How to Schedule Your First Year

With assessment and orientation behind you, you’re probably ready to sit back and relax for a while before starting college, but don’t get too comfortable. Before you know it, you’ll find yourself on campus, thrown into a whirlwind of decisions. Choosing your courses will be among the first.

Picking classes in high school may not have been a big deal, but college is different. Some schools offer literally thousands of classes. Deciding what to take can make even the most experienced student dizzy. The following tips and strategies will make it easier to select your courses.

Tip 1: Review the College Catalog
You will need to purchase a College catalog from the bookstore or view the College catalog at www.rcc.edu. Look through it thoroughly. You’ll find certificates, associate degrees, and transfer programs requirements. Review the course descriptions so you have a better idea of the course content.

Mark the classes that interest you. If you have an idea of what you want to major in, consider taking some of the general requirements in your major. If you’re like most freshmen and have no idea what you want to major in yet, think about taking classes in areas that spark your interest. Have you always wanted to learn about space? Try an astronomy class. Do fossils intrigue you? Sign up for anthropology.

Tip 2: Search on WebAdvisor
Go to www.rcc.edu. Click on WebAdvisor, then view open classes by campus. You will find class names, titles, location, meeting information, units, faculty, and available capacity. If you click on class names/ deadlines, you can find detailed information about the class, including any prerequisite requirements.

Tip 3: Find a Balance of Hard and Easy Courses
You may be eager to jump into difficult classes your first year, but beware of taking too many. You may not realize how challenging college courses can be, and how much reading and other work they require. And don’t forget that this will be your first semester on campus -- you’re in for lots of changes. Too many hard courses can put a real strain on you and it will show in your grades.

Tip 4: Find a Balance of Subject Areas
You should also take subjects that require different kinds of work. For example, some classes, like literature and history, require a lot of reading, while others, like journalism, require lots of writing. And courses like math and science will have you solving problem sets. Choose a variety of subjects so you’re not stuck writing five research papers or having to read five books in one week.

Tip 5: Take Advantage of Counseling Services
Take the opportunity in the group orientation to ask questions. Make it a priority to set up an appointment to see a counselor and come with questions.

Tip 6: Use AP Credits, Placement Exams, and More
Before you register, find out if you’ve already fulfilled any of your requirements. If you score high on AP exams, for example, you may not have to take certain classes, such as a lab science. Acing a placement exam could free you from taking the required language course. Submit your official AP exams results to Admissions and Records.

Tip 7: Take a Writing Course
It is in your best interest to take a writing class during your first semester, even if you’re not required to do so. You can apply the writing skills you develop in this course to all your other courses throughout college and in whatever career you choose.

Tip 8: Make a Plan for Registration Day
Registering for classes can be a nailbiting experience. You can be sure that some of the classes you want will be full, or that you’ll have to choose between two classes that are held at the same time. So, after you come up with your dream schedule, make a list of alternative classes. Your preparations will make registration day easier, and help you start your first year off right.