

Purpose of the Syllabus

The syllabus provides basic information about the course content, activities and assignments planned for the term and information about how to contact the instructor. The syllabus establishes expectations, policies, and procedures for the course. It identifies what will be taught and when it will be taught, what assignments and exams students must complete, how assignments and exams are used to compute grades, the instructor's rules for handling attendance and participation in class, late assignments, missed exams, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct, and any other matters relevant to the conduct of the class.

Value of a Complete Syllabus

A well-constructed syllabus sends students the message that the instructor is organized, cares about student learning, and will create effective learning experiences. Faculty also benefit from a well-documented syllabus. If the syllabus gives students clear and explicit information about expectations for the course and the consequences of failing to adhere to course procedures, an instructor may be spared student grievances that can arise when an instructor reacts to an unexpected problem by creating a rule or altering the course mid-term in ways that may appear arbitrary and capricious.

Components of a Well-Documented Syllabus (Faculty Handbook, 2011)
<http://uwf.edu/academic/facultyresources/facultyhandbook/facultyhandbook.cfm>

Expected Syllabus Components	Additional information and resources
Course prefix and number, course title, semester and year offered	
Instructor name	Office phone, e-mail address, URL for course materials (if instructor posts information in eLearning or on a faculty web page)
Instructor contact information	
Office hours	Check with department about expected number of office hours
Required and recommended texts and readings	
Catalog description for the course	Include the names of any pre-requisite or co-requisite courses
List of course student learning outcomes	http://uwf.edu/cutla/writingslo.cfm
Topics covered	Describe the general topics that will be discussed in the course.
Exams and Grading Describe how you will assign grades in the course	Identify exams, assignments, and other graded work. Describe how graded work will be weighted to determine final grade. For online courses, describe course policy regarding proctored exams. http://uwf.edu/atc/Guide/Developing/DesignStandards/assessment/Proctor.cfm
Attendance policy	Instructors are required to report the date of last attendance for all students who received financial aid and earned a grade of <i>W</i> , <i>WF</i> , or <i>F</i> . Instructors set their own policies about attendance, but need to anticipate how they will handle this reporting requirement.
Proctoring policy (Required for online courses)	Describe the course policy for proctoring for exams, including dates and times when proctored exams may be scheduled, locations (on campus or through ProctorU), and projected costs for proctoring. http://uwf.edu/academic/policies/Proctoring_Policy_for_Exams_in_Online_Courses.pdf
Expectations for academic conduct / Plagiarism policy	http://uwf.edu/cutla/frs-syllabus.cfm
Notification of use of TurnItIn (if planned for your course)	http://uwf.edu/cutla/syllabus_sample.pdf
Statement about assistance for students with special needs	Instructors have permission to use the language included in the sample syllabus for these sections of their syllabi. This language can be reproduced verbatim and without attribution.
Emergency planning information for course continuity	
Calendar of important events	Identify dates for exams and due dates for major projects and assignments. Do not schedule a major test or major class event on a major religious holy day. To permit flexibility, dates can be identified as tentative dates and/or subject to change.

Required policy statements can be found at the URLs listed. You may use this language verbatim in your syllabus.

Suggested “Best Practices” Components to Include on a Syllabus

Describe your goals for the course and its role in degree programs

Describe your major goals for the course. Course goals might be more global and less easily measured than the course SLOs. Describe how the course contributes to the goals of the degree program(s) in your department, the General Education curriculum, or other degree programs that require this course by describing how course SLOs and assignments are related to the program-level SLOs of these programs. Describe any student work that is used for program-level assessment.

Introduce yourself and describe your professional background

New, less experienced faculty can establish their professional credentials with students by briefly describing their academic background and professional skills directly related to the course. Describe why the course topics interest you professionally. Discuss why students will find this course interesting or useful (either personally or professionally).

Provide the ISBN number for textbooks

The University complies with the Florida Textbook Affordability Act (2008) by posting ISBN numbers for all required textbook on the University Bookstore web site. Include ISBN numbers for required texts on the syllabus to increase the accessibility of this information to students.

Describe expectations about classroom behavior to promote standards for classroom civility.

Instructors have different rules about whether students can use laptops and electronic devices or make recordings during class. Instructors also differ in their preferences about personal behaviors that have an impact on the overall climate of a class. Set a positive tone for civil discourse by establishing ground rules for classroom conduct. A clear description of expectations about classroom behavior creates a firm foundation that helps instructors resolve conflicts should a student violate these expectations.

Instructor-established policies for the course

Instructors have discretion to establish many course policies and should describe the specific policies they establish.

Examples of common course policies set by instructors:

- Do you accept late work? If so, describe any penalties on grades that you will impose on late work.
- Do you assign work to allow students to earn extra credit? Establish the boundaries for earning extra credit on the syllabus to prevent the stress of negotiating these requests late in the term when students are anxious. Describe when extra assignments will be given and the amount of extra credit that can be earned or include a statement that extra credit work will not be assigned.
- Describe your policy about in-class activities and assignments that a student misses because of an absence. Do you allow make-up exams? Under what conditions can students arrange a make-up exam? Will the make-up exam differ from the exam given at the scheduled time?
- Keep the University Attendance Policy in mind when establishing policy about absences (Faculty Handbook, p. 34). Absences due to the participation in extracurricular activities in which students are official representatives of the University, such as Athletics, shall be recognized as excused absences. Religious holy days and legal responsibilities (jury duty, court appearances) are also recognized as excused absences. In contrast, serious emergencies such as a student’s serious illness, death or serious illness within the student’s immediate family, military obligations, and other sound reasons may be accepted as excused absences by the instructor. Students must make arrangements with their instructors for any assignments or tests that may be missed because of an excused absence *before* any scheduled absence for a University-sponsored event (p. 179, UWF Student Handbook).
- If you excuse absences for a serious emergency, describe the procedures a student with a serious emergency must follow (e.g., when must the student notify you and make arrangements to make up a missed exam or other assignment?). Describe any documentation you require from students who request an excused absence.

Describe technology and study strategies that will help students succeed in the course

Identify any special skills with technology or software required in the class. Describe study strategies that promote successful learning in your course. Some instructors encourage students to form study groups or use publisher-sponsored web sites with free study resources. Describe resources available on the UWF campus for tutoring, assistance with technology, or assistance with other aspects of the course (e.g., assistance with writing or library research).

Additional information to include on the course calendar

Describe beginning dates for discussion based on readings. Remind students of important University deadlines such as the last day to withdraw with an automatic grade of *W*. Plan to return at least one graded quiz, assignment, or exam before this date. Identify official University holidays.