

WRITING A SYLLABUS

Introduction

The word syllabus as defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* is an outline of a course of study. A syllabus should contain an outline, a schedule of topics and other pertinent information. The primary purpose of a syllabus however, is to let the student know what the course is about, why it is taught and what will be required of them in order to pass the course with a passing grade. Remember to include all-important information about the course in writing. You do not have to include every single item. The syllabus should include the following content areas:

Major Headings of a Syllabus

Course Information. This is the course title, course number and credit hours, also lab hours if applicable. Also include the prerequisites for the course if any. Include in this section when and where the class meets.

Instructor Information. Give the student the full name of the instructor, title, office location, office phone number, email address, office hours and where to leave assignments. If you give students your home telephone, list the restrictions for calling such as “No calls after 9:00 p.m. or before 8 a.m. please”.

Textbook(s). Include the titles, author, date and edition, publisher, cost, where they can obtain the textbook.

Materials. Lab courses may require additional supplies and materials a student will need, be sure you include them in your syllabus.

Course Description/Objectives. A paragraph describing the general content of the course, the methods of instruction to be used (lab, lecture) etc, this is usually the course description taken from the college catalogue. In the objective section list the course objectives or skills the student will attain upon completion of the course.

Course Calendar. The calendar should include the dates for exams, quizzes or due dates for projects and/or major assignments. Include a statement explaining that the schedule is tentative and subject to change depending on the progress of the class.

Course Policies. Include in the syllabus a section on each of the following areas:

Attendance and tardiness.

Missed exams or assignments and make up policy

Lab assignments and safety issues

Academic dishonesty. This should address issues of cheating and plagiarism refer students to student handbook.

Grading. Include details about how the student will be graded, what factors will be included and the weight given to each factor and the grading scale.

Guidelines for Writing a Syllabus

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Available Support Services. Include the instructional support services available to the student, for example, Disability support services, library, computer labs, learning center and tutoring.