How to Read a College Textbook

1. Preview the Chapter
   - Flip through the chapter and skim the headings.
   - Look at the graphs, charts, vocab lists, chapter summaries, and review questions.
     - Write down the bold words - they’re important!
   - What are the main concepts in this chapter?
     - Pay attention to the heading titles and subtitles.

2. Begin at the End!
   - Start at the end of the chapter by reading the summary, practice problems, review questions, and vocab list.
   - This will let you know which topics are the main points.
   - Make sure to take notes on these topics and questions.

3. Find the Main Ideas
   - Read each paragraph to find the main idea.
   - The first sentence will typically tell you what the paragraph will be about.
   - Make sure to read the introduction and conclusion of each section to find the main points.
   - Pay attention to bold, italicized, or underlined words in each section.

*Inspired by resources from the Academic Success Center at Cornell College and the Learning Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*
4. Stop and Summarize

- Read an entire paragraph, section, or page before taking notes.
- Pause and write down as much as you can from memory. Make sure this is written in your own words.
- Look back over the paragraph, section, or page - did you write all of the key ideas?
- Fill in any missing points.
- See LASSO’s Cornell Note Taking handout for a template!

5. Keep Your Reading Sessions Short

- Sit down and count how many pages you have to read each week.
- Break your reading up into pieces that are manageable for you!
- Example: 60 pages per week
  - 10 pages x 6 days
  - 15 pages x 4 days
  - 20 pages x 3 days
- Set reminders or alarms on your phone to read!

6. Review Your Notes

- This step will take place after you have read the chapter or assigned reading!
- Create an Outlines or Concept Maps to help you visually see how the main ideas connect.
- Create flashcards to help you focus on main ideas, formulas, or vocab words.
- Re-read the chapter to make connections between ideas.