

Course Mapping

Directions:

1. **Decide on a major.** If you don't know what major you are going pick choose one that you find interesting. Even if you change majors the concept of mapping out your courses is a skill you can use in the future to map out another major or to plan any other complex project.
2. **Find your college's requirements for graduation** for that specific major and minor (if applicable). Usually located in the course catalog or on your major's webpage, is a list of how many credit hours, core requirements, course requirements, and minor requirements that are required to graduate with that specific degree/major. You will want to print any list you come answering "what do you need to graduate with this degree?"
3. **Find your college's course catalog** and cut out every course that you need to take to graduate. Cut out not only the Course Number and Title but the whole description as this will help you when putting them in order. You will have a variety of electives to choose from so read the descriptions and chose what you think you would like to take. Don't worry if you change your mind once you get to college.

Example from Penn State:

MATH 141J (GQ) **Calculus with Analytic Geometry II** (4) Derivatives, integrals, applications; sequences and series; analytic geometry; polar coordinates. Students may take only one course for credit from MATH 141, 141B, and 141H.
 Effective: Spring 2009 Ending: Spring 2009
 Prerequisite: MATH 140, MATH 140A, MATH 140B or MATH 140H

4. **Map out**, (place each course in order by semester) every course you need to graduate for the next four years. You can do this on a poster or on a sheet of paper for each semester.

Please title the Map with your *Name, Major, Minor (if applicable), and College Name.*

Fall 09	Spring 10	Fall 10	Spring 11	Summer 11	Fall 11	Spring 12	Fall 12	Spring 13
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5. Questions to consider before you begin.

- a. In how many years do you want to graduate? _____
 - i. Remember that if you take summer or intensive courses you may be able to graduate a semester to a whole year earlier...in the long run could save you a lot of money.
- b. Do certain courses have prerequisites?
 - i. A Prerequisite is a rule about what must happen before you take a course. Sometimes it's a grade level like you must be a sophomore or senior and sometimes it's a course that you must take first like math 101 before accounting 102 because you need basic math in order to take accounting.
- c. Are all courses offered every semester?
 - i. Sometimes courses especially courses that are part II are ONLY offered in the second semester (spring) and part I only offered in the fall. If you can figure this out it is very helpful so you don't plan on taking Drawing II in the fall and then realize last minute its not available. PLAN well and save yourself headaches and worse case not being able to graduate on time!
- d. Does your map reflect a balance in hard and easier subjects for you?
 - i. It is not wise to take all of your hard classes in one semester. Try to balance out hard and easy subjects or classes. For example if you struggle in math but absolutely love English it would be wise to take writing based classes and calculus at the same time- NOT Calculus, Physics, and Statistics which are all math based in the same semester.
 - ii. Secondly, the best way to figure out what classes are harder than others is to first look at the course number (100's= Freshmen and 400's = Seniors) the higher the number and the more credit hours the harder it usually is. However, depending on the professor and your abilities some courses may be easier than you expected. The best way to figure out what courses will entail is to ask a senior that is in your major about all the upper level classes. Ask questions about the format of the course (project based? Paper based? Lots of reading) and which professors they recommend and why.
- e. Did you plan for minors?
 - i. Minors are usually have a list requirements as well, although not as many as a major. Minors typically require a certain number of credit hours approximately 18 and that the courses be at a certain level usually (300-400 level).
- f. How many credits does your program require?
 - i. This varies from major to major and college to college. You must figure out how many credits are required from your college and then go back and

count the credit hours on your map to make sure you have enough. You can always have more than are required to graduate but never less.

- g. Are their courses you plan on taking at community college during the summer to relieve your course load?
 - i. Community college courses are typically MUCH cheaper to take. I suggest taking at least one course over the summer each summer to get especially challenging classes out of the way. It is much easier to focus on a subject that you do poorly in over the summer than to take that same course with 5 other courses during the school year. For example: I don't like History and I knew it would be a ton of reading and writing. I decided to focus on it in the summer rather than procrastinate and possibly do poorly in the class at college. Example two: Sometimes there are tough or foreign professors teaching the only section of the class that is required for you to graduate- solution- Community college during the summer!
 - ii. Community college courses can be taken as intensives! The advantage to taking summer courses at the community college is that you can take a course that would normally be a whole semester and finish it in two weeks. This means that you will probably have to focus on it and study for two weeks straight but after two weeks are done you don't have to think about that subject anymore. Typically professors can't assign you as much work as a whole semester class too. So it takes a little extra discipline but it is definitely worth it to be done with some ridiculous core classes in a few short days instead of agonizing weeks! Be wise....make these courses work to your advantage!

Grading

1. Map Title (*Name, Major, Minor (if applicable), and College Name*) 3pts
2. Map (semesters clearly defined, courses include course descriptions, title, course number) 10pts
3. Requirements for graduation (printed from college website or course catalog) 20pts
4. All courses present 30pts
5. All semesters balanced 10pts
6. Prerequisites considered 20pts
7. Correct number of credits to graduate 5pts
8. Summer learning or Minors represented 2pts

Total Points: 100