

Sample Online Syllabus

This sample syllabus is based off of the MCCC DE-1 form and is designed to provide suggestions to instructors seeking to create a comprehensive syllabus for teaching online.

Please keep in mind that you do not have to make the syllabus one long document. You can divide it up into sections (course overview, instructor information, grading policies, etc...) and post those sections individually.

If you do have questions regarding how to best design and post your syllabus for the online learning environment contact the Director of Distance Learning.

For syllabi questions of an academic nature please contact your Program Coordinator, Department Chair or Divisional Dean or the Center for Teaching and Learning.

Form DE- 1

**DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
CHECKLIST FOR COURSE MATERIALS**

Faculty Member: _____

Year and Semester: _____

Course Title and Selection: _____

- ___ 1. Instructor's Name
- ___ 2. Course Title/Number
- ___ 3. General course description (according to College catalogue)
- ___ 4. All required texts, paperbacks, software, software capacity, specific handout including information on publisher, edition, version etc.
- ___ 5. Course topics and/or assignments and/or required and/or supplemental reading
- ___ 6. Teaching procedures (briefly describe)
- ___ 7. Instructional objectives (list)
- ___ 8. Basis for student grading
- ___ 9. Procedure (criteria) for evaluating student performance
- ___ 10. Tentative test schedule/assignment(s) schedule
- ___ 11. Interaction Plan

If any of the above are missing or if the evaluator has concerns, the unit member will be notified and given an opportunity to submit the missing materials and respond within fourteen (14) calendar days.

Evaluator's Signature/Date: _____

Sample Online Syllabus

Items in black are content items based on the Distance Education Course/Instructional Materials Checklist (form DE-1 – see the previous page).

Items in blue are comments, suggestions and items to consider as you create your syllabus.

Course Information

- Course Title/Number
- General Course Description (according to the college catalog)

Did you know you can go to the online catalog and copy/paste the description rather than retyping it from the printed catalog?

<http://www.bristol.mass.edu/Catalog/coursesearch/courses.cfm>

Instructor Information

- Instructor Name
- E-Mail
- Phone

All BCC faculty (including adjuncts) should have a BCC phone extension. You do not have to give out your home phone number unless you feel comfortable doing so!

There are many ways a student could possibly contact you – be clear as to what methods are acceptable and only include the contact information you feel comfortable sharing.

- Office Hours

Remember that you can hold “online” office hours too!

If you do have “live” office hours you can certainly open them up to your online students. You may want to say something like...

Example:

Even though this is a 100% online course it does not mean that you cannot visit with me during my “live” office hours. Please feel free to drop by or make an appointment if you have any questions regarding the course content. You can also call during my office hours and I’d be happy to speak with you over the phone.

- Office Location
(If applicable)

Required/Recommended Textbooks and Materials

List the required textbook and any other supplemental materials needed by students.

You may want to provide additional information on your syllabus and/or on the course site relating to the bookstore.

Example:

As a reminder, you can purchase the books through the college bookstore and can have them shipped directly to you:

http://www.bristol.mass.edu/Students/support_services/bookstore.cfm

If you use additional online resources (such as a textbook course site) you may want to also mention that here and/or refer students to the course site to access the appropriate links.

Videos

If you require students to watch videos you will want to mention that up-front in your syllabus.

Example:

As part of this class we will be watching and discussing the following two videos: “Dances with Wolves” (1990) and “How the West Was Won” (1979). For more information as to how these videos fit into the course and when these discussions will occur please review the Course Schedule and the Assignment Overview. Both of these titles are available in the BCC library and/or via interlibrary loan. Your local library may also have copies that you can borrow or you can always rent copies from your local video store. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are able to obtain and watch the videos. Do not wait until the last minute as there are 25 students in the class. Plan your time accordingly!

Instructional Objectives

What are the course objectives and how will they be assessed?

If you need assistance with your objectives please contact your Program Coordinator, Department Chair or Divisional Dean. The Center for Teaching and Learning is also a wonderful resource relating to instructional objectives and outcomes assessment.

The eLearningBCC system does have a “Goals” tool that allows you to define course goals and link to those goals throughout the course site. This is a nice way to reiterate the course objectives that appear on your syllabus and assist students in understanding how they relate to the course content. If you have questions on how to use this feature please contact the CITE lab.

Procedure (Criteria) for Evaluating Student Performance

Basis for Student Grading

How will students be evaluated, what percentage is assigned to each method, are make-up exams allowed, what penalties are charged for late work if late work is accepted, what constitutes attendance in the class, how should students turn in their work?

This seems self-evident but it is imperative that grading criteria and course expectations are communicated clearly to students. Otherwise you'll find that your assumptions may not conform to the expectations of your students!

Attendance Policy

Every instructor can define what "attendance" means in an online course. For most instructors this means participation in the online classroom by posting to the Discussion Board or submitting course assignments. Whatever your mechanism, please make sure you explain to students what constitutes attendance in your class.

Example:

You will be counted as "present" for a class week if you participate in that week's Discussion Board question. If you do not post to the proper discussion board forum during the class week you will not be counted as attending class that week.

You may also want to include the college's policy regarding dropping a course:

College Policy with Regard to "Dropping" a Course:

Students are required to withdraw formally with the BCC Enrollment Services office during the student-generated withdrawal period OR by requesting a withdrawal from the instructor before the 10th week of semester. Course and college withdrawals are not processed retroactively and students who withdraw from a course and/or the College are not entitled to a refund. To withdraw from a course and/or the College, a student must complete and submit the appropriate Course Withdrawal Form or College Withdrawal Form, to the Enrollment Center located on the first floor of the Commonwealth College Center. **Failure to withdraw formally will result in an F for the course.**

Interaction Plan

The interaction plan explains how students are expected to communicate and interact in the course environment and it's a place to explain your communication policy.

