

## Suggestions for an Effective Syllabus

A syllabus serves to invite students to a course. It sets the tone for the teaching and learning that will take place, informs students of the objectives of the course, and orients them with regard to course content, assignments, and logistics. A syllabus also provides administrative information useful for students and instructor, such as the course schedule, office hours, assignments, textbooks, etc. The syllabus should be consistent with the official course description. It should also follow guidelines, if any, of the department curriculum committee and state any additional requirements the department may have, based on its academic programs. The Senate urges all instructors to provide a written syllabus for each of their courses.

Inclusion of the following elements will help ensure that a syllabus functions as an effective teaching tool and provides students with needed administrative information.

1. The syllabus should include the official course description. It might also include a brief statement of the instructor's teaching philosophy and pedagogic approach.
2. Assignments and due dates should be part of the syllabus. If late assignments will be accepted, this should be stated, including possible consequences, such as lower grades.
3. The syllabus should include dates and times of course examinations, including the final, if available. If there might be unannounced tests, this should be stated. State the policy on make-up exams.
4. A quantitative description of how students' grades will be determined should be part of the syllabus (the tests and assignments required and the relative weight of each).
5. In general, attendance may not be used to evaluate students, except in special cases such as studio art or activity courses, laboratories, or practica. However, class participation is normally a valid criterion. Students who are absent cannot contribute to or benefit from class discussions, presentations, and other activities. The consequences of non-participation should be stated.
6. The syllabus should state the names of required textbooks and other materials, as well as recommended texts and materials, and how they can be obtained. If the course is partially or fully on-line, complete instructions on access and use of electronic resources should be provided.
7. The syllabus should include a statement on forms of academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism or cheating. It should describe what they are and the disciplinary and academic consequences of these behaviors. Reference might be made to the University's policy on academic integrity.
8. A schedule of class meeting dates and times and associated assignments should be part of the syllabus. Depending on the nature of the course, the department's policy, and the instructor's judgment, this schedule may be brief or detailed. Changes may of course occur; these should be communicated frequently to the class. Note any days on which the schedule is shifted, such as a Wednesday on which classes meet according to a Tuesday schedule.
9. Include administrative information such as: College; Department; Course name, title, and section; Building and Room Number; and Instructor name and contact information (office phone and e-mail address, as well e-mail policy).
10. If the course qualifies for General Education credit, including writing-intensive credit, a statement should be included which explains how the course fulfills this requirement.