



8 WEEK CLASSES

for Faculty

Definition

8-week classes fit a full semester's worth of content (16 weeks) into just half that many weeks, while maintaining the same **credits** and **overall contact and out-of-class hours** as semester-long courses.

- In each week of a 3-credit 8-week course, students should expect to receive 6 hours of in-class contact (face to face or virtual, depending on modality) and to put in at least 6-12 additional hours on homework/studying, for a total of 12-18 hours
- Course objectives and student learning outcomes (SLOs) remain the same
- Faculty and students alike should understand that although these courses take half the time, they generally require at least twice the work. Nonetheless, retention and success rates are often higher!

Conversion

Your 8-week course should cover the **same content, learning objectives, and SLOs** as a semester-long one, but should be intentionally structured to maximize the student learning experience over a shorter timeframe.

- You should not simply shift the dates on all your existing assessments, such as by having your regular-semester Week 1 content due on Wednesday and Week 2 due Sunday
 - Instead, deliberately plan to the 8-week timeframe, which usually means combining some assessments and adjusting due dates
 - You might want to keep weekly discussion posts, but have 8 instead of 16, addressing more content at one time. Three exams or projects from a semester-long course might better serve students if combined into two for an 8-week course
- Design both formative and summative assignments to support student learning and achievement of SLOs

Strategies for Success

Because 8-week classes are faster-paced and more intense than semester-long ones, intentional **course design** and consistent **communication** are especially crucial. 8-week classes are also new to many IVC students, who may not even have realized they have registered for one, making early outreach is key.

Communication

- Let students know—early and in multiple ways—that they're in an 8-week class
 - Email students registered in the first 8-week session at least one week before the class starts, if not earlier, and consider sharing the 8-Week Student Guide
 - On or before the first day of the term, email students in the second 8-week session, who won't see the course in their Canvas Dashboard and may not have realized they are also

registered for a late-starting eight-week class

- Emphasize in multiple places that the course is just 8 weeks long: Canvas Home page, syllabus, and in early communications like emails and Announcements

VARSITY LEVEL

- Provide an introductory video, ideally included in your initial email, explaining how 8-week courses are different and offering tips for success.
- Update your Canvas thumbnail and Quick-Start Guide (if you have one) to graphically emphasize that the section is just 8 weeks long
- Publish your Canvas course as early as possible

Strategies for Success

Course Design & Materials

- Structure your content to fit your pedagogical goals as well as the 8-week format
 - Have at least one assessment due per week
 - Establish consistent, posted, assignment deadlines
 - Plot out the schedule for the term in as much detail as possible, and share it with students
- Use materials that students can access as early and easily as possible
 - Consider open educational resources (OER), which are not only immediately available, but are free and customizable, for at least the first week's content
 - If students must buy a publisher textbook, workbook, lab manual, or access a paid homework platform, make sure to give them full and accurate information about edition(s), pricing, and acceptable formats before class starts, and then support them in acquiring the material as soon as possible
 - Whenever possible, post at least the first week's content in Canvas so that students who don't have the textbook don't fall behind
- Use Canvas to organize your content clearly and intuitively
 - Utilize consistent formatting and organization
 - Make it easy to find information

Varsity Level

- Enter all assignments in Canvas with correct due dates, so that they appear in the Calendar, and build them into Modules in Canvas before the semester starts
- Include a detailed, printable schedule as part of the syllabus and as a separate printable in Canvas
- Use OER instead of a textbook to get your section to Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC)

Community Building & Academic Integrity

- Letting students know they're part of a community of learners builds confidence and self-efficacy
 - Facilitate authentic introductions, possibly including audio/video in online courses, to let students meet each other
 - Welcome students personally, by name
- The intensity of 8-week courses, especially online, can drive some students to cheat
 - Students cheat when they feel like they are incapable of succeeding honestly; when they feel

like cheating doesn't matter because everyone is doing it and/or they won't get caught; and/or when the course design or delivery makes it particularly easy

- Design assignments with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and for resistance to completion by Artificial Intelligence (AI) or other cheating
- Have a clear, detailed, academic integrity policy, including guidelines on AI usage, and apply consequences consistently and fairly

Varsity Level

- Humanize your course by increasing instructor presence (especially through videos that show your own personality, story, and interests)
- Create authentic, relevant assignments, and offer timely, consistent feedback, including on formative assessments
- Consider requiring drafts for summative assessments, with the final version incorporating instructor and/or peer feedback
- Experiment with small group/collaborative assignments

Student Support

- Clearly explain the planning, time management, and study skills required for success, and help students practice them, such as by requiring them to submit a weekly schedule
- Share IVC resources including tutoring, the Library, and mental health counseling services
- Make it easy to reach you, ideally through multiple means (Canvas Inbox, phone, email, Pronto, etc.)—and respond promptly to messages you receive

Varsity Level

- On the first day of class, send an Inbox message to each student, by name, welcoming them and inviting them to contact you with any questions
- Use the "Notes" column in the Canvas gradebook to help remember details about students and offer tailored support
- Use the "Message Students Who..." function in Canvas to reach out to students before or shortly after assignment deadlines to help avoid missed assignments and/or to remind them they can submit late work. Catch the first missed assignment to avoid establishing a pattern and help keep students on track
- Reach out directly to students who aren't participating or are struggling