

THE SMART SEMESTER STRATEGY

Laying the Groundwork for Schoolwork

5 STEPS FOR SUCCESS & A SMART START TO A NEW SEMESTER

1. Review Syllabi Content

- Be sure to read each syllabus in its entirety and pay special attention to
 - Professor’s preferred mode of contact and office hours/location
 - Grading policy and grading scale
 - How much of your grade will you know before the withdrawal deadline?
 - Attendance and participation policies
 - Class materials required and recommended
 - Assignments: papers, presentations, lab reports, quizzes, exams, etc.
 - quantity, format, points/percentages, deadlines
 - Reading schedule
- Refer to *Syllabus Review* handout on the Resources page of the FYAE website:
<http://fyae.sdes.ucf.edu/forms>

2. Set Expectations & Build Support

Course	Realistic grade I hope to earn	Specific study skills I will need for this course	Resources on campus

3. Track Your Progress

- Create a tracking sheet that outlines all assignments for all classes. This will help you see how you are progressing in each class throughout the semester. You can do this in various forms, such as checking webcourses regularly or creating your own tracking sheet in excel. Just be sure to double check your work – you don't want to write incorrect deadlines or miss an assignment!

4. Develop a Student Schedule & Time Management System

- See the Big Picture
 - Schedules have several benefits: They allow you to (1) look ahead, (2) plan ahead, (3) know your availability, (4) remember your assignments, (5) track your progress, (6) create a routine that helps foster focus and prevent procrastination, plus (7) manage large projects by breaking them down and scheduling each small task at a time. First, you want to create a general schedule to develop a routine. Refer to the **Full Week Scheduler** handout on SARC online for more direction.
- Pay Attention to the Details
 - Now, to gain all the benefits of a schedule, take it a step further by breaking down your assignments into more manageable smaller “to do” items and scheduling those specific items into weekly schedules or to do lists. You can do this one week at a time as it may be challenging (and timely) to try to plan out every week of the semester all at once. The main idea is to go beyond just scheduling general “study hours”.
 - For example, if you blocked off “study hours” on Tuesday from 12-3pm, then each week you want to decide how you will use those 3 hours. For Tuesday, October 8th, your plan may be 12-1 Review Lecture Notes, 1-3 Make Notecards.
 - Style Samples for Specific Scheduling:
 - **The Three List Method**
 - **My TO DO List**
 - **Super Scheduler**
 - Time Management Systems, no matter how effective at one point, should be assessed regularly and altered when necessary – every class and semester is different, so what worked well one term may not work well for the next. Be flexible and adjust.
 - Examples of Systems: Planner, To Do List, Smart Phone (calendar and reminders), E-mail Calendar, Post-Its, or a combination of these!

5. Start!

- Follow the plan and don't procrastinate! You might consider developing a reward system for sticking to your schedule all week. But keep in mind that life happens and things come up that may require you to alter your plans – the schedule you create is not set in stone or meant to limit you. You want to do your best to follow it, but you can tweak it when needed – just be sure to keep your priorities in mind and only make adjustments that are necessary and realistic for your schedule and course deadlines. Refer to the **Combating Procrastination** handout online for more information and ideas.

* Time Management handouts referenced here can be found at <http://sarconline.sdes.ucf.edu/> (go to Learning Skills Resources, then Time Management).