



# Top Advice on Scheduling College Classes Effectively

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Scheduling classes for the first time in college can be overwhelming. There are many different types of classes to choose from, different professors who teach them, and various times during which you can take them. And of course, there's the ongoing [COVID-19 pandemic](#) to worry about. While some of your required courses may have a limited set of class times throughout the week, you will have the best experience if you keep your own interests in mind. Are you more of a night owl or an early bird? Do you need a lot of breaks in between your classes to help you concentrate? Do you have a job? Take into account the times of day when you are the most attentive and use that information to help you schedule your classes.

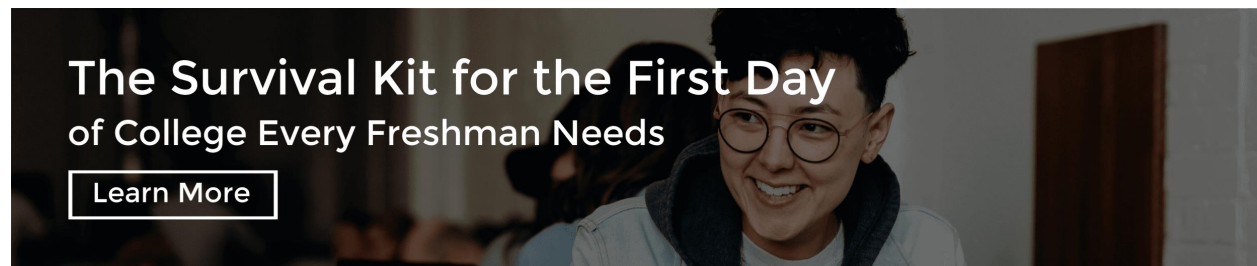
If it's your first semester in college, we recommend scheduling classes at different times of the day to see what works for you. You might surprise yourself with what time of day works best for you.

We've made a list of pros and cons for scheduling classes at different times of the day. Check it out! It will help you make informed choices as you set up your weekly schedule for the upcoming semester.

## Morning Classes

If you schedule the bulk of your classes in the morning, you'll be able to get them out of the way early on and have the rest of the day to yourself. That said, many students enjoy the perk of finishing their classes early, so morning courses tend to fill up fast. If you are serious about taking a particular class at an early time, make sure you act quickly as soon as you're able to enroll.

Morning classes are great excuses to work on maintaining a healthy sleep schedule. Especially since this is likely the first time you'll be living independently, it's easy to slip into the habit of waking up at noon and lazing around for most of the day. Morning classes will make you get up, dressed, and better prepared to take advantage of the day. And if you often stay up into the odd hours of the night, morning classes might help you learn to go to sleep at an earlier time. (But if you do accidentally stay up until 4am before an 8am class, you'll be able to go home and back to bed right after your early classes end!)



If you are not a morning person (and don't see that changing anytime soon), I wouldn't recommend morning classes. You might not wake up on time, and even if you do, you might be too tired to concentrate. You might even skip class on purpose to stay in bed, making you miss important material and get points deducted from your grade due to poor attendance.

Another downfall to a morning class is the fact that you might not have time to do your homework before class. Sometimes we all forget to do our homework, so an early class might make it hard to squeeze in some last-minute work before it starts.

## Morning Classes Recap:

### PROS

- You can finish your classes early on in the day.
- You'll learn to practice a healthy sleep schedule.
- You will be out of bed and able to take full advantage of the day.

### CONS

- Morning classes can fill up quickly. So act fast to add them to your schedule.
- You might be sleepy if you're up late the night before.
- You might oversleep or be tempted to skip class.
- There isn't enough time to do last-minute work before a morning class.

## Afternoon Classes

As a freshman, having afternoon classes may be the easiest to handle. You're less likely to oversleep; the sun is up, so you're up! Not only will you not have to worry about waking up on time, but you will also be more alert and able to focus.



A downfall to afternoon classes is that it might be difficult to balance your school schedule with a job (if you have one). If you prefer afternoon classes, however, you might want to consider a [work-study](#). Since work-study is a student employment opportunity directly run through your school, it is easier to get your employer to work around your schedule. It is flexible and convenient, giving you more opportunities to take the courses you want while making spending money.

