

# CONDENSING COURSE CONTENT EFFECTIVELY



There are many reasons why you may need to condense your 15-week course into a shorter format—a sudden change in modality from in-person to remote, developing a 5-week version for Summer, or if you are developing an LSU online course in the 7-week structure. Use these principles and best practices to make your course adjustable and versatile regardless of the duration of the term or semester.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES



### Use an outcomes-focused approach

- **Focus on the delivery of core content** and ensure the topics covered in the condensed course directly align with student learning outcomes. This allows you to plan, design, and teach more effectively. Rather than trying to fit the semester-length content into a more compressed format, you can focus on what needs to be learned and plan accordingly.
- **Use your course outcomes to guide the activities and assessments.** Take stock of your assignments in the course and determine if they are helping students meet the identified outcomes. Eliminate activities and assignments that are not directly tied to specific outcomes.
- **Organize by topic instead of by week.** Instead of thinking in terms of chapters and weeks, reset your perspective of the course in terms of skills you want students to master and the topics you need to cover. Reorganize the course into topics or modules instead of by weeks.



### Remember that credit hours have not changed

- **Regardless of the course duration (15, 7, or 5-week), the course design has to meet the same number of credit hours.** The total amount of student time-on-task for a 3-credit course should total 45 hours of in-class time. We recommend using the [Wake Forest Workload Estimator](#) to calculate in-class engagement and study time for your course.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDENSING YOUR COURSE

- 1 Review the current syllabus and determine what can be compressed, what lectures can be merged, what can be dropped.**  
Focus instructional strategies and methods on must-knows and need-to-knows based on outcomes.
- 2 Require pre-reading of the text to optimize "in-class" time.**  
Assigning readings for students to complete before viewing/attending lectures or learning activities will make "in-class" time more efficient. Also, set lengthier readings over weekends versus between classes during the week.
- 3 Re-chunk lectures and/or modules.**  
Adjust and break lecture topics based on logical flow rather than a weekly topic structure.
- 4 Consolidate quizzes, discussions, or other assignments.**  
Modify/combine assignments in a manner that assures all course outcomes are still met, but in a more efficient manner.
- 5 Communicate regularly and often with the students**  
Abbreviated courses moves fast, so stay more engaged and connected with the students so they don't fall behind, regardless of the modality or duration of the course.