



Anticipating Planning for Courses

During the first week of each quarter, your professors will present you with a syllabus or course outline. You should not stuff the syllabus in a folder and forget about it! It contains valuable information that will help you plan your study time for that course, including class policies, test types, and final grade calculation. The syllabus is a plan to follow, or a road map of a professor's expectations, so file each one in a safe place for frequent future reference. You can predict much about a course from the syllabus, and it can help you to design your academic activities for the course.

Long-range planning needs to begin on the first day of class. Planning out your quarter will help you reduce confusion and anxiety by defining more exactly the demands you will face in each course. By anticipating and planning your approach to each course, you can plan your coping strategies.

⇒ Steps for Creating a Quarter Schedule

1. Collect all of your course syllabi.
2. Print out a **Time Management Calendar**. You will need four copies of the calendar, one for each month of the quarter.
3. Using your course syllabi, fill in on each of the term's monthly calendars all of your exams, papers, short essays, presentations, quizzes, and due dates for other important projects.
4. Using these calendars, you can see which weeks of the semester will be the busiest, and plan your time accordingly. If you have several tests and papers during one week, you may want to start studying several weeks in advance to avoid cramming! Many people find it helpful to set their own deadlines for their work. For example, if you have a paper due on May 1, set a deadline of April 24 for completing the rough draft. Write in these deadlines on your calendars to help yourself stick to them!

⇒ Steps for Planning for Your Courses

1. Collect all of your course syllabi.
2. Print out a **Course Chart**.
3. Under **Course**, list each course title with your most difficult course at the top, to indicate its high priority, and your easiest course at the bottom. Under each course title, set a goal by adding the final grade you want to earn in that course.
4. Under **Professor**, record name, office hours, office location, and phone number. You may want to visit each professor's office hours during the first two weeks of classes, to introduce yourself and to ask any questions you may have. Get acquainted with each professor early, especially in your most difficult courses, and you'll be more likely to seek help regularly, before problems with grades can arise. Seeing this entry on your chart will remind you to take this step.
5. Under **Exams**, briefly list the dates and types of each exam, and how much it counts toward your final grade (e.g., midterm 10/2, 3 essays, 40%). Do the same under **Projects & Papers** and again for **Other**, for courses in which homework, quiz grades, or critiques contribute to your final grade. Leave blanks for any courses in which these do not apply. These three spaces show you, at a glance, exactly what you have to do — and when — to earn the final grade you desire.

6. Under **Attendance Policy** and **Late & Makeup Assignment Policy**, note any special requirements of individual professors. There will be wide variations on these; you need to know that four absences in one course will cause the professor to fail you, while in another case you have more leeway. Some professors dramatically lower grades for late work, while others are less strict. Your chart will make it easy to meet individual requirement that can affect your grades.
7. Post your completed chart prominently, where you will see it every day. Seeing your entire course demands condensed onto one sheet of paper, rather than spread out over five multi-page syllabi, is the first step in organizing and balancing your approach to the quarter.
8. Be sure all of the important dates you have listed (tests, papers, projects) are listed on your quarter calendar!