Forming Study Groups

Become aware of your study group expectations.
- Before joining or forming a study group, you should consider what you want to get out of the experience. Your reason for joining a study group should guide decisions as to the composition and goals of the group and it should be consist of people with similar goals.

Study groups are not necessarily for everyone.
- Think about whether you have had positive study group experiences or have participated in successful group projects in the past. If you have not had productive study group experiences, consider whether you can alter your approach before you decide that study groups are not for you.

Set an optimal group size.
- The size of the group is important. It can involve as few as two individuals, but an optimal group size is about three – six people. This group size will allow participation and discussion, yet also allow the group to function if one member cannot attend a meeting.

Establish a schedule of meetings and assignments.
- Having weekly meetings and following a regular schedule will allow you to keep up with course material. This will also prevent cramming for tests because there will be consistent outside-the-classroom studying and review. It is also important to agree on guidelines for meetings.

Select a location for meetings.
- Avoid meeting in places that are too comfortable or full of disturbances that can be distracting to the group.

Prepare for the meetings.
- A study group is not a substitute for doing your own work. A study group is most beneficial when members are prepared with topics to discuss, points of confusion, or important questions. Study groups should be used to review material and to test understanding of that material. Additionally, time should be set aside during each group meeting to discuss material that students do not understand.

Evaluate the group.
- If the study group is not meeting your goals, discuss your concerns with the group and try to come up with suggestions for improvement. If you decide to leave the group, do not leave your colleagues in a bind (by dropping out the week it is your turn to lead a group meeting, for example).