Syllabus Creation

Your syllabus is an extremely important element of your course. A syllabus is a contract between you and your students. It clarifies your relationships, expectations, policies, and procedures. In addition, it is a way of connecting with your students immediately and giving them a view of you and your course. The syllabus for the course you are teaching may have been created by a faculty member or you may have to create it yourself. Keep in mind that certain items are required on all syllabi according to University policy found at: http://www.curriculumsystems.uga.edu/Policies/CourseSyllabusPolicy.pdf.

Required Components of Any Syllabus
- Course title and number as it appears in the course catalogue.
- Building name and room number where the class convenes
- Instructor’s name, first name if you want students to call you by first name
- Instructor’s office, building name (if different from where the class is held) and room number
- Office hours, days, and times
- Telephone number, either your office’s or the department’s, and/or your email address
- Prerequisites, corequisites, and cross-listings for the course
- Required texts and materials, including required lab and/or technology fees
- Attendance policy
- Grading policy, course requirements, percentages for major assignments
- Principle course assignments and when they are due
- Any applicable procedures or policies (e.g. paper or lab report format, policy on late work, extra credit options, expectations concerning participation)
- Reference to University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy and a statement as to what behavior unique to the course could be academically dishonest: The syllabus must include this statement:

  As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University’s academic honesty policy, “A Culture of Honesty,” and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in “A Culture of Honesty” found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

- The syllabus must include this statement:

  The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviation announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

- The syllabus must include a statement concerning the accomodations for students with disabilities, such as:

  Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the instructor or designate during regular office hours or by appointment.
In addition to the required items, you may want to consider the following:

Suggested Components of Any Syllabus

- The purpose and learning goals for the course
- Attractive design (e.g. readable font type and size, colored paper, appropriate pictures or cartoons)
- Mention of relevant electronic resources (e.g. eLC, class Listserv, departmental URL, links to personal sites that may include a philosophy of teaching statement)
- Interesting and relevant quotations
- Contact numbers for Academic Enhancement, the Writing Center, and other on-campus academic resources

Use the following questions to further clarify or enlarge upon the basics of your syllabus:

What . . .

...will be studied? What are the topics, themes, issues and questions?
...kind of prerequisites are necessary for this course?
...specific rules and regulations will apply to this course?
...are the objectives of the course?
...will students be able to do after they take this course?
...books are required for the course?
...order will the instructor use to present the material and what is the rationale for organizing the course in a particular way?
...kind of instruction will take place? Will the course be primarily lectures, discussions or group work?
...kind of participation is required? Will attendance, questions, responses and level of preparation count?
...kind of learning will take place? Will students analyze, synthesize, compare or contrast? What are students expected to be able to do? How will students practice these skills?
...are the major requirements? Are they clearly described? What is the goal of the assignment? What strategies will help the student successfully complete the assignments?
...evaluation procedures will be used? How do they measure student performance on the behaviors described in the course objectives? What kind of tests will be given?
...counts in the final grade? What percentage of the grade is assigned to each test or requirement and why?

Why . . .

...were the books chosen for this course? How will they be used in the course?
...should students want to take this course? Is it relevant to student goals?
...are the objectives important and how will the course help students accomplish those objectives?

One last thing . . .

Avoid simply listing assignments and important dates without a rationale for your choices. Try to link the content with your students’ interests and needs. Use your syllabus to really communicate with your students.

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