Prereading: What is it?

- **Rapid Skimming.** It should not take more than 10-15 minutes to preread for an hour's worth of lecture material; if it does, you're not prereading - you're reading!
- **Looking for the “big picture” or main points in the text.** Is there a unifying concept?
- **Getting a sense of the vocabulary** by learning new terms that will appear in the lecture and in later focused reading.
- **Spotting the patterns** of relationships between subtopics and main topics.
- **Analyzing** causes and effects, comparisons and contrasts, the time sequencing, and so on.

How to Preread

You may preread from a variety of materials:

- Textbook
- Course syllabus
- Review Books

Obviously you can't preread from every source available. It's important to find the best one or two sources for each class.

When you preread, notice the following:

- Study questions - read these first then scan for the answers
- First paragraph
- Bold-faced print
- Subtitles
- Colored print
- Italicized print
- Boxed information
- Diagrams
- Shaded areas
- Charts
- Tables
- Graphs
- Lists
- Pictures
- Glossary of new terms
- Summary
- Objectives
- First sentence of paragraphs

Prereading encourages active (vs. passive) learning to take place - anticipating what is coming instead of just letting it "wash over you" and hoping that some will stick.

While prereading look for the following:

- Key Ideas
- Main subordinate details

When is the best time of day or week to preread? Usually in the evening prior to the next morning's lectures. Some students prefer to preread immediately before a lecture, but because most lectures are scheduled in the morning, that would necessitate being an extra-early riser.