Example:

Please feel free to email me directly with questions of a personal nature, grading questions, advising help or with any other issues that are not appropriate for the rest of the class to read. I check my email regularly and will respond to all emails within 24 hours during the work week. Please note that I am not available on weekends but will respond to weekend email messages on Monday.

All class related questions must be posted to the proper forum on the Discussion Board. I will check the Discussion Board on a daily basis and will answer questions as needed. I also highly encourage students to read and respond to postings from their classmates. Part of the nature of this class is for students to help each other troubleshoot problems and develop critical-thinking skills and working through questions on the forum is an excellent method to develop proficiency in these areas.

Discussion board postings are an integral part of the course. As the attendance policy states, you must post your own responses weekly to the discussion board and must read and respond to at least one other student's posting. Responses must be more than "I agree." They should be substantive and should reference reading assignments, web references, lecture notes or outside resources.

Students are encouraged to attend virtual office hours and can also meet with me face-to-face during my scheduled office hours on campus. If you have any questions about the course please be sure to ask!

Time Considerations

How much time should students be putting towards the class? This is a huge area of confusion because students don't realize that the time they would usually spend in class needs to be spent on their own doing work. I've put the following in my online syllabus to make it clear to students how much time they should expect to spend on the course on a weekly basis:

Example:

As an 8 week class, this will be an extremely fast paced course and students should be prepared to spend a minimum of 8 hours a week on reading and on course assignments. While you may feel that I'm throwing a lot of information at you on a weekly basis remember that in a traditional 8 week "live" course you would be coming to class for 4 hours and then spending an additional 4 hours (at least) outside of class on assignments and reading. In our online course environment my expectation is that you will be spending those 4 "class hours" on your own working on the concepts that you would usually get in a live lecture. Please be sure to budget your time accordingly!

Course Schedule

Every online class must start on the official semester starting day. However, as the instructor you can define your own "weeks" and when things will be due. Be clear on due dates and expectations throughout your course documentation.

Example:

Our class "weeks" will be from Thursday-Thursday. Weekly homework assignments must be uploaded no later than 5pm each Thursday. If you have not posted and/or responded to the weekly discussion board question by that time you will be marked as absent for the week.

Review the Course Schedule for an overview of our weekly schedule and the dates of each week. New assignments and discussion board questions will become available 5pm each Thursday. Specific due dates for assignments are listed in the schedule and can also be found in the course calendar.

Some faculty members will include a full copy of the course schedule as part of their syllabus. Others save it as a separate document. If you do have separate file make sure you refer to it in your syllabus so students know where to look and how to find it!

Student Support Services

This information is included on the distance learning portion of the BCC web site http://www.bristol.mass.edu/Academics/distance_learning/dl_student_support.cfm and is also included in the email that is sent to all registered students approximately two weeks before the semester begins. However, may want to also include it in your syllabus to reinforce the fact that online students can access all services afforded to traditional on-campus students. You may also choose not to put this information in your syllabus but instead to create links to these resources from your course site. Either way it's a good idea to reinforce the fact that these services are available.

Example:

As a 100% online student you do have access to all BCC student support services. There are few services that I specifically want to make you aware of:

Tutoring

If you are having difficulty with the class please:

- Post a message on the Discussion Board – be sure to use your classmates for troubleshooting and problem solving.
- Make an appointment to come in and meet with me during my office hours
- Contact TASC for a tutoring appointment:
http://www.bristol.mass.edu/Students/tasc/tasc_tutoring_center.cfm

Technical Help

If you have any technical problems or questions about eLearningBCC please visit the BCC Wiki: <http://dl.bristol.mass.edu/wiki> .

If you require additional assistance or have other questions please contact the distance learning help desk by calling (508) 678-2811 x3333 or send an email to distancelearning@bristol.mass.edu .

Disability Accommodations

Bristol Community College complies with the regulations of the Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. It is your responsibility to notify me of your need for classroom accommodations. Accommodations are arranged through the Office of Disability Services/ODS, which will issue a confidential Disability Services Accommodation Form. This should be accomplished during the first two weeks of class. If you do not have an accommodation plan or have questions please contact ODS by calling (508) 678-2811 x2955 or online at http://www.bristol.mass.edu/Students/ods/request_forms/ods_contact_us.cfm

Policies

There are a variety of policies that you could potentially include. It's helpful to state them on your syllabus because you can always refer to them if needed. Feel free to reword/rework as appropriate!

Civility Policy

Teachers at Bristol Community College are committed to developing and actively protecting a class environment in which respect must be shown to everyone in order to facilitate and encourage the expression, testing, understanding, and creation of a variety of ideas and opinions. Rude, sarcastic, obscene, or disrespectful posts have a negative impact on everyone's learning and will not be tolerated.

Please refer to the college's **netiquette policy** for more information on acceptable behavior and interaction in the online course environment.

Note: the netiquette policy is available as a separate document and can be located in Public Folders -> Distance Learning and in the Distance Learning folder in the CITE Lab course space. It is highly recommended that you upload this document into your own course space.

Confidentiality Policy

Students are asked to try to form conceptual links between the course material and their own personal experiences in class discussions because this is an excellent way to learn new material. Therefore, confidentiality must be guaranteed to all students in order to provide a safe learning environment. No student should ever repeat class discussions or allow people outside the class to access our password protected course Website or read printed versions of any student's posts. Be sure to discuss only information you wouldn't mind being made public in case anyone violates this confidentiality rule.

Plagiarism Policy

Students must cite all sources of information in posts, essays, or papers and provide references to them. Using ideas or words written or spoken by another person without providing a citation and reference for the source is plagiarism and will not be tolerated in this course.