

Why Does the Availability Sometimes Seem Wrong in Class Search

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This article applies to both MJC Class Search and Columbia Class Search.

Have you noticed sometimes that a class will list available spots, but yet have a waitlist. Why is that? What's really going on?

Let's take a look at CSPCOM-4-4252 as an example.

Class Search Results

Results for Columbia Spring 2020 Term

Course location, title, and type codes printed in blue (links) can be clicked for additional information.

Name	Section	Title	Important Notes	Instructor	Section #	Location	Type	Times	Days	Max/Avail	Status	Text Books	IGETC/CSU/GE/CC/GE
CSPCOM-4	4005	Introduction to Human Communications 911320-050220		Elizabeth Tim	3	CSUJ 215 Columbia	LEC	9:45A - 11:05A	TTH	30/0	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4009	Introduction to Human Communications 911320-050220	This is an online class.	Elizabeth Tim	3	CCHL Online	DLIT	3:30 break	ARR	30/0	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4225	Introduction to Human Communications 911320-050220	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Amador Economic Prosperity Center. The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live videos of the class will be broadcast to the Center.	Oliver Jorda	3	CABC 1 Amador County	LEC	8:00P - 9:05P	TH	10/8	Open	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4252	Introduction to Human Communications 911320-050220	This face-to-face course will also be video-broadcasted to students at the Amador Economic Prosperity Center and Calaveras County Office of Education.	Oliver Jorda	3	CMLP 101 Columbia	LEC	8:00P - 9:05P	TH	15/9	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4271	Introduction to Human Communications 911320-050220	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Calaveras County Office of Education. The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live video of the class will be broadcast to the Center.	Oliver Jorda	3	CGOL 1 Calaveras County	LEC	8:00P - 9:05P	TH	10/1	Open	Books	TC.A1

In the above example, we see a max capacity of 15 for the class, an availability of 9, and a waitlist with 7 students.

How can there be an availability when there is a growing waitlist?

What may appear to be an error is actually not. We'll get back to that strange behavior in just a moment. First, let's take a look at how Class Search is designed to work.

Class Search is designed to count down the available spots as students register for the class. Once a class is full, the waitlist will open and as students add to the waitlist those numbers go up. When that happens, the available number usually remains at zero. However, sometimes it does not.

Why is that? Time to get back to that strange behavior from earlier.

If a class is cross-listed with other classes, Class Search is designed to display the total number of available spots that exist across those other cross-listed sections.

Let's look back at our example. It just happens that CSPCOM-4-4252 is also cross listed with CSPCOM-4-4225 and CSPCOM-4-4271 which appear above and below our example class.

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Class Search Results

Results for Columbia Spring 2020 Term

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Name	Section	Title	Important Notes	Instructor	Location	Type	Times	Days	Max/Avail	Status	Text Books	IGETC/CSU/GE/CC/GE
CSPCOM-4	4006	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20		Elisondo, Tim	3 CBUD_211 Columbia	LEC	9:40A - 11:05A	TTH	30/0	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4009	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is an online class.	Elisondo, Tim	3 CONL Online	DIST	3:30 hrs/wk	ARR	30/0	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4225	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Amador Economic Prosperity Center . The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live video of the class will be broadcast to the Center.	Olsen, Terita	3 CAPC_1 Amador County	LEC	6:00P - 9:05P	TH	10/8	Open	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4252	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This face-to-face course will also be video-broadcasted to students at the Amador Economic Prosperity Center and Lafayette County Office of Education .	Olsen, Terita	3 CMLP_101 Columbia	LEC	6:00P - 9:05P	TH	15/9	Wait	Books	TC.A1
CSPCOM-4	4271	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Calaveras County Office of Education . The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live video of the class will be broadcast to the Center.	Olsen, Terita	3 CCOE_1 Calaveras County	LEC	6:00P - 9:05P	TH	10/1	Open	Books	TC.A1

Notice that section 4225 has an availability of 8. Notice also that section 4271 has an availability of 1. Added together, we can better see where the availability of 9 in section 4252 comes from.

Why does Class Search do this?

Well, this is meant to be an indicator to students that they may be able to find a spot in a different section allowing them to take the class they want. However, this may not always be great news as the alternative sections may be on a day, at a time, or at a location that does not work for the student's schedule.