

Creating an Effective Syllabus Overview

An effective syllabus serves several important functions and sets the tone for your course. A well-developed syllabus:

- Outlines clear course expectations;
- Defines and details a schedule and methods of student assessment;
- Contains information to support student success;
- Describes pedagogical efforts that engage students in the learning process; and
- Establishes a positive classroom climate.

Effective syllabi also:

- Presents students with an idea of your teaching philosophy;
- Explains course pre-requisites;
- Acquaints students with course logistics;
- Describes course content and calendar of learning events;
- Provides policies that support student learning and guide course practice; and
- Communicates how technology will (or will not) be used in your course.

Checklist (Bold denotes required elements):

- ◆ **Course Title, Meeting Days/Times**
- ◆ **Instructor Information & Office Hours**
- ◆ Teaching Philosophy Statement
- ◆ Purpose of the Course
- ◆ Course Overview/Description (Pre-requisites if applicable)
- ◆ **Student Learning Outcomes for Course (BGP or Program Outcomes if applicable)**
- ◆ Readings
- ◆ Course Calendar
- ◆ **Course Assignments/Activities to Engage Students In Learning**
- ◆ **Course Schedule/Method(s) of Assessment**
- ◆ Grading Procedures
- ◆ **Policies and Expectations**
- ◆ **Resources to Support Student Success**

Best Practice:

- ◆ Syllabus should be shared with students on or before the first day of class and should be provided to all students via Canvas.
- ◆ Syllabus should be incorporated into the first class meeting. Different strategies can be used to actively engage students in a discussion about the syllabus and course expectations.
- ◆ Syllabus should reflect the style of the faculty and the standards within the discipline.
- ◆ Syllabus should be viewed as a guide for both students and faculty with the understanding that changes to the syllabus may be made at some point in the semester.

Resources:

O'Brien, J.G., Millis, B.J., & Cohen, M. W. (2008). *The Course Syllabus: A Learner-Centered Approach* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.