

**GCTS Student Success Department**

*Planning Your Semester*

Following this guide will help you to break up your assignments and course work throughout the semester. The goal is to be proactive, not reactive, as you approach your tasks for the week.

**Creating a Master Schedule:**

* Using the **Semester Scheduling Template** you will gather all of your due dates and have them in one place.
* Fill the left column of the template with dates for each week of the semester.
* Put everything possible from your syllabi into this document, using one column for each class.
  + Drop weekly assignments/readings/quizzes into their appropriate week.
    - *Tip:* calculate exact page amounts for each week so you know when you will get hit with some extra long chapters.
  + Drop Large assignments (midterms, exams, papers) into the week they are due.
    - Now, do some backwards planning by adding further details into the weeks leading up to these larger assignments. You do not want to start studying/writing the week they are due!
    - For midterms/exams, write “study for \_\_\_\_” in the preceding 2-3 weeks.
    - For larger papers, work backwards to set benchmarks, breaking the larger task down into smaller tasks. For example, if you have a research paper due October 14th, you might set up this timeline (writing each task in the appropriate week):
      * Final Draft: October 12th
      * Rough Draft submitted to Writing Center: October 9th
      * Thesis Developed: September 25th
      * Sources compiled: September 20th
      * Identify paper topic: September 15th
  + Consider giving yourself a due date buffer ahead of larger assignments. You never know what unexpected things may come up those last few days. Aim to complete assignments a few days early.
* Your Master Schedule is now complete, with all your assignments and due dates in one place!

**Using Your Master Schedule:**

* Throughout the semester, refer to your Master Schedule at the start of each week to see exactly what is due in each class.
* Use this schedule to help you with your prioritizing work by answering the question “What do I need to do?” vs. “What do I want to do?”. You may feel like reading tonight, but if you have completed your reading for the week and there are other assignments still due this week, you need to do what is most pressing.
* If you need help with this planning process at any point in the semester, talk with your Student Success Coordinator.