

**Butler College**

**Peer Academic Advice for  
First Years**

**2021-22**

# Orientation: Picking Your Fall Courses

Here are a couple points that may help you start thinking about course selection in the fall!

- Let's start with a breakdown of a typical Princeton's course structure:
  - Lecture: When the entire class meets and the professor teaches the content for the week (abbreviated with an L, such as L01)
  - Precept: Smaller classes (about 10-20 students depending on the course) taught by either a graduate student or the professor to reinforce topics, discuss material, and solve sample problems (abbreviated with a P or C, such as P01 or C01)
  - Labs: Typically last 3 hours, where you will test out concepts learned in lecture in precept. Some courses allow you to work in groups; chemistry labs are done individually (abbreviated with a B, such as B01)
- You will need to select one of each of the above to be able to enroll in a course (though not all courses with lectures and precepts have labs). Alternatively, you may also run into courses following the "seminar" or "class format" structures, both of which always meet with the entire class:
  - Seminars have small class sizes and meet once a week for three hours. These are great opportunities to work closely with your professors. (Abbreviated with an S or C, such as S01 or C01.)
  - Others, by the "class format," typically meet twice a week for an hour and a half. (Abbreviated with a C, such as C01.)
- There are several resources for browsing through courses and planning your schedule, many of which were created by students! Some are:
  - [Course Offerings](#) is the University-official posting of courses. Note that in order to see evaluations of the courses, you'll have to submit your log-in information (a button appears in the top right corner of the page).
  - [TigerHub](#) is the University-official site where you will register for courses, and it also has a built-in Course Planner.
  - [Recal](#) is a great tool to help you tweak and fine tune your schedule, and often preferred by students to TigerHub's Course Planner! It is extremely user friendly and will help you lay out all of your potential classes and fit them to times that work.
  - [Princeton Courses](#) is another useful site for exploring courses in a format that is friendlier than Course Offerings. There are several filters available, the ability to "favorite" courses, clash detection, etc.
- Course selection happens very quickly, so thinking through your course selection over the summer will be very helpful as you orient yourself to Princeton in the fall!
- Choosing courses is very different in college than in high school. You have what can be an almost overwhelming array of choices that you will want to think about carefully.

- Consider the resources to help you choose classes. You very likely will not want to read the entire [Undergraduate Announcement](#), but read through the description of distribution requirements and a few departments you find interesting! Also, use [Course Offerings](#) to find the most up-to-date course listings and to search by department, distribution requirement, professor, topic, etc. Be sure to check out the reviews and ratings for a class, they often are helpful.
- Be open. Don't shy away from taking a class that is outside of your typical academic interests – you might discover something you love more than you realized. On the flip side of that, definitely take a couple classes within majors you are considering to gauge if you truly are interested in pursuing that field. Don't be afraid of changing your mind.
- Talk to people and ask lots of questions, but what you want to study is ultimately your choice, one of the most important decisions you will make in college. Here are some questions that may help you think through that choice. (Don't think that you need to have firm answers to all these questions – your answers will likely change as you start classes – but thinking through what you want from Princeton early on and as you choose classes each semester will be helpful.)
  - What are two classes that you know you want to take before you graduate, even if they are outside your main academic interests? Do you have a particular professor that you know you want to take a class with before you graduate?
  - What is the rough time frame you want to set for completing requirements? If you are not particularly inclined to take an STL or an LA, do you want to take one a semester? Consider how distribution requirements line up with majors you may consider. For example, SOC, ECO, PSY, and WWS have stats requirements and POL has an analytic requirement, which can be primarily fulfilled through QR's. So, once you've homed in on one of these majors, you can fulfill your QR while fulfilling one of their requirements.
  - Do the major or majors you are interested in have certain requirements? Do you want to take them early or make sure you are interested in that major before you take the prereq?
  - Do you want to take more than one language? If so, you should consider how you want to balance those classes with the rest of your requirements.
  - How much work does each class you sign up for have on a weekly basis? How many papers or exams does each class have? Try to think about how you work best. Some people work better with consistent weekly work, others do fine studying for big exams. Also, consider that final papers for almost all classes will be due on the same day, "Dean's Date." Unless you are incredibly disciplined, you might want to balance your exam classes with your paper classes!

