

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

Time Well Spent

Higher education has long valued final examinations as a pedagogical tool. The final examination period, inclusive of any reading days, complete a term by creating a necessary block of time for synthesis, reflection, and greater mastery of skills and material. The following policy respects the need for a summative evaluation for each course while respecting differences in pedagogical practices. Membership in the St. Olaf community requires commitment and co-operation in adhering to the structure and limits of the final exam schedule.

A Term's End

Each St. Olaf course officially ends at the conclusion of the course's scheduled final exam period. The college's registrar establishes a schedule and posts it at least a year in advance on the Registrar's Office website (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar>). The schedule for each term states in writing a specific date and time for each course's final exam period.

Student Absence from a Final Examination

An instructor should report any student's absence from a required final examination or failure to submit final evaluative material by the end of the course's scheduled final exam period to the Dean of Students Office as soon as the instructor can. That can constitute grounds for a student failing either the final evaluative item or the entire course. The instructor has the discretion in how to factor the absence and any missing, final evaluative material into the course grade with the exception of granting an incomplete.

Incompletes

In instances of health problems or important personal emergencies, a student may request, via the Office of the Dean of Students, an incomplete (<http://catalog.stolaf.edu/academic-regulations-procedures/grades/#incompletes>) prior to the end of the course, or the Dean of Students Office may arrange for an incomplete if it becomes aware of circumstances warranting it and the student is not able to make the request.

Student and Family Responsibility

Because final examination schedules are publicly posted well in advance, students and parents/guardians are expected to consult the schedules before making any travel or family plans for upcoming terms, and to plan accordingly.

Academic Integrity

All final examinations of any type are subject to the college's Honor Code (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/honorcouncil>); all other forms of final evaluation are subject to the college's academic integrity (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/thebook/academic/integrity>) procedures.

In-class Final Examinations Studies in Physical Movement (SPM) Courses

The final evaluation for Studies in Physical Movement (SPM) courses typically occurs on the last day of the class.

All Other In-class Final Examinations

For all other courses, any in-class final examination must be administered at the place and time period scheduled for final exams.

Other Means of Final Evaluation and Time Allotted for Them

Performative Final Evaluative Activity

Certain forms of final individual or small-group evaluation (e.g., performance studies [MUSPF] courses, individual oral examinations as part of the course's final evaluative activity, etc.) typically are scheduled individually during a time span between the end of classes and the final examination period. These are scheduled through mutual agreement of the instructor and student(s) involved, taking into account the special function of Reading Day, students' individual workload as each faces other examinations, and the grades-due deadlines (e.g., 24 hours after the end of each course's scheduled final exam time for seniors in the spring semester).

Other Final Evaluative Activity Done Outside the Scheduled Class Time

Other means of evaluation (e.g., final examinations completed electronically, "take-home" examinations, final papers, final projects) substituting for in-class final examinations and not requiring the students' presence at an organized meeting of the course cannot be required to be due prior to the course's designated final exam period and must be due no later than the end of the course's designated final exam period. If the alternative form of evaluation also includes a formal, required event for the full class in the same place at the same time, that event must be scheduled during the course's scheduled final examination period.

Time Limits for In-class Exams

An instructor must formulate examinations so that students can complete them in the scheduled final examination block of time. Faculty and students need to respect this time limit in the spirit of equality and citizenship that produced this constraint.

Time Limits for Other Final Evaluative Activity

Instructors are encouraged to establish time limits for take-home examinations, online examinations, etc. Instructors should assign final papers or projects and stage any specified activities in developing them so that completing them during the final examination period should consume no more time than an average student would take to prepare for and take an in-class final examination.

Exceptions to Taking In-class Final Examinations at the Scheduled Block of Time or Place

Disability Accommodations

Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are determined in consultation with the Disability and Access Specialists in the Academic Support Centers and the instructor.

Multilingual Student Accommodations

Accommodations for students with certified, special English-language needs are determined in consultation with the Academic Support Centers and the instructor.

Rare, Special Circumstances

A student is required to take in-class final examinations on the scheduled days unless the department chairs or program directors, in consultation with the course instructors, give the student written permission to reschedule any final examination to other days or times. Student requests for any alternative final examination dates, times, or accommodations for special circumstances must be made in writing on the Special Circumstances form (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar/wp-content/blogs.dir/54/files/2016/05/Final-Examination-Special-Circumstances-Form.pdf>) and submitted to the instructor, who passes it on to the appropriate chair or program director.

Three Final Examinations in a Single Day

Three final examination periods are scheduled per day during the fall and spring semesters' five-day final exam period, but rarely does an individual student have more than two examinations in a day. In the rare instance where a student has three in-class examinations scheduled for the same day, s/he may request an alternative for one of them by filling out the Petition to Move an Exam to a Different Date and Time (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar/wp-content/blogs.dir/54/files/2016/05/Three-Final-Examinations-in-a-Single-Day.pdf>) form (<http://wp.stolaf.edu/registrar/wp-content/blogs.dir/54/files/2016/05/Three-Final-Examinations-in-a-Single-Day.pdf>) and following the procedure outlined above. Since some examination formats require that all students be present in the same room at the same time, faculty members are not obligated to make such an alternative arrangement.