Something to consider is that the afternoon is usually when fun extracurricular activities are held or begin on campus. If you're prone to FOMO (fear of missing out), scheduling your classes in the afternoon, especially on Wednesdays-Fridays, could be a bad idea. How active or outgoing you wish to be on campus will determine whether an afternoon class is worth it. I would recommend not

scheduling late classes on Friday unless you have to. It's always tough being stuck in class when you could be heading home early or enjoying the weekend festivities with your friends.

## Afternoon Classes Recap:

### PROS

- It is easier to stay awake and focused.
- You don't have to worry about oversleeping.
- Unlike morning classes, you'll have more time to prepare for tests or complete homework beforehand.

### CONS

- Classes in the middle of the day might be difficult to schedule around a job.
- Your classes could overlap with extracurricular activities held on campus.

## Night Classes

If you usually stay up late, night classes might be the best fit for you. It gives you ample time to study and do your homework before class if you weren't able to do it earlier. Night classes also work really well if you have a job during the day.

If you tend to be the most attentive at night, late classes might be for you. At whatever time of the day you know is the best time for you to focus is also the best time for you to schedule your hardest classes.

Night classes usually create a gap in between your daily responsibilities. The space in your schedule gives you time to relax, take a break, power nap, do your homework, study, or even go to tutoring.

Obviously, night classes are not for night owls. I'm not really a night owl myself, and I fell asleep a couple of times during a later class. After that semester, I stayed away from night classes altogether. Follow your instincts!

One last thing to keep in mind about night classes is the fact that they end when it is dark outside. Many schools have great campus safety staff and procedures, but you might want to consider what it would be like to walk home late at night. Nighttime classes may otherwise interfere with evening plans or dinner with friends.

Night Classes Recap:

### PROS

- You have a lot of time to study and do homework beforehand.
- Classes are easy to schedule around a daytime job.
- Late classes are great for night owls.
- Having a gap in your schedule will block out time for you to recharge or study.

## CONS

- Depending on the day, you might be sleepy.
- You might miss out on evening activities.
- You'll leave class when it is dark outside.

# General Scheduling Tips

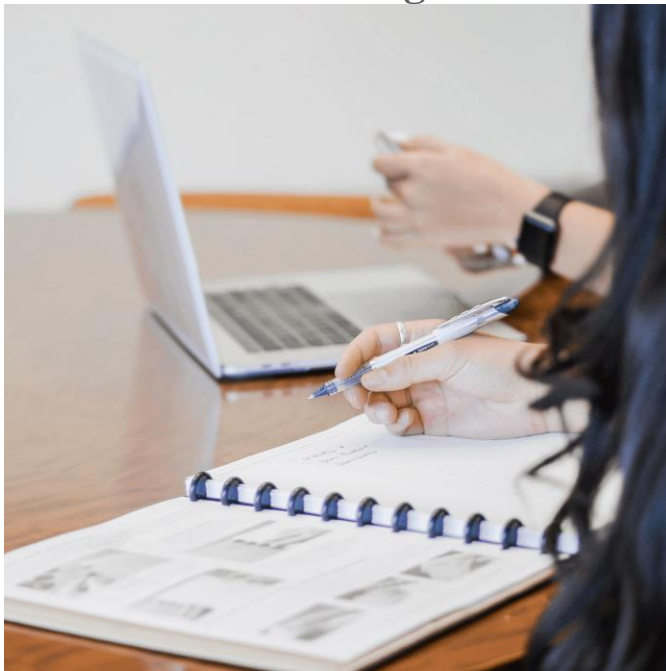
## Research Your Classes and Professors

Be sure to research your classes before you schedule them. Look up the professor teaching the class or ask friends in your major to see how other students liked them. Get a clear idea of who will be leading the course and what their teaching style is like.

It is beneficial for you to take your required general education classes in the first few years of your college career. That way, you'll be able to take your more challenging and more exciting courses after you establish confidence as a college student. You also won't end up being a senior in a Geology 1001 class made up entirely of freshmen. And yes, that's exactly what happened to me. There's nothing wrong with that, but you might find a class like that boring or uncomfortable.

It's important to remember always to have a back-up plan. Sometimes classes fill up before you can reserve a place in them, and sometimes your desired classes overlap with one another. Keep in mind other classes of interest that either fulfill the same graduation requirement or take place at the same time as your first choice. You'll figure out how to work through it. Don't worry.