- What does your daily schedule look like? Some classes have a lot of reading and other work due on a weekly basis. Are you likely to be able to pace yourself well if you have most of your work due on one day of the week or do you want to try to pick a schedule where weekly assignments for different classes are due on different days? (This will matter with your precept selection as well.)
- Is the class schedule you picked manageable? Princeton courses involve far more work than most high school classes so academic advisers tend to recommend lighter schedules while you get adjusted. Take classes that you want to take but be realistic about your workload. The course evaluations linked to each course in [Course Offerings](#) can be a rough gauge of class difficulty.
- Do you have language credit? Take a placement test to see which class you would place into. It is a good idea to try to get your language requirement out of the way if you are an AB student! If you start in the first level, you will have to take 3-4 semesters depending on the language in order to fulfill the requirement. Or if you want to start a new language, now would be the time to start thinking about which one you would like to study. Princeton has a lot of choices to learn a new language!
- You can shop classes, but work for many classes starts the first week. Princeton has very short semesters, so getting settled into your classes sooner rather than later will make life much easier.
- If you are a prospective engineering major, most of your schedule is already set due to the number of requirements depending on the number of AP/IB credits you have. The typical first semester schedule will include four of the following: Physics (Mechanics), a Math class (typically multivariable if you have AP BC Calc credit or IB credit), Chemistry, Introductory Computer Science, a writing seminar or a humanities class. Take a humanities class that interests you to balance out your schedule!
- Choosing classes is one of the most important aspects of your Princeton experience, but that choice can be overwhelming, particularly before even reaching school. You will meet your assigned peer adviser in mid-July and your faculty adviser in August. You should also feel free to contact any of the Butler peer advisers you feel can be helpful or ask Dr. Lazen your questions.
- Ask questions of older students, and don't worry!

# Before Week 1: Getting Signed Up and Ready for Classes

Once you have chosen what classes you want to take, it is ultimately up to you to enroll in them. Here are a few pointers for your first course enrollment:

## **ENROLLING IN COURSES ON TIGERHUB**

- To prepare for course enrollment, go onto the TigerHub website (<https://registrar.princeton.edu/tigerhub/>) before meeting with your adviser. Once there, use the Course Planner to create a visual representation of your potential schedules. Make sure to choose the lab/precept times that you want to take.
  - Some classes only have a precept called P99. This just means that precept times will be chosen later on. For now, you should just choose this one.
  - If you see red exclamation points, these indicate a problem such as conflicting class times or not having picked a precept/lab for a class.
- You'll discuss course selection with your adviser before enrolling.

## **WHAT TO DO IF A CLASS IS FULL**

- Sometimes a class is full before you are able to sign up for it. Don't panic! Just because a class is full now does not mean it will stay full. Often, other students will drop it.
- Princeton Pounce (<http://pounce.tigerapps.org/>) is a great way to be notified when the class you are looking for has an open spot.
- It can also be useful to email the professor directly and explain that you are interested in taking their class despite it being full. Some classes have a waitlist that they will add you to. In some cases, a professor may even open up a spot specifically for you if you have a compelling enough reason for wanting to take their class.

## **GETTING THE MOST OUT OF CANVAS**

Once you have chosen your classes, you should definitely explore Canvas (<https://canvas.princeton.edu/>). This is the website that many classes use to post their syllabi and other materials. Be sure to go to each of their pages on Canvas and explore it. You will probably be using this website a lot over the course of your semester! There is also a Canvas app for cell phones where you can enable notifications.

## **HOW TO GET TEXTBOOKS**

Students used to be able to view reading lists on Canvas' predecessor, Blackboard, but beginning in August, you can view textbooks that are required for a class on a new system called Timber and order discounted books there from Labyrinth Books.

- Labyrinth is located on Nassau Street and is a convenient way to purchase new/used textbooks at reasonable prices. You can either purchase them online or directly at the store.
- The Princeton Textbook Exchange Facebook page is also a popular way for students to sell/buy their used textbooks for discounted prices.

- Of course, websites such as Amazon also have textbooks for sale, though in most cases the prices are comparable to Labyrinth.
- The Princeton library website sometimes has textbooks available in ebook format (especially COS classes) and you can sign out books from course book reserves for a limited time as well.

# WEEK 1: GETTING ORGANIZED

## 1. Understand your workload

- a. Print out the syllabi for each of your classes and become aware of big assignment deadlines and exams early
- b. If you are in a reading intensive class, don't be afraid to print out all of your readings for the 6 weeks leading up to midterms, hole punch them, and organize them in a three-ring binder
- c. See a [map of campus computer clusters](#)

## 2. Create a schedule for yourself

- a. Use Google Calendar or iCal to schedule everything: Divide everything you need to do into different color-coded calendars like:
  - Red for "Extracurricular Activities and Campus Events"
  - Blue for "Classes and Academic Work"
  - Green for "Vacations"
  - Orange for "Social Events"
  - Purple for "Your To-Do List and Appointments".
- b. Look through [Princeton's Academic Calendar](#) (this is very useful!) and the syllabi that your classes have posted on Blackboard.
- c. Also, there is no shame in using a classic, write-in paper/book agenda... Just as long as you stay organized

## 3. Keep your computer organized

- a. Create computer folders for each class you are taking and develop a consistent naming system for your documents
- b. Stay on top of your Gmail inbox--your [@princeton.edu](mailto:@princeton.edu) inbox will fill up quickly!
  - i. Create a separate label for each class you are taking. Delete emails from your inbox that you no longer need as you read them.
  - ii. Manage your student group LISTSERVs
    1. Unsubscribe from student group LISTSERVs you are no longer interested in and discover group LISTSERVs that you would like to join. Go to <https://lists.princeton.edu/> to get a LISTSERV password and then go to Subscriber's Corner to change your subscription options.

