Study Tips for the Study Jam
Chancellor's Associates Scholars Program
UC San Diego

Understanding the course concepts:

The 5 different systems of note-taking:
http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/docs/asc/ssl/NoteTakingSystems.pdf

Resource for reading more quickly & effectively:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/reading.html

Make a concept map to help you understand your material: http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Concept-Map

5 Study Skills that Accelerate Your Learning: http://thinkeracademy.com/5-study-skills-to-accelerate-your-learning/

Also, although everyone’s brain is different, specific “learning styles” are a myth:
http://www.wired.com/2015/01/need-know-learning-styles-myth-two-minutes/;
http://www.psych2go.net/the-myth-of-learning-styles/

Exams:


We have increasing evidence from the learning sciences that students engage in poor study strategies. Likewise, research shows that most people are plagued by the illusions of fluency. The solution on both fronts is better metacognition — that is, a clearer understanding of our own learning. What if all of us worked together deliberately to achieve that?

For example, we have excellent evidence that students remember material better when they test themselves and try to retrieve information from their own minds. And yet most students still study by reviewing their notes over and over again — probably the least-effective study strategy they can employ. The final five minutes of class can provide a quick opportunity to let students know how best to prepare for their next assessment, based on the science of learning and on your experience as an expert learner.

Before the midterm, I asked students to take two minutes and write down for me how they studied for the test. When I compared what they said with the exam scores, the evidence couldn’t have been clearer: Low-performing students used phrases like "reviewed my notes" and "reread the poems"; the students who aced the exam said things like "wrote an outline," "rewrote my notes," "organized a timeline," "tested myself," and "created flashcards." I made a slide with a side-by-side comparison of the two columns, and spent five minutes of class showing students the differences. They’ll see that slide again in the last five minutes of class just before the next exam. - See more at: http://chronicle.com/article/Small-Changes-in-Teaching-The/235583?cid=trend_right_h#sthash.0Uj9njA1.dpuf
An explanation of the “retrieval practice” for studying for a test:
http://www.digitalpromise.org/blog/entry/ask-the-cognitive-scientist-retrieval-practice

Tips on how to write exam essays: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/737/01/

**Writing Papers:**

“Where to Start a Paper” from the University of Richmond Writing Center’s *Writer’s Web*
(http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/1stqsprint.html)

Starting a paper is almost always the hardest part of the writing process. Consider these questions as you prepare to start your paper. It may even be helpful to write out your answers.

What question(s) must I answer in order to fulfill the assignment?

What "code words" does my assignment contain? (Code words could be abstract terms such as "concepts of freedom" and "system of belief," or they could be terms that demand a certain task of you, such as "analyze," "compare," "explore reasons for," etc.)

Which areas of my readings or sources are still unclear to me? How necessary are they for writing a first draft?

Who is the audience for this paper? Don't always assume that you're writing for your professor; s/he may want you to write for people unfamiliar with the topic. If you're in doubt, ask your professor. What are the most important things that my audience needs to know?

What are a few main points that I want to convey in this paper?

Are any of these points contradictory or overly vague? (For example, if you wrote "I want to show how factories in Japan and America are both similar and different," your goals are probably too broad; "Macbeth was both good and evil" could be easily read as a contradictory statement.)

Can I refine any of these goals? (For instance, for the second example above, you might decide to focus on how Macbeth was a good man who fell because of his lust for power.)

Can I support my main ideas? Are they unsupported speculations and opinions? Depending on the type of paper, opinions might be acceptable. Generally, professors look for support from readings and other academic sources--when in doubt, ask.

Tips on how to write argument papers: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/1/

Tips on how to write research papers: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/658/1/

Tips on sentence mechanics (sentence structure, word order):  
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/4/

Tips on grammar (verbs, prepositions, pronouns): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/5/

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