



Building Your Syllabus

Requirements and Recommendations: What are the nuts and bolts?

The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and the Learning Committee have gathered recommended language and syllabus sections that you may want to consider adding to your syllabus. **This also includes language for the current situation of teaching online and virtually.**

WSU Syllabus Guidelines (<https://www.weber.edu/cetl/syllabus-guidelines.html>)

University Course Policy Language in Canvas Commons
(<https://lor.instructure.com/resources/8019ec845ef24b179fd18e580df590f3?shared>)

Purpose of a Syllabus: What's the big idea?

A syllabus is your students' first interaction with you as their instructor. What impression do you want to leave with them? Whether it is intended or not, the quality of the syllabus is a fairly reliable indicator of the quality of teaching and learning that will take place in a course (Woolcock, 2005). Therefore, it benefits instructors to make the effort to construct a high-quality syllabus. The results of that effort can benefit the instructor as well as his or her students. The first things you must decide before mindfully designing your syllabus are the purposes you want to achieve with this document. Integrating the information from each of the purposes will lead to a more robust and quality syllabus that will meet multiple needs, i.e. for department records, clarifying student expectations, etc.

Course Expectations—Makes the Rules Clear

- Sets forth what is expected to happen during the semester
- Delineates responsibilities of students and instructor
- Describes appropriate procedures and course policies
- Content for a syllabus to set out expectations:
- **Course Policies**
- Delineates the responsibilities of students and of the instructor
- Describes appropriate procedures and course policies
- Provides a clear and accurate calendar
- **University Policies**
- Academic Dishonesty
- Extended Campus Closure
- Creating a Supportive Campus
- Core Values
- Accommodation of Disabilities
- Withdrawal from Courses
- Other
- **Department Policies**
- List your department policies here
- **Grading (components and weights)**
- **Attendance**
- **Assignments (late, incomplete, revisions)**
- **Course Communication (respect for each other, guests, instructor)**

Permanent Record—Provides Accountability and Documentation

- Contains information useful for evaluation of instructors, courses, and programs.
- Documents what will be covered in a course, at what level, and for what kind of credit (useful for equivalency transfer, accreditation, and articulation)
- Content required for a syllabus to be useful as a permanent record:
- Title and semester of course, department offering the course, credit hours earned, meeting time and place
- Name, title, and rank of instructor(s)
- Pre- or co-requisites
- Required texts and other materials
- Course objectives (linked to professional standards if appropriate)
- Description of course content
- Description of assessment procedures

Learning Tool—Helps Students Learn More Effectively

- Informs students of the instructor's philosophy about teaching, learning, and the content area
 - Focuses on students and what they need to be effective learners
 - Places the course in context of overall curriculum and relation to students' lives
- Content required for a syllabus to serve as a learning tool:
- Instructor's philosophy about the course content, teaching, and learning
 - Relevance and importance of the course to students
 - How to plan for the semester (including self-management skills, time management, tips on how to be successful on assessments, common misconceptions or mistakes, specific study strategies)
 - Pre-requisite courses or skills
 - Availability of instructor(s) and teaching assistants
 - Campus resources for assistance and offices that aid students with disabilities

First Impression—Sets the Tone for the Course

- Lets the students know
- What the course is about
- Why the course is taught
- Where the course is going
- What will be required for success
- Reflects the instructor's feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about the subject matter, teaching, learning, and students
- Acts as a guide to the instructor as much as a guide to the class
- Leads the instructor and the students to reflection
- Shares some of the instructor's personality with the students

References:

- Altman, H.B., and Cashin, W.E. (1992). Writing a syllabus. *IDEA Paper No. 27*. Retrieved from https://www.engr.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/departments/MTEI/Writing_a_Syllabus_Altman_and_Cashin_Accessible.pdf
- Davis, B.G. (1993). Tools for teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Eberly, M.B., Newton, S.E., and Wiggins, R. (2001). The syllabus as a tool for student-centered learning. *Journal of General Education* 50 (1), 56-74.
- Grunert, J. (1997). The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach. Bolton, MA: Anker.
- Parkes, J., and Harris, M.B. (2002). The purposes of a syllabus. *College Teaching*, 50 (2), 55-61.
- Woolcock, M.J.V. (2005). Constructing a syllabus: A handbook for faculty, teaching assistance, and fellows: Brown University. Retrieved from <https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/sites/sheridan/files/docs/constructing-a-syllabus.pdf>.



- [New Faculty Experience Syllabus Session](#)
(https://rise.articulate.com/share/MF_9DUAiDrQ6KGBkTN7-FdaieyL78Vec)
- [Weber State University Current Policy on Course Syllabi](#)
(https://www.weber.edu/ppm/Policies/4-9a_CourseSyllabus.html) (PPM 4-9a)
- [Syllabus Presentation by Louise Moulding at New Faculty Retreat 2012](#)
(<http://youtu.be/iswYm93jEhY>)
- [WSU Online syllabus template](#)
(<https://www.weber.edu/online/syllabusTemplate.html>)
- [Enhancing Education, Carnegie Mellon](#)
(<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/index.html>) *An excellent website for*

university teaching. The assessment resources are especially good. Navigate using the menu on the left.

- [Constructing a Syllabus, Brown University](#)
(https://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/docs/syllabus.pdf) (Word Document)
- ["One Way to Show Students You Care"](#) (<https://www.chronicle.com/article/One-Way-to-Show-Students-You/244384>)
An article from The Chronicle of Higher Education
- [Starfish Language for Student Success](#)
(<https://www.weber.edu/wsuiimages/cetl/Syllabus%20Files/Starfish%20Syllabus%20Statement.docx>)

Questions?