## 4. Consider these useful tools

- a. Download [Mendeley](#). This free desktop application will allow you to easily download, read, highlight, take notes on, and cite PDF's from Blackboard and elsewhere.
- b. Download [Self Control](#). This free application will block Facebook, email, the news, or even the whole Internet, and you can't turn it off. You then will have no choice but to do work.

**Good luck with your first full week of classes!**

## WEEK 2: USING YOUR RESOURCES

### **Go to Office Hours**

Really, go! This is your chance to get to meet with your professors and TAs one-on-one and ask them questions about the material. Office hours were created for your benefit, so use them! If you are nervous about going on your own, use the buddy system and invite a classmate to go along with you.

### **Form a Study Group**

Study groups are extremely useful tools for surviving difficult classes.

### **Tackle Heavy Reading Loads with Classmates**

Create a Google doc and have every person in your group take notes on a particular week's readings. This will save everyone in your group a lot of time over the course of the semester!

Before exams, ask everyone in your group to create a study sheet and practice questions on their readings to share with everyone.

Schedule meeting with your study group early in the week to force yourself to start problem sets early!

### **Go to McGraw Study Halls and Get a Tutor**

The McGraw Center study halls offer great support for intro econ, chem, physics, math, and stats classes. To get the most out of them, don't go the day before the p-sets are due, when they can be crowded! McGraw also provides other tips for getting the most out of study halls.

If you have gone to study halls, worked in study groups, and talked to your instructors and you still have questions, it can be really useful to study with a fellow student who has already completed (and done well in) a course you are taking. Tutoring at Princeton is completely free and *you definitely don't need to be failing a course to request a tutor*. For McGraw-supported courses, you can sign up for peer tutoring on their site. For other intro courses, Dr. Lazen, Butler's Director of Studies, will provide info on how to sign up for a tutor.

For info on all of McGraw's resources, check out their site at <https://mcgraw.princeton.edu/undergraduates>.

## WEEK 2: FIND CAMPUS SPACES YOU LIKE

**Architecture.** It can have subtle, yet profound, influences on our psychology, and we, as students, are no exception. But not to worry -- we are blessed with a beautiful campus, with a plethora of different styles to choose from for all your daily activities, from studying to socializing. Do you focus best in Collegiate Gothic? Then Firestone might be the place for you! Do you produce your most original work in modern spaces? Give the architecture library a shot! Is your creativity sparked by a more contemporary style? Then try Lewis Library, designed by the renowned architect Frank Gehry!

Establishing a study location is an important step in setting up a personal study routine! In addition to several libraries (the “main” ones are Firestone and Lewis), Princeton offers a number of study spots for those who want to hit the books outside of their rooms:

**Dining Halls** are usually open at night and are a great spot for group meetings. The dining hall staff also puts out snacks most nights of the week.

**East Pyne Cafe** is a prime studying area during late hours. It's quiet and has a very comfortable atmosphere. Grab a booth or a counter and spread your stuff everywhere because there is plenty of room. If you need a quick nap, there are comfy armchairs right down the corridor.

**East Pyne Library/Chancellor Green** is by far the most beautiful library on campus. It's serene, quiet, and rustic. But the lighting is terrible, so only go during the day and make sure you have a window seat.

**Fine Library** is very big and quiet, and is an extension of the Lewis Library basement wing. Not too many people study there, so it is a good place to go during exams.

**Firestone Library** is by far the largest library on campus. It is often very crowded on Sundays, during midterms and finals. The basement (B/C levels) are often overlooked but they have great light and are often less crowded than the upper levels! The upper levels are beautiful as well. The portrait room on the third floor is a popular spot. The tower room all the way up on the sixth floor is small but beautiful, and provides a great view of campus.

**Frist** contains many study locations, from individual study spaces on the second and third floors to booths in Café Vivian. It's a great spot to take a break by using your late meal and to see friends, and especially for people who like to work with some constant background noise.

**Lewis Library:** The **4th floor** is a quiet space with 7 study rooms (6 can seat 4, 1 can seat 8) and easy printer access--these rooms are especially good for group work. You can reserve

these rooms in advance, or if they are not reserved, you can just occupy them. Beware: rooms are very coveted during exam time! The **2nd floor**, known as **Tree House**, has many tables and has nice natural lighting during the day, as does the **3rd floor**. All four floors also have *really comfortable chairs* if you prefer that to working at a table. You can find cubicles in the **basement of Lewis** and on the **3rd** and **4th** floors.