## You Can Make Changes and Get Help



Don't be afraid to visit your advisor so that they can help you. You can always visit them to help you build a schedule and create a four-year plan to help you graduate on time. Ask for advice, recommendations, and guidance! and they could tell you which teachers they would recommend for you.

Most schools have a grace period during which you can add and drop classes during the semester. Don't panic if your schedule doesn't work well in practice. Think of the first couple of weeks as a test run to see whether you like the classes and times of the day that you signed up for. You might love it, or you might hate it. And don't forget that you are scheduling these classes for only one semester, so they won't last forever!

## **Schedule Classes With the Rest of the Week in Mind**

Make sure that you take into account not only the time you pay attention best for class, but also the time of day when you study the best. Schedule classes around when you need to be by yourself for productive study and homework time.

There are many other things you should pay attention to when you schedule your classes, whether that be a job, when you are most attentive, and when your chosen extracurriculars hold meetings or host activities.

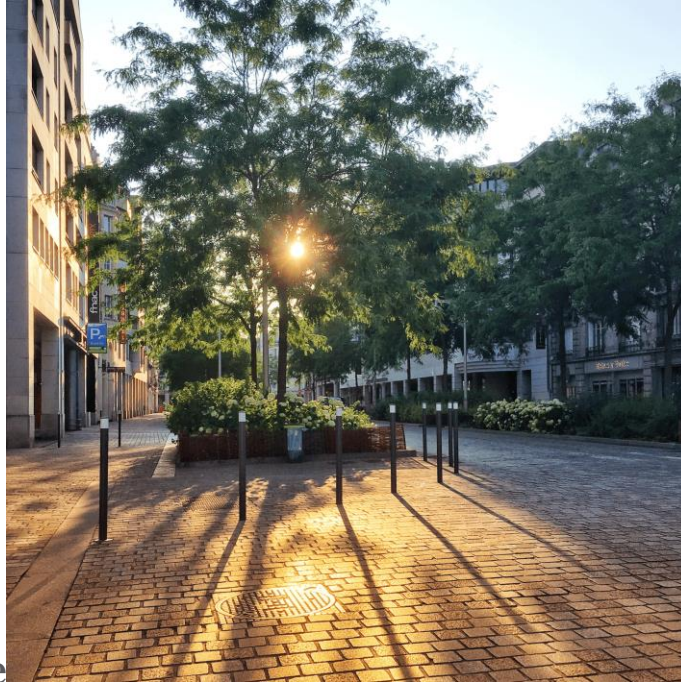
Also, don't forget to make time for lunch during the day! You don't want to feel weak or cranky because you weren't able to eat. It is very important that you make time for that. And drink a lot of water. Always drink water.

## **Make Time for Yourself**

I cannot stress this enough: make sure you schedule time for yourself. It is important for your health, both physical and mental. [Schedule around your studies and extracurriculars](#), and make time for your life outside of school.

If you are someone who feels exhausted in the middle of the week and wishes for a break, schedule one! Your schedule is in your hands. Unlike high school, no one is telling you when to do something. You have the power to decide how to spend your time and what will make you successful.

Don't schedule more than you can handle. I recommend taking difficult classes *and* electives or creative classes in the same semester so that you have a good balance of difficulty and fun. It works your brain and keeps you motivated.



## **Calculate Distance**

Another thing to take into account is the location of your classes. You don't want to schedule classes back-to-back if they are miles away from each other. Take into account your commute to school or the time it takes to walk from class to class. If your classes are too far away from each other, you could be late or very tired and sweaty from running across campus.

Sometimes it's also easier on you if you schedule similar courses next to each other. It might be hard to switch your brain from Math to English if you scheduled them back-to-back. What's more, classes in the same discipline are usually in the same area of campus, so you won't have to worry as much about moving from one class to another.

## **Don't Forget to Plan for Finals**

One of the biggest mistakes many of us make when we schedule classes is that we forget to look into the future and think about finals. Depending on the school, you can sometimes look up the dates of each class' finals so that you know how closely or far apart all of your finals will be held. If you're a student who needs gaps between finals, be mindful of that when you are making your schedule.

## **Happy With Your Schedule or Not, Connect**

It's always important that you connect with your peers and develop a support group for each class. By having a strong connection with one or a few of your classmates, you gain a sense of accountability, friendship, and support. No matter your relationship with your professor, connecting with students in your class will make sure that you have help when you need it. It's likely these connections will follow you throughout your four years and be a key factor in your success in college.