

Guide to Syllabus Construction

The template that follows is meant as a guide to key components of a course syllabus. You should also check with your program director or department chair to see if there are additional required elements.

Syllabus template:

	Course Title	
	Course ### - Semester/Year	
	Class location	
	Class meeting time(s)	
Instructor's name		Email
Office location		Phone Number
Office hours		

I. Course Description

Your course description should mirror the course description in the *Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletin*. It can also include any additional details that are unique features of your course, the course credit for completing your course, and any prerequisites or co-requisites there may be.

II. Learning Outcomes

Your learning outcomes are the crux of your syllabus. They shape every aspect of your course design: the content, overall structure of your course, required readings, activities, exams and assignments, and your forms of assessment or grading procedures.

Learning outcomes describe the measurable skills, abilities, knowledge, or values that students should be able to do or demonstrate as a result of the course or program. For an expanded set of guidelines on outcomes, please consult "Constructing Useful Learning Outcomes," available online at:

http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/academics/assessment/faculty_resources.php

Examples include: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify pertinent research problems.
2. Formulate a research plan.
3. Summarize each of Erikson's stages of development.
4. Describe the major sociological perspectives and illustrate how each perspective relates to events in their daily lives.

Note: When applicable, use appropriate program-level learning outcomes on the course syllabus. Undergraduate program outcomes are published on their respective websites; many graduate programs list them as well. "Mapping" program outcomes to syllabi outcomes shows how students develop skills and knowledge in courses that are required for their programs of study.

III. Textbooks, Readings, and Other Materials

Include full bibliographic information for texts (state whether required or optional). Follow the format customary to your discipline. For example:

Myers, D. G. (2000). *Exploring social psychology*, 4th Edition. NY: McGraw-Hill.

List other materials needed (e.g., calculators, art supplies, safety equipment).

IV. Overall Structure of the Course

Discussing the overall structure of the course provides an indication of the way class sessions will be conducted and the types of activities students will be involved in (e.g., lecture, discussion, lab and experiments, group learning projects). It is important to select modes of instruction appropriate for your clearly defined learning outcomes. (See “Constructing Useful Learning Outcomes” for an extended example or contact the Center for Educational Effectiveness {CEE} to find out how to obtain help with course design.)

V. Course Requirements

This section details what students will have to do in the course: assignments, exams, projects, and performances. Describe the nature and format of these assignments. Be specific. For instance, what format are the exams: short answer, essay, multiple-choice? What are the topics, expected lengths, and due dates of the term papers? Is attendance or participation a requirement in your course? Identify campus resources available to help students meet requirements (e.g., Writing Center, Math Tutorials).

VI. Course Policies

Clearly state your expectations and procedures concerning attendance and tardiness, class participation, missed exams or assignments, assignment submission, use/ban of electronic devices, and academic honesty as well as procedures for accommodating disabilities or special needs.

VII. Assessment and Grading

Your assessment rubrics or grading criteria should directly reflect key components of your outcomes. Selecting a variety of assignments with their assessments will help you to better determine whether students are achieving your desired outcomes. CEE provides opportunities for faculty to learn to align assessment criteria with course design.

Provide clear details of the items that will contribute to the final grade, the weight or point value of all graded items, and the grading scale. The weight given to each graded item conveys its relative importance, and hence affects how students allocate their study time and the amount of effort they put forth. If class participation contributes to students' grades, establish and make clear the criteria used to make that assessment.

VIII. Course Outline / Course Schedule

Create a schedule that outlines the dates in which topics and readings will be discussed, and when assessments will take place. Keeping a degree of flexibility in the schedule is advantageous, but exam dates should be somewhat fixed.

References:

Cornell University. *Education 548: Effective college teaching*. Retrieved May 1, 2008, from <http://www.clt.cornell.edu/campus/teach/faculty/SyllabusTemplate.doc>.

University of Southern California. Guide to syllabus construction. Retrieved August 13, 2010 from <http://kudzu.ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/syllabus.htm>

Woolcock, M. J. V. *Constructing a syllabus*. Retrieved April 30, 2008, from http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/publications/syllabus.html.