**Friend Library:** This library is located in the Friend Center and has three floors with glass walls and nice natural lighting. It's fairly quiet but not at all isolating, since there is some bustling from students leaving the classrooms on the second and third floors between classes. When the classrooms are not being used, they are great places to work in a more private space, especially if you would like to use chalkboards.

**Murray Dodge** offers a cozy environment for individual or group study in addition to free cookies and treats every night starting at 3:00 PM.

The **glass-walled study rooms in Scully** are beautiful, especially during wintertime. They are very quiet, very isolated, and equipped with convenient couches in case you need a snooze.

The **Starbucks on Nassau Street** and **Small World Coffee on Witherspoon Street** are great destinations for those who want to get away from campus distractions. Some people even venture a little further to the **Princeton Public Library**.

The **Writing Center** is a great mix of quiet and social. It is very pleasant and sunny during the day and a great space to camp out in during reading period! Unfortunately, there are no nearby printers.

The **Butler study rooms** in 1976, Yoseloff, Bogle, Wilf, Bloomberg, and Scully are good places to do work with your 'zee group and socialize at the same time.

**All residential colleges have their own quiet libraries. Make sure you check out Mellon Library and the Wu Common Room above Wu Dining Hall and J Street above Wilcox Dining Hall.**

For a full list of libraries, see: <http://library.princeton.edu/libraries>.

## WEEK 3: KEEPING UP WITH YOUR READING

This week, we present tips on how to tackle readings. We offer both general strategies and specific advice on reading textbooks and academic articles.

### General Strategies:

- Before you begin reading, understand the big ideas your professor touches upon in class or your syllabus highlights.
  - Read and mark up the text with these main ideas in mind. Do not try to read every word, page, or paragraph, especially if you are pressed for time.
  - Try to answer the questions: What is/are the author(s) saying? Why are we reading him/her for our course? What is the relationship between this reading and other past/current readings?
- Prepare for precept discussions of readings by jotting down key words/ideas on a post-it right before going into class.
  - If you are handling foreign literature readings, make sure you know the key words in the appropriate language (and jot those down on the post-it!). That way, you will have the vocabulary necessary to participate in a discussion.
- Get visual
  - Sometimes, if you are dealing with a large number of readings and are expected to synthesize ideas from multiple readings for an exam, it's immensely helpful to draw brainstorm charts
  - Draw connections to key ideas/words/motifs using reading bubbles

### Specific Advice on How to Read Textbooks:

Understand how your professor intends to use the textbook throughout the course and strategize your approach accordingly

- If professors structure their lectures around textbook chapters, be sure to do the reading before lecture. If you have time, jot down any ideas you have from the reading on a sticky and use it as a resource when you take notes in class.
- If the textbook reading is equal to lecture discussion, skimming may be more appropriate depending on your time constraints.

### Specific Advice on How to Read Academic Articles:

1. Read the abstract first followed by the conclusion/discussion in order to determine the key points of the article
2. Focus on the figures in the article because they generally display important information.
3. Go back and read the article in its entirety trying to find important elements you glean from the discussion and abstract.

# WEEK 3: LANGUAGE LEARNING SECRETS AND WRITING CENTER TIPS

Also in week 3, suggestions from the experts: 1) How to ace your language class (by a Spanish and Portuguese Major), and 2) How to make the best use of your Writing Center appointment (from a Writing Center Fellow who has seen it all). Enjoy!

## **Language Learning Secrets**

- You know what will help you on your language exams a lot more than flash cards and cramming? Your iTunes playlists. Try to find a couple artists you like in the target language and listen to them as often as possible. It's a painless way to pick up syntax, pronunciation, and vocabulary.
- Language tables can be a great way to keep your skills sharp while you're not taking a foreign language course - and a place to meet grad students, community members and other undergrads you might not normally run into.
- Also, try recording your vocabulary lists on your phone.... I listen to mine walking across campus to classes and standing in line for food. Great 10-minute study session when you seemingly have zero time.

## **Writing Center: Important Tips from the Inside**

- Have some concrete goals when you walk into the conference room: it is your conference, after all! Still, understand that your Fellow might direct you toward other things first in order to accomplish what you want.
- Know your sources before going in. They work with people at any step of the writing process, but it's difficult to make progress if you haven't done the reading required for the assignment yet.
- If you're bringing in a take-home exam, make sure you get written permission from your professor beforehand.
- It's okay (and common!) to schedule multiple conferences for one assignment. That way you can get feedback early in the process and check in again when you revise.
- Have an open mind when you come in. Fellows will never tell you outright to change one thing or another, but if you're not willing to make any changes at all, your conference won't be very productive
- Fellows don't proofread papers—that's what friends are for!

