation.

If available, use practice exams.
- Look on the course web site or ask your professor if practice exams are available. Or create your own practice exams by using questions at the end of the chapters. You could even make up questions based on your class notes and textbook chapters.
- Use practice exams to:
  o Identify areas where your knowledge is weak.
  o Practice answering the kinds of questions that may be on the exam.
- Try to get or create at least two practice exams. Do one after your first review of the material from the entire semester. Then review the material again. When you feel you have mastered the material, try a second practice exam.

See a Study Skills Specialist in the Office of Academic Support (Seton Hall, 1st floor; 716-286-8072), who can help you review your graded tests and suggest ways to tailor your studying.

Niagara University
Office of Academic Support
http://www.niagara.edu/oas-study-reading-strategies/