Course Timeblock Guidance, Spring 2021

Below please find information regarding scheduling courses for Spring 2021.

The **4.5-hour time blocks** are meant to afford flexibility to faculty by providing several possible slots within that time block for scheduling synchronous class sessions with multiple, small groups of students enrolled in the course. They also allow faculty to engage students in standard course work as well as additional activities like labs, film viewings, discussion sections, etc. In addition to synchronous sessions with faculty members, this time may include asynchronous activities such as discussion posts, and watching and responding to recorded lectures, or student-led discussions, among other things.

These time blocks place a “hold” on students’ calendars for three windows of time during the week, with the specific time for a synchronous meeting for individual students to be determined once enrollments are finalized. There is no expectation that a student or faculty member would have synchronous meetings scheduled for the entirety of these 4.5-hour time blocks.

You will be asked to select the intended instructional location:

- **Remote**: delivered fully remotely or with minimal in-person components that can be replicated for remote students
  - An example of this would be a class that subdivides periodically into two discussion sections, where one is fully remote, and one is in-person.
- **In-person**: courses that are delivered for students in-residence

The description of how to use the blocks follows:

**Use of Blocks**

- Departments/programs should use ALL blocks once before repeating use, use all blocks AGAIN before repeating use, etc.
  - Exception: departments/programs only need to use block 5 OR block 9 and block 7 OR block 10 before cycling back through the time block options.
- Block 9 and block 10 coincide with block 5 and block 7 respectively. Please be aware of this when scheduling.
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Long Blocks

- Courses that pedagogically require a longer experience component, such as a lab, should be scheduled in block 5 or block 7 first.
- Long blocks should only be used in extenuating circumstances where students will substantively lose out on their educational experience without the longer component.
  - Department chairs/program directors will assess which courses should be assigned in long blocks.
- If necessary, after using block 5 and block 7, department/programs may seek approval to create additional long blocks by linking block 7 with upper level seminar block 1 or by linking block 8 to upper level seminar block 1 or block 2.
  - Department chairs/program directors will work with Academic Affairs for approval to combine these time blocks as they create several conflicts and will significantly reduce student course choices.

Upper Level Seminar Blocks

- Ideal for courses with in-person components, as students in other time zones may have trouble participating.
- Note that these two blocks consist of only two meetings per week, making them lack the scheduling flexibility that can be key to meeting the needs of a remote student population.

Evening Blocks

- Student feedback on the fall semester indicated that many feel considerable fatigue by the end of the day, and that they would appreciate having evenings free of classes if possible.
- Therefore, Academic Affairs is advising faculty to use evening blocks only when students' time zones and life circumstances require it. There is ample course time during the day that should be used first, when feasible.