## WEEK 4: STRESS TIPS

This week, we advise you on how to keep yourself healthy! Midterms are coming up, and while there are no simple rules for doing well, in our experience we are much better learners and paper-writers when we are not totally stressed out.

### 3 quick tips:

- Calm yourself down.
  - Sit up straight, relax your shoulders, take a deep breath. No, we're serious, do it now -- 15 seconds, and you will be much better at concentrating.
- Get some fresh air.
  - If you're stumped on an assignment, sometimes all you need is a little break. Stand up and take a five-minute walk. If you need a little boost of energy, take a piece of fruit with you and munch it as you go. When you sit back down, you should be able to refocus in order to tackle that p-set or write that paper.
- Figure out your sleep schedule.
  - Not all sleep is created equal -- you've surely woken up from a long night's sleep feeling as tired as if you'd never slept, and had incredibly refreshing naps. Often, the key is to monitor your sleep cycles. Sleep cycles last about 90 minutes, on average, going from light sleep to deep REM. If you wake up at the end of a sleep cycle, you won't feel as groggy, and it'll be that much easier to start off your day. Chances are that you might actually feel more rested on 6 hours than 7! Here's a helpful calculator to help you figure out your optimal bedtime:  
<http://sleepyti.me/>

### Campus Resources and Tools:

- Mind-Body Programs:
  - Dillon Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation: <https://campusrec.princeton.edu/fitness-wellness/instructional-programs>
  - Office of Religious Life Weekly Meditation: <https://religiouslife.princeton.edu/events>
  - UHS: <https://uhs.princeton.edu/mindbody>
- Mindfulness Training:
  - Stress Reduction Downloads: <https://uhs.princeton.edu/health-resources/stress>

# WEEK 5: PREPARING FOR and TAKING MIDTERMS

**As you approach midterms week, keep in mind the following things:**

- Unlike during finals period, classes continue during midterm week. This means you'll still have homework assignments, problem sets, and weekly readings as usual. Make sure you complete these assignments the week before midterm week so you can dedicate time during midterms week solely to studying.
- Midterm week is not successfully completed as a sprint. It requires your sustained energy and focus. Sleep, eat, and exercise throughout the week to do your brain justice and perform at your best during the test!

**Receive Academic Support:**

- Visit the McGraw Center for [workshops](#) on Effective Mid-Term Exam Preparation Strategies and Post Mid-Term Reflections: (Re)Planning for Academic Success and one-on-one [learning strategies consultations](#).
- Visit Butler College's page on [Academic Resources](#).

**Consider course-specific tips for success:**

For reading intensive classes...

- Professors often hold some sort of review session where the exam format will usually be discussed--attend these!
- At these reviews, professors often focus on the big questions/themes of the course. So, when you sit down to study, do not spend time re-reading all articles and papers. Rather, create short, sweet, and to-the-point outlines that focus on these big ideas.
- If the course includes controversial subjects, spend time establishing your own opinion on these topics.
- Spend time comparing ideas introduced across different lectures and tying them together. Do not rely on the professor to connect all of the dots for you.
- Form study groups with friends. Perhaps you may find it useful to create a Google Doc where you share reading summaries and brainstorm ideas

For problem set-based classes...

- Professors most often post old midterms on Canvas as study materials. Use these!
- Before starting practice exams, review your notes and old problem sets
- Take one or two exams without tight time constraints, possibly looking at your notes if you need a refresher
- Take the remaining practice exams under real exam conditions: closed notes, silence, timed
- If you have questions, attend your professor's or TA's office hours with specific problems in hand

## WEEKS 7-9: HOW TO PDF AND AUDIT CLASSES

This week, we present our tips on PDFing or auditing a class. Please recall that you normally have 4 PDFs, and that while you can only use one per semester, you can PDF a class while also taking a PDF-only course.

As a **First-year**, we encourage you not to PDF too hastily during your first semester. We promise that employers and admissions committees will take these grades with a grain of salt, and be very impressed if your grades improve over the course of your Princeton career. (And, to be totally honest, they are just going to be impressed that you are at Princeton).

But as a **Sophomore** especially, don't be afraid to PDF! PDFs are great ways to explore new subjects or high-level courses without fear. Do NOT try to save your PDFs until later on in your Princeton career, because by then you will be taking more departmentals where you will be unable to use them.

### How to PDF a class:

- Log onto TigerHub, choose "Elect P/D/F Grading Option" in the menu, and follow the instructions
- Stay engaged in your class, learn what you came to learn, and don't let it stress you out

### How to Audit a class:

Meet with your professor to determine their requirements for auditing students (ex: a passing grade on the final and consistent attendance), as it varies in every class

- Audited courses don't count toward your course-total, but do appear on your transcript (your grade will appear as AUD)
- You will need to deliver a course worksheet with the signatures of both your Professor and Dr. Lazen to the Registrar's office before the PDF-deadline
- If you change your grade option to 'audit' but do not complete the audit-requirements, the course will just not appear on your transcript

If you have questions, or want to discuss your options, your PAA is always available with tons of great advice!

