

Google calendar

What is it?

Google calendar is an online calendar that you can use to keep track of recurring events (like classes), important dates (like tests), and task lists. A simple web-tool like the Google calendar is not necessarily breakthrough technology (by today's standards), but very helpful nonetheless. Since your email at the University of Illinois is already a "Google" account, you already have a Google Calendar (you just may not know it!).

Why does it work?

Let's face it, if you don't write it down, you are going to forget it. Some students have an uncanny ability to look at their syllabus once and somehow remember every due date, every office hour, and every room number. But not you. Google calendar will help you keep it all in one place. You have probably had access to online calendars in the past, but Google calendar is special in that many of its features are really sleek, and it is already built into the email you use every day. One of the most powerful features of Google calendar is that it has a reminder system. You can ask Google calendar to send you an email right before important events (and chances are you are able to receive Gmail on your cell phone). So, Google calendar serves as your personal assistant that tells you to get out of bed every MWF for your 9:00am class! The goal of Google calendar is not to make you an efficiency expert or Mr./Ms. Punctuality, it's there to make sure you do have any gigantic scheduling blunders in your semester.



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How does it work?

When using Google calendar, you create events with a single mouse-click. You can color-code the event, set it to "recur" if it happens repeatedly (like class or office hours), and set email or pop-up reminders however long before the event you choose. When events change, you can click and drag the event to its new time. One of the best ways to use Google calendar is after the first week of class when you have collected your class syllabi. You'll sit down and have a Google planning session where you input all of the important dates for the semester (e.g., exam dates, homework due dates, final times, etc.) You can do a semester's worth of planning in just a couple of hours (and your DRES coach can help you with this)! You can easily share your Google calendar with classmates or professors, and integrate others' calendars into your own. You can even set events and invite other Google calendar users to them. You can create a "task-list" by clicking on the task pane on the right. You are able to set deadlines for your tasks, and they will show up like a to-do list right on your calendar. As you complete your tasks, you can check them off of your list. You can search your events in the handy search bar at the top of the screen. You don't have to worry about losing it like a regular planner, and it's so easy to check your schedule since it's right there when you check your email!

Resources:

- Login to your Google calendar at www.google.com/calendar.
- You can sync your Google applications (including calendar, gmail, and contacts) with your phone using instructions on this website: <http://www.google.com/mobile/sync/>
- Please email Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at jstagg@illinois.edu if you have any questions!

Change that habit!

The best way to change your academic habits for long-term success is to invest time and energy into practicing strategies like using Google calendar. It may not work great right away, but the effort you put in to practicing better academic habits is directly proportional to the success you will experience. Coaching at DRES can help you change your habits. To start coaching, please contact Dr. Jonathan Thomas-Stagg at jstagg@illinois.edu. Thanks!

The screenshot shows the Google Calendar interface for December 11-17, 2011. The interface includes a search bar at the top, navigation buttons for Today, previous/next day, and view options (Day, Week, Month, 4 Days, Agenda). A notification bubble at the top center says "Your event was updated. Undo". On the left, there are sections for "My calendars" (Jonathan Thomas-St...) and "Other calendars" (Add a friend's calendar). The main calendar grid shows events for various days, with a red horizontal line indicating the current day (Thursday, Dec 15). On the right, a "Tasks" list for "drijstagg's list" is visible, with a task "Tell people how great Google calendar is!" checked. Numbered callouts (1-7) point to: 1. The task list on the right; 2. The search bar; 3. The red horizontal line indicating the current day; 4. The "Tasks" calendar in the "My calendars" list; 5. Overlapping events on Saturday, Dec 17; 6. The search bar; 7. The notification bubble.

Screenshot of my Google calendar. Take note of some special features:

1. Your task list shows up on both the right pane, and on the days that the tasks are "due."
2. You can specify if you want to calendar to show you the current day, week, month.

3. The orange line tells you the current day/time and Google calendar's default is to "shade" events in the past.

4. You can create as many calendars as you would like and select/de-select them depending on what you want to view.

5. You can "double-book" events, they will show up as overlapping.

6. Quickly search through your events with the search bar at the top.

7. The "bubble" tells you your last action.

