

# Using a Syllabus:

## 7 Steps for Your Best Semester Ever

### How to use this guide:

A syllabus should be more than just something that gets stuffed into a backpack; it's a tool for maximizing both your life and your school work. Use this step-by-step guide to start each semester out the right way. We've included approximate time requirements for each step -- all together it's less than an hour.

### You'll need:

Every syllabus you have for the semester and your calendar (digital or paper is fine)

#### **Create a "Due Date" calendar (2 minutes)**

*Google calendar makes it easy to create a bright red calendar for all due dates, or, if you're using a paper calendar, you can set a place on each day where any due dates will be recorded.*

#### **Record every due date on your due date calendar (10-15 minutes)**

*Do every class at once so that every single due date makes it off your syllabus and onto your calendar; be sure to assign due dates a time slot for when they are due, not just the date. This will help you plan better and visualize when assignments need to be handed in.*

#### **Record every class period on your calendar (10 minutes)**

*Set up a recurring time block on your schedule for when you need to be in class each week. Again, this is incredibly easy to do in Google Calendar*

#### **Record any additional commitments you know you will have (5 minutes)**

*If you have another job or an extracurricular activity that takes up the same consistent time block on your calendar, put that down as well. This will be for planning purposes.*

❑ **Set homework/studying appointments with yourself (10 minutes)**

*After recording all of your class times, you now know when you have the ability to study. Your entire week doesn't have to be full of homework appointments, but try to give yourself a few so that you have time set aside for homework, projects, and test prep.*

❑ **Review your due dates & identify tough weeks (5 minutes)**

*This is where you can really begin to take control of your week. Now that you know when you typically study and when everything is due, you can find weeks where work will tend to pile up. Specifically, look for weeks where you have multiple projects due or multiple tests.*

❑ **Offload projects from tough weeks to easy weeks (5 minutes)**

*If you have one week where 3 papers are due, move one or more to a different week by creating another due date for that project and labeling it "Personal Due Date" with the project details as well.*

That's it! If you've followed these steps, you just spent about an hour on making sure that you have the best semester ever. The key now is just to follow through with this. When you've given yourself a homework slot, use it. When you've given yourself a personal due date, keep it. This will help even out the weeks, keep you on track, and make sure that -- if you're looking daily at your calendar -- you'll be right on track!