## WEEK 7-9: FINDING SUMMER OPPORTUNITIES

Even though it is still fall semester, believe it or not, it is already time to be thinking about summer opportunities. Some programs have due dates as early as December or January, so start looking early! Be sure to apply for multiple programs since you can never know whether you will be accepted by any one program. Here are some possibilities for what you can do during the summer:

- **Work with a professor:** *Interested in doing research at Princeton?*
  - Go to your department's website and look through the faculty. Most departments have websites that allow you to easily read about each professor's research.
  - Choose several professors you might be interested in contacting, and send an email to ask about potential summer openings. (*It is a good idea to attach a resume or a CV.*)
- **Apply for an internship:** *Interested in getting work experience?*
  - Intern abroad with the **International Internship Program (IIP)**! Check out the IIP website (<https://oip.princeton.edu/our-programs/international-internships>) and be sure to attend their sessions on how to apply!
  - Check out **Princeton Internships in Civic Service (PICS)**! Application information can be found at the PICS website (<http://pics.princeton.edu/>).
    - IIPs and PICs tend to be due around December, shortly after Thanksgiving break, so make sure that you delegate time to complete these applications (which often require essays, a resumé, and recommendations) around this busy time!
- **Research programs:** *Interested in doing research at other institutions?*
  - The National Science Foundation (NSF) provides research opportunities through the **Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU)** program. You can find a list of programs here: [http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu\\_search.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/reu_search.jsp). You can find more information about the application process and application deadlines on the Internet.
- **International programs:** *Interested in travelling?*
  - **Global seminars:** Take a class abroad during the summer through the global seminar program. Information about the application process can be found here: <http://piirs.princeton.edu/study-learn/global-seminars>. Global seminars tend to be due in early February.
  - **Learn a language abroad:** Look into summer language programs, such as Princeton in Beijing and Princeton in Italy (and more! check out departmental websites).

Most of these applications require a resume or CV. For resume and CV help, you can schedule an appointment with Career Services (<https://careerservices.princeton.edu/>).

## WEEK 10: PREPARING FOR COURSE SELECTION AND LOOKING AHEAD

Now that you've selected courses at least once before, take some time to reflect on your past experience in order to prepare yourself well for next term. **To prepare for choosing classes**, ask yourself:

- What time of day do I prefer certain types of classes (i.e. seminars, lectures, precepts, labs)?
- Do I like having time between classes? (*Be aware of the class location so you have enough time to walk across campus to the next class*)
- What time of day do I study well?
- When are my extracurricular and social activities?
- When do I prefer to have meals?
- When do I exercise or take time to rejuvenate myself?
- How much sleep/how many naps do I need?

As you start to look at classes on course offerings, keep in mind your answers to these questions and use Course Planner (on TigerHub) or Recal ([recal.io](https://recal.io)) to create an appropriate class schedule.

# WEEK 11: COURSE SELECTION

When it comes time **to choose classes**, consider the following tips:

1. As you search through classes...
  - a. Don't stick to searching by department. If you branch out, we promise that you will discover some really interesting gems! Try searching by keyword, time, or distribution requirement.
  - b. Review course and professor evaluations available on Course Planner and course offerings
  - c. Ask your Peer Academic Advisers for recommendations and advice!
2. Look at the ODOC [Choosing a Major](#) page.
3. Think about the requirements for your prospective major(s). For more information on Princeton's departments and certificates, visit: <https://www.princeton.edu/academics/areas-of-study>.
4. Understand your general education requirements: <https://odoc.princeton.edu/curriculum/general-education-requirements>. BUT, don't take an uninteresting distribution requirement right now if you are going to fulfill that distribution requirement as a junior with a course for your major.
5. Use the course reviews to figure out how often classes are offered - you might have several more chances to take that fun elective, clearing space for important requirements. Alternatively, that perfect SA might only be offered once and you should pounce now!
6. Balance your classes keeping in mind what midterms week, Dean's Date, and finals period are going to look like. You don't want 4 midterms or 4 papers due on the same day!
  - d. To get a sense of each course's workload, check out course syllabi for previous semesters on Canvas.
  - e. If the class does not have a syllabus posted on Canvas, feel free to email the professor of the course asking for a copy of one.
7. Keep in mind that some classes, like Creative Writing courses, require *applications* (a short essay, for example). Prepare a backup class in case you don't get in and remember that you may have to enroll in this course at a separate time during Add/Drop period.
8. MOST IMPORTANTLY: If you are confused by anything at all, or just want to be sure that you are making the right class decisions, don't hesitate to reach out to your Peer Advisers, your faculty adviser, or Dr. Lazen

# WEEK 12: WRITING PAPERS

This week, we present you with our experiences and tips for writing research papers in the humanities and social studies. We also remind you of our Writing Center tips.

