

The Syllabus from a Student Perspective

Instructor & Course Information

Does this syllabus tell me:

- ☐ What class this is?
- ☐ Who the instructor is?
- ☐ How to contact the instructor? (email? phone? carrier pigeon?)
- ☐ The instructor's departmental affiliation?
- ☐ How to contact the instructor's department?
- ☐ When the instructor's office hours are scheduled?
- ☐ Where the instructor's office is?
- ☐ What options I have if those office hours times conflict with my schedule?
- ☐ What days and times this class meets? (F2F/Hybrid only)
- ☐ The location in which the class meets? (F2F/Hybrid only)
- ☐ What the official catalog description for this class is?
- ☐ How many credit hours this class is?
- ☐ What the primary instructional modality will be?

Course Overview

Does this syllabus tell me:

- ☐ What the course outcomes are?
- ☐ What knowledge, skills, or understandings I will gain as a result of this course?
- ☐ What the instructor's teaching approach or philosophy is?
- ☐ Why this class is an important part of my college education?
- ☐ How this course fulfills any major requirements, and if there are any minimum grade requirements associated with it? (e.g., must earn at least a C, etc.)

Policies & Schedule

Does this syllabus tell me:

- ☐ The instructor's communication policy?
- ☐ What the expected turnaround time is for communication?
- ☐ How students can get any questions answered or concerns addressed, if needed?
- ☐ What the classroom policies/expectations are? (Or how those will be determined?)
- ☐ What the course's attendance policy is?
- ☐ What counts as an excused absence?
- ☐ How to make up missed work or material from an excused absence?

Policies & Schedule (continued)

Does this syllabus tell me:

- ☐ What the course's policy on academic honesty is, and a clear explanation of what constitutes a violation of this policy?
- ☐ How I can request assistance or accommodation if I need and/or am entitled to them?
What course content will be covered in each module/week/class session?
- ☐ What the due dates are for each required assignment?
- ☐ When the final exam/project/presentation is scheduled?
- ☐ What I will be expected to have completed for each particular class session/week/module?
- ☐ Information about meeting days/times and location which matches the official course schedule for that particular semester?

Materials and Technology

By reading this syllabus, will I know:

- ☐ What the required materials for this course are?
- ☐ What all of my options are for getting those materials?
- ☐ What to do if I can't afford the materials or have trouble finding them?
- ☐ What technological access or expertise I will need to be successful? (e.g., proficiency with specific software, access to high-speed internet, a Netflix subscription or other license?)

Assessments

By reading this syllabus, will I know:

- ☐ All of the assignments I will be expected to complete for my course grade?
- ☐ How exactly my grade will be calculated? (Are there weighted grades? Straight percentages or points? Letter grades on a 4-point scale? Something else?)
- ☐ What the grading scale for the course is? (e.g., 90-100%=A, etc.)
- ☐ How much each individual assignment or assignment category counts for my total grade?
- ☐ What each assignment involves? (Are the assignments clearly explained? Is there a more specific description than simply 'essay' or 'exam' or 'think piece'?)
- ☐ If I have the opportunity to submit work late? If so, do I know what (if anything) the penalty will be?
- ☐ How assignments are to be submitted? (i.e., on Canvas? Semaphore? Interpretive Dance?)

Formatting, Clarity, and Tone

Is this syllabus:

- ☐ Clearly arranged and professional-looking? (i.e., free of typos, properly formatted, enough line and margin spacing so text isn't crammed together? Readable font styles and sizes?)
- ☐ Compatible with screen reader technology for visually impaired students? (i.e., employs specific styles for headings, sub-headings; contains alternate text/descriptions for images)
- ☐ Written in a positive, as opposed to negative/punitive, tone? Is it inviting?

Does this syllabus:

- ☐ Clearly communicate that the instructor cares about the students and their success?
- ☐ Suggest specific things students can do to maximize their chances of success?
- ☐ Describe the students' responsibilities in the learning process?
- ☐ Have a statement regarding how the course will be an inclusive learning environment?
- ☐ Inform students of any sensitive or potentially disturbing information/topics/themes that will be covered by the course (if necessary?)
- ☐ Have information regarding campus resources that can assist students? (e.g., tutoring, the writing center, math lab, counseling services, disability services, multicultural office?)
- ☐ List important academic dates that fall during the term? (e.g., last day to drop, last day to drop with a 'W')
- ☐ Contain the text of, or link to, any required institutional language or statements?
- ☐ Avoid confrontational or adversarial language? (i.e., USING ALL CAPS TO MAKE A POINT).

Additional Comments: