University policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered. Instructors are required to report attendance for all students registered in their classes. Students who are verified as “Not Attending” the first class meeting of a course for which they are registered will be dropped from the course. This policy applies to all levels of courses and includes on campus, off campus, distance learning, two way interactive video, and internet (online) classes.

For online classes, students are usually required to make a discussion posting or send an email to the course instructor on the first day. It is the student’s responsibility to verify course drops and check that fees are adjusted. Students who have verifiable extenuating circumstances which prohibit them from attending the first day of classes must contact their instructor or complete the “First Day Exemption Request” form available online through the student’s MyGeorgiaSouthern account (https://my.georgiasouthern.edu/) to avoid being dropped from the course. In lieu of contacting the instructor or completion of the web form, students may also call the Office of the Registrar at (912) 478-5152.

Once completed, the “First Day Exemption Request” form is sent via email to both the Office of the Registrar and the instructor(s). A “First Day Exemption Request” form must be completed for each class that a student will not be able to attend on the first day for that particular class. The Office of the Registrar is only able to excuse an absence for the first day of class and an exception will be approved only for emergency reasons, such as serious illness (a note from Health Services or family physician will be required), the death of an immediate family member (a copy of the obituary will be required and an immediate family member is defined as one’s spouse, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, siblings and immediate in-laws), or military obligations (a copy of military orders will be required). Exceptions to attending the first day of class will not normally be made for any of the following reasons: wedding of the student, relative, or friend; part-time job or job interview; vacation; or convenience of travel schedule. Exceptions to these guidelines can be made, but should be based on a very compelling case.

If the absence is for one day and meets the above criteria the Office of the Registrar will approve the absence by holding the seat for the student and notifying the student and appropriate instructor(s) via email. Student documentation for the absence should be sent to the Office of the Registrar within the first two weeks of class. Requests for attendance exemptions that are not for the reasons specified above will not be approved by the Office of the Registrar. In this situation the student and appropriate instructor(s) will receive an email notification that the Office of the Registrar is not able to verify their attendance and to contact the instructor directly. Only the instructor and/or the Provost can hold seats if the absence is for more than the first day of class. Questions about this process can be directed to the Office of the Registrar at (912) 478-5152 or sent via email to attendance@georgiasouthern.edu.

Students are expected to attend all classes. Each professor has the responsibility for setting specific policies concerning class attendance beyond the first class meeting, including whether they will accept excused absences and whether they will allow work missed to be made up. Professors should clearly state policies to each class and make clear what constitutes excessive absences. Departments may establish policies concerning class attendance provided there is unanimous agreement by faculty members within the department. The student is responsible for all material presented in class and for all announcements and assignments whether or not the student is in attendance. For Financial Aid reasons, attendance of all students will be officially verified before financial aid will be disbursed. Students who have been recorded as “Not Attending” may not receive their financial aid and will be dropped from the class roster.

Students participating in authorized activities as an official representative of the University (i.e., athletic events, delegate to regional or national meetings or conferences, participation in university-sponsored performances) will not receive academic penalties and, in consultation with the instructor of record, will be given reasonable opportunities to complete assignments and exams or given compensatory assignment(s) if needed. The student must provide written confirmation from a faculty or staff advisor to the course instructor(s) at least 10 days prior to the date for which the student will be absent from the class. The student is responsible for all material presented in class and for all announcements and assignments. When possible, students are expected to complete these assignments before their absences. In the event of a disagreement regarding this policy, an appeal may be made by either the student or the instructor of record to the corresponding college dean.

Students whose military obligations require their absence from class for more than the first day may seek an exemption from the class attendance policy. Students will begin the process by logging onto their MyGeorgiaSouthern and click on the First Day Exemption Request listed under the Registration Information block. The student will then receive an email with information informing them that they must contact the appropriate college Associate Dean for which the particular class belongs to request an exemption from the class attendance policy. The Associate Dean will then work with the appropriate Department Chair and faculty to ensure that your instructor is contacted and made aware of your request for an exemption. Instructors will carefully consider your request and base his/her decision upon the course attendance policies and your ability to address any missed coursework upon your return. Additionally, the student will need to provide to the appropriate Associate Dean a copy of their military orders which can be delivered to them either in person or by email.

The University does not issue an excuse to students for class absences. In case of absences as a result of illness, representation of the University in athletic and other activities, or special situations, instructors may be informed of reasons for absences, but these are not excuses.

It is the policy of the University to permit students, faculty, and staff to observe those holidays set aside by their chosen religious faith. The faculty should be sensitive to the observance of these holidays so that students who choose to observe these holidays are not seriously disadvantaged. It is the responsibility of those who wish to be absent to make arrangements in advance with their instructors.