

Class 6: Semester Org Files (1/4): Introduction

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1 Semester Org Files: Introduction

A semester Org file is the master file for the course in a given semester. That is, a semester Org file, which is where semester-specific information about the course (e.g., classroom location, course schedule, etc.) is stored, is also where materials from other Org files are pulled as the instructor constructs the course to create a syllabus, lectures, exams, assignments, etc. It can accommodate multiple sections of the same course offered in the semester.

The example below shows the top-level contents of a semester Org file, with all the trees and drawers collapsed. We will dedicate several lectures to cover each component, following the order in which they are presented in the example.

```
#+TITLE:      Org-Coursepack: 2020 Spring
#+AUTHOR:     Your Name
#+EMAIL:      Your Email
#+DESCRIPTION: Org-Coursepack: 2020 Spring
#+CATEGORY:   Teaching
```

```
:LOCALSETUP:
```

```
:SETUP_EXPORT:
```

```
:SEMESTER_INFO:
```

```
* Tasks
```

```
* Sections
```

```
* Syllabus
* Classes
* Exams                                     :Exams:
* Assignments                             :Assignments:
* Local Variables
```

2 Export Options and Macros

The file starts with multiple metadata definitions, such as `TITLE` and `AUTHOR`, which also act as global export keywords. This is followed by three drawers containing various macros and export options, which will be used across the file.

```
#+TITLE:      Org-Coursepack: 2020 Spring
#+AUTHOR:     Your Name
#+EMAIL:      Your Email
#+DESCRIPTION: Org-Coursepack: 2020 Spring
#+CATEGORY:   Teaching
```

```
:LOCALSETUP:
```

```
:SETUP_EXPORT:
```

```
:SEMESTER_INFO:
```

2.1 `:LOCALSETUP:` Drawer

The `:LOCALSETUP:` drawer has startup options (`#+STARTUP`) for the Org file as well as a couple of `#+SETUPFILE`'s which import necessary macros from the dedicated macro Org file (`../../../../Assets/setup_Macros.org`) and school Org file (`../../../../Assets/Institutions/School.org`). Note that one can visit each file with `C-c` `'`. Absolute paths can be used instead of relative ones.

```
:LOCALSETUP:
#+STARTUP: overview
#+STARTUP: hidestars
#+STARTUP: indent

#+SETUPFILE: ../../../../Assets/setup_Macros.org

#+SETUPFILE: ../../../../Institutions/School.org
:END:
```

2.2 :SETUP_EXPORT: Drawer

The `:SETUP_EXPORT:` drawer has export related options, mainly those related to `org-reveal` (e.g., hand-outs). For example, `#+REVEAL_ROOT` should specify the location of `reveal.js` (see the `org-reveal` documentation for more information). The semester Org file for Org-Coursepack specifies `reveal.js 3.6.0` from a CDN. See the Org manual for more general information about export options.

```
:SETUP_EXPORT:
#+REVEAL_ROOT: https://cdnjs.cloudflare.com/ajax/libs/reveal.js/3.6.0

#+REVEAL_PLUGINS: (classList markdown zoom notes highlight)

#+EXCLUDE_TAGS: noexport
#+OPTIONS: reveal_history:t tags:nil timestamp:nil todo:nil

#+REVEAL_THEME: simple
#+REVEAL_TRANS: linear
:END:
```

2.3 :SEMESTER_INFO: Drawer

The `:SEMESTER_INFO:` drawer has macros containing information about the course that is common across sections but specific to the semester.

Course name and number are categorized as semester-specific information, as they may change over time.

```
:SEMESTER_INFO:
#+MACRO: COURSE Org Teaching Template
#+MACRO: COURSE_NUM ORG 0000
#+MACRO: SEMESTER 2020 Spring
#+MACRO: OFFICE_HOURS Tue 3:30-4:30pm
:END:
```

3 Tasks Top-level Tree

This is the subtree where users can organize instruction-related tasks (TODO items) specific to the semester, e.g., reminders to post announcements or grades. See the Org manual for more information on how to use TODO items in Org mode.