## Two things to always remember when writing papers:

1. Make sure that your topic is interesting to you. Would you read X # of pages on this topic? If not, your grader probably doesn't want to either.
2. Make a [Writing Center](#) appointment! It's a great way to force yourself to start early and to get some great help.

## Writing Research Papers in the Humanities

"Before I begin writing my papers, I think through the material we've covered in class, and if I have a broad choice in my topic, I choose the topics that captivate me. After fleshing out my idea, I often consult with my professor during office hours or a specifically scheduled meeting, and we discuss the topic and preliminary structure of the argument I've devised. Then I write, write, write, and rewrite, until my paper has a solid, clearly articulated thesis which is carefully substantiated by my textual analyses."

## Writing Research Papers in the Social Sciences:

"I think the first step, as with humanities papers, is to first come up with an interesting question and then research the topic. You should make sure that there is research on the topic, but try not to pick a topic that's too saturated with research. I like using simple google or google scholar searches, but be sure to also make use of the PUL (Princeton University Library) online. Next, structure your paper with an introductory paragraph laying out how your topic fits in the field. Then, write the main body of your essay. Finally, in the conclusion, write about possible implications and applications of your research and potential future research areas.

## Writing Center: Important Tips from the Inside (reprinted from Week 3 because writing is a continuous practice)

- Have some concrete goals when you walk into the conference room: it is your conference, after all! Still, understand that your Fellow might direct you toward other things first in order to accomplish what you want.
- Know your sources before going in. They work with people at any step of the writing process, but it's difficult to make progress if you haven't done the reading required for the assignment yet.
- If you're bringing in a take-home exam, make sure you get written permission from your professor beforehand.
- It's okay (and common!) to schedule multiple conferences for one assignment. That way you can get feedback early in the process and check in again when you revise.

- Have an open mind when you come in. Fellows will never tell you outright to change one thing or another, but if you're not willing to make any changes at all, your conference won't be very productive
- Fellows don't proofread papers—that's what friends are for!

# WEEKS 13 and 14: READING PERIOD AND FINALS

For first-years, navigating reading period and finals is a new experience. If you find yourself asking questions about how to handle the time you have at home and on campus before finals, read our suggestions below:

## Preparation:

1. Organize and Condense
  - Tackle an easy activity first such as organizing notes and readings or creating study outlines
2. Create a Schedule
  - Don't create an unrealistic work schedule, but rather one that is manageable and consistent.
  - If you work well by studying in big chunks, define "study days." Or, if you prefer to space studying out, allocate an hour a day for work instead.
  - Find motivation to stay on track. This can come from yourself or your peers. If you are in a quantitative class, perhaps work on problems each day with friends over the phone or Skype. If you are in a reading-based class, create a Google Doc to keep track of readings and bounce ideas off of each other.
3. Take a break
  - The MOST IMPORTANT thing you can do to prepare for finals is to refresh yourself. So, step away from the books for a bit and make sure to spend some time resting and relaxing.

## During Reading Period:

1. Prioritize papers due Dean's Date and take home exams due right after
2. Create detailed action plans for exam studying and start studying for your first final a full week in advance
3. Schedule time each day to have some fun and relax in a healthy atmosphere

## February: Finding Your Rhythm

Congratulations on completing fall semester at Princeton! Whether you are a freshman or a sophomore, the next step is a very important one: using your momentum from last term to carry you into the spring with plenty of energy. Like a surfer, you have already accomplished the first difficult task of popping up on the board. Now, it is time to stay up on the board and sustain your forward motion.



### First Years:

Use February as a time to establish a rhythm that best suits you. Based on the past semester, what time of day were you most efficient studying? What libraries were most conducive to your work needs? How many hours of sleep do you need to be efficient and well rested? Is there a particular way in which you space classes around meal times? Are you balancing studies with adequate exercise and/or rest? Do you like to implement daily routines like five-minute meditations, yoga, or stretching sessions?

Be cognizant of the spring semester's pace. Unlike the fall, there are fewer breaks, so establishing your own rhythm and routine early will be important as workloads start to increase and midterms approach.

### Sophomores:

It's still not too late to begin looking for summer internships! Be sure to attend the Career Fair in February. In addition, check out these useful resources:

- Career Services: a great place to start asking job-related question, polishing your resume, and creating cover letters
- TigerTracks: a website that offers many postings from companies, specifically for Princeton students
- Look into Princeton's Global Seminars, the International Internship Program (IIP), and Princeton Internships in Civic Service (PICS)

**For everyone:** To stay on track throughout the semester, read this helpful handout offered by McGraw:

- <http://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/for-students/deans-date/What-Can-I-Do-NOW-Deans-Date.pdf>

# April: Making a Major Decision

April is a pivotal month during which **sophomores** and **BSE freshmen** declare majors and enroll in certificate programs.

