Syllabus Design Guidelines

(Appendix B from the Faculty Handbook)

Designing your Course Syllabus

Instructors are required to develop a syllabus for each course and to provide it to students during the first week of class. A syllabus is a contract between the instructor and students. It is important that instructors review syllabi with students. Instructors are also encouraged to post syllabi on their faculty websites as well as on Canvas.

Purpose of a Syllabus

A clear, well-organized course syllabus serves several important purposes:

- It informs your students about important aspects of your class, where and when the class meets, how to reach the instructor, etc.;
- It organizes and outlines the material to be taught and what students can expect to learn;
- It contains important policy information for students regarding attendance, assignments, grading, textbooks, exams, etc.;
- It helps students stay organized and plan ahead, thus optimizing their chances for college success.

Essential Syllabus Elements

Use the checklist below to ensure that your syllabus contains all essential syllabus elements.

Essential Syllabus Elements Checklist
A. **General Class Information** ☐ College course number and title ☐ Meeting dates and times ☐ Classroom number ☐ Year and semester
B. **Instructor Information** ☐ Your name ☐ Your office number and office hours ☐ Your contact information (phone, e-mail)
C. **Course Description** ☐ Course description as listed in college catalog ☐ Description of the purpose and scope of the course ☐ Description of how learning will take place

Essential Syllabus Elements Checklist

D.	**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)** ☐ A bulleted list of 5-10 statements/objectives reflecting what students can expect to learn in the course ☐ Include how these SLOs are measured ☐ For more information on the incorporation of SLOs for your course, see the official course outline, which is available from the department chair.
E.	**Textbook and supplies needed** ☐ Title of textbook, including authors, year, edition, and where it can be acquired ☐ Where to obtain class supplies ☐ What to bring to class ☐ How to access Canvas, if applicable
F.	**Class schedule** ☐ Due dates for major assignments and exams ☐ Drop dates and other important deadlines ☐ Day-to-day agenda for topics, activities, focus ☐ Homework, readings, how to prepare for class
G.	**Grading and Assessment** ☐ List of grading methods (number of exams and assignments, consistent with SLOs) ☐ List of grading categories (papers, participation, etc.) ☐ Division of points ☐ Correspondence of points to letter grades ☐ Exam, assignment, quiz, late-, and make-up policies
H.	**Requirements** ☐ If applicable, prerequisites to take the course ☐ Necessary skills to take the course (e.g., proficiency with Canvas, e-mail) ☐ Other materials and resources students should be able to use and/or have access to
I.	**Clear Formatting and Appearance** ☐ Make your syllabus easy to read (font, font size) ☐ Use headings and page numbers ☐ Leave space for student notes

Additional Elements

Additional elements may include: listing full course assignments and their sequence; recommendations for study habits appropriate for your course; a general grading scale with grade point values as seen below; directions to where to find support and assistance with course work (e.g., writing center, tutoring services); available accommodations for students with disabilities;

rules regarding plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and intellectual property; an honor code or and/or behavioral guidelines; teacher expectations; rules with regards to attendance; a contract of agreement for your students to sign with regards to responsibility, behavior, and policies; and some words of encouragement to help with student motivation and confidence.

Letter Grade Values

In the College Catalog under 'Grading System', instructors have the option to assign the following grade symbols (shown with the assigned grade point value) using a plus-minus system as follows:

A+	= 4.0	**A**	= 4.0	**A-**	= 3.7
B+	= 3.3	**B**	= 3.0	**B-**	= 2.7
C+	= 2.3	**C**	= 2.0		
D	= 1.0	**F**	= 0.0		

Example Syllabi: see [example syllabi and templates](#) for face-to-face and online courses.