## To prepare for your major decision:

- Get to know the departments:
  - Need general advice? Attend departmental open houses. This allows you to meet departmental representatives, professors, and current concentrators suited for you (access to resources, research grants, advising assistance, study abroad possibilities)
  - Interested in studying abroad? Read into each [department's study abroad options](#)
- Talk to people:
  - Contact current concentrators. Your peers can be your best mentors, providing direct and honest insight on a specific concentration
  - Speak with your director of studies, Dr. Lazen, at the college office!
- Utilize online resources:
  - Check out the [Major Choices Advising website](#) to learn more about Princeton's concentrations and [Major Choices Alumni Profiles](#) to learn more about graduates who followed their intellectual passions to major in subjects they love
  - Explore the relationship between majors and careers through Career Service's Page: ["What can I do with my major?"](#)
- Throughout **freshman** and **sophomore** years, if you already have an idea of your intended concentration, start fulfilling the departmental entry requirements. Come sophomore spring, it can be a little more difficult to catch up on necessary pre-requirements.

## Look into certificate programs:

- Certificates are excellent programs to pursue whether you have several different or parallel passions at Princeton.
- The [office of the dean of the college](#) is a good starting point to learn more about certificates.
- See Princeton's [list of certificate programs](#) for more details

# May: Finish Those Finals!

You deserve a big pat on the back for all you've accomplished so far! You've managed to not only pop up on that surfboard, but also ride those waves like a champ for another semester. And now, one thing remains: a last set of finals. While you should use your experience from your winter finals to prepare for spring finals, you should also keep in mind that there are significant differences. In particular, you do not have the extra cushion of a winter break period.

*Before reading period focus on the following things:*

1. Organize and condense: organize notes and readings in the weeks leading up to finals

2. Take time thinking about your study habits: Do you like dedicating large chunks of time studying for one class or breaking up the day studying for multiple classes?
3. Create a study schedule for reading period around these habits: don't get to reading period without knowing how you want to break up your days.

*During reading period focus on the following things:*

1. Prioritize papers due Dean's Date and take home exams due right after
2. Create outlines that condense lecture notes and readings in one place
3. Take plenty of practice tests and do practice problems for quantitative classes
4. Schedule time each day to have some fun and relax in a healthy atmosphere

\*\*To further prepare yourself for Finals Period, be sure to check out McGraw's [Academic Strategies Workshop Series](#)\*\*

## Sophomore Reflections

### **Before Week 1: Taking the time to Reflect and Learn from Freshman Year**

Research shows that reflecting on your experiences is the most important part of the learning process. Therefore, no matter how your freshman year turned out, in order to reap the most benefits from your first year at Princeton, it's important to reflect upon your experience! We all have something that we would like to improve on, so here are some questions to guide you as you look back upon your first year so to make sophomore year an even better year!

(As this is obviously a personal reflection, feel free to tweak the questions for yourself so that they mirror your values better!)

- Which of your classes have you found most interesting? Which classes have you felt that you have learned the most in? Which ones intrigued you the most? Would you consider taking more of those courses?
- Which classes did you find most challenging? Were you able to effectively handle these challenges? If not, can you think of different ways you could have approached these challenges?
- What do you find to be your academic strengths? Are you good at note-making? Do you study better in a group or by yourself? etc.
- Did you take advantage of the resources available to help make the academic transition into college smoother? Did you ask for help when you needed it? (i.e. McGraw tutoring/McGraw learning consultations, Writing Center appointments, office hours, etc.)
- If you could re-do freshman year, what is one academic-related thing that you would do differently in order to have a smoother transition into Princeton? Do you think you can apply this change to some future aspect of sophomore year?
- What were your goals and dreams for freshman year? Are they still applicable to sophomore year? Have you developed any goals for sophomore year? What actions will you take today and the rest of the semester in order to help you reach these goals for this fresh, new year?

- Do you remember why you came to Princeton? Have you stayed true to these reasons and your values? Have you tried to put your experiences at Princeton so far into the perspective that fits right for you?
- If you are an AB major, have you started thinking about what you want to major in? Are you on track with your courses for then? Don't forget that you will declare in the spring!

**Advice for after week 1:**

- Stay motivated! Sophomore year can be hard academically because often you are getting to the upper level classes and they take more time and commitment.
- Continue to study with friends! It is a more efficient and productive way to get things done but also to socialize!

Continue to ask yourself questions like these so to be able to make the most of your Sophomore year!

*"We do not learn from experience ... we learn from reflecting on experience."*

*-John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer*