



Syllabus Checklist

| | | Required | Suggested | My Syllabus |
|---|--|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Syllabus Title | Appears in bold on the first line e.g. NUTRITION 10 | x | | |
| Course Title | e.g. Contemporary Nutrition | x | | |
| Course Number | e.g. NUTR-010.-64Z | x | | |
| Call # | e.g. Call #2495 | | x | |
| Instructor Name | e.g. Barbara Brown | x | | |
| Semester | Fall Spring Summer | x | | |
| Description | Brief description of course, usually 3-5 sentences | x | | |
| Prerequisites | | x | | |
| Instructor Information | Include a brief biography | | x | |
| Office Hours | Dates, special arrangements | x | | |
| Days And Time | Day of the week, time of class | x | | |
| Phone / Voicemail | | x | | |
| Fax Number : | | x | | |
| Office Location : | | x | | |
| E-Mail Address : | | x | | |
| Web Site : | | | x | |
| Requirements | | | x | |
| Objectives | | x | | |
| Course Materials | List of books, software, other materials as appropriate | x | | |
| Media Components And Availability | Print, Video, Audio, Multimedia | x | | |
| Class LISTSERV | | | x | |
| Important Dates For Semester | Holidays, events, seminars | | x | |
| Schedule | | x | | |
| Testing And Grading | | x | | |
| Alternate Exams | | | x | |
| Academic Integrity | | x | | |
| Technical Requirements For LMS or other technologies used | Hardware, software | | x | |
| Login For Courses in LMS | | | x | |
| Syllabus Change Policy: | For example: This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice | | x | |
| Disabilities Statement | Indicate procedure from institution | x | | |



Designing a Learning-Centered Syllabus

Retrieved 7 November 2008 from <http://www.udel.edu/cte/syllabus.htm#note>

Your syllabus can be an important point of interaction between you and your students, both in and out of class. The traditional syllabus is primarily a source of information for your students. While including basic information, the learning-centered syllabus can be an important learning tool that will reinforce the intentions, roles, attitudes, and strategies that you will use to promote active, purposeful, effective learning.

➤ Suggested Steps for Planning Your Syllabus:

- Develop a well-grounded rationale for your course
- Decide what you want students to be able to do as a result of taking your course, and how their work will be appropriately assessed
- Define and delimit course content
- Structure your students' active involvement in learning
- Identify and develop resources
- Compose your syllabus with a focus on student learning

➤ Suggested Principles for Designing a Course that Fosters Critical Thinking:

- Critical thinking is a learnable skill; the instructor and peers are resources in developing critical thinking skills.
- Problems, questions, or issues are the point of entry into the subject and a source of motivation for sustained inquiry.
- Successful courses balance the challenge to think critically with support tailored to students' developmental needs.
- Courses are assignment centered rather than text and lecture centered. Goals, methods and evaluation emphasize using content rather than simply acquiring it.
- Students are required to formulate their ideas in writing or other appropriate means.
- Students collaborate to learn and to stretch their thinking, for example, in pair problem solving and small group work.
- Courses that teach problem-solving skills nurture students' metacognitive abilities.
- The developmental needs of students are acknowledged and used as information in the design of the course. Teachers in these courses make standards explicit and then help students learn how to achieve them.

➤ Syllabus Functions:

- Establishes an early point of contact and connection between student and instructor
- Helps set the tone for your course
- Describes your beliefs about educational purposes
- Acquaints students with the logistics of the course
- Contains collected handouts
- Defines student responsibilities for successful course work
- Describes active learning
- Helps students to assess their readiness for your course
- Sets the course in a broader context for learning

RAMP-UP T.E.A.S. - November 19, 2008
M.-P. Huguet - huguem@rpi.edu



Design Tools

- Provides a conceptual framework
- Describes available learning resources
- Communicates the role of technology in the course
- Can expand to provide difficult-to-obtain reading materials
- Can improve the effectiveness of student note-taking
- Can include material that supports learning outside the classroom
- Can serve as a learning contract

➤ Checklist for a learning-centered syllabus:

- Can serve as a learning contract
- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Instructor Information
- Letter to the Student
- Purpose of the Course
- Course Description
- Course and Unit Objectives
- Resources
- Readings
- Course Calendar
- Course Requirements
- Evaluation
- Grading Procedures
- How to Use the Syllabus
- How to Study for This Course
- Content Information
- Learning Tools

➤ Course Information:

- What do students need and/or want to know about the course?
- What pre-requisites exist?

➤ Instructor Information:

- What do I want students to know about myself? My interest in the discipline? My teaching philosophy?
- How can I convey my enthusiasm for teaching, for the course?
- Other instructors in the course (e.g., graduate TAs, peer tutors, team teacher)?

➤ Course Description:

- What content will the course address? How does the course fit in with other courses in the discipline? Why is the course valuable to the students?
- How is the course structured? Large lecture with discussion sessions? Large lecture with laboratory and discussion sessions? Seminar?
- How are the major topics organized?



Design Tools

➤ Course Objectives:

- What will the students know and be able to do as a result of having taken this course?
- What levels of cognitive thinking do I want my students to engage in?
- What learning skills will the students develop in the course?

➤ Instructional Approaches:

- Given the kind of learning I'd like to encourage and foster, what kinds of instructional interactions need to occur? Teacher-student, student-student, student-peer tutor?
- What kinds of instructional approaches are most conducive to helping students accomplish set learning objectives?
- How will classroom interactions be facilitated? In-class? Out-of-class? Online? Electronic discussion? Newsgroups? Chatroom?

➤ Course Requirements, Assignments:

- What will students be expected to do in the course?
- What kinds of assignments, tests do most appropriately reflect the course objectives?
- Do assignments and tests elicit the kind of learning I want to foster? Assignments (frequency, timing, sequence)? Tests? Quizzes? Exams? Papers? Special projects? Laboratories? Field trips? Learning logs? Journals? Oral presentations? Research on the web? Web publishing? Electronic databases?
- What kinds of skills do the students need to have in order to be successful in the course? Computer literacy? Research skills? Writing skills? Communication skills? Conflict resolution skills? Familiarity with software?

➤ Course Policies:

- What is expected of the student? Attendance? Participation? Student responsibility in their learning? Contribution to group work? Missed assignments? Late work? Extra credit? Academic dishonesty? Makeup policy? Classroom management issues? Laboratory safety?

➤ Grading, Evaluation:

- How will the students' work be graded and evaluated? Number of tests? In-class? Take-home? Point value? Proportion of each test toward final grade? Grading scale?
- How is the final grade determined? Drop lowest grade?
- How do students receive timely feedback on their performance? Instructor? Self-assessment? Peer review? Peer tutors? Opportunities for improvement? Ungraded assignments?

➤ Texts/Resources/Readings/Supplies:

- What kinds of materials will be used during the course? Electronic databases? Electronic Course Reserve? Course Webpage? Software? Simulations? Laboratory equipment?

RAMP-UP T.E.A.S. - November 19, 2008
M.-P. Huguet - huguem@rpi.edu



Design Tools

- What kinds of instructional technologies will be used?
- **Course Calendar:**
 - In what sequence will the content be taught? When are major assignments due? Fieldtrips? Guest speaker?
- **Study Tips/Learning Resources:**
 - How will the student be most successful in the course?
 - What resources are available?
Online quiz generator? Study guides? Lecture notes online? Lecture notes on reserve in library? Guest speaker to explain/demonstrate online resources? TA? Peer tutors? Study groups? Academic Services Center? Writing Center? Evaluation of online resources? Citation of web resources?
- **Student Feedback on Instruction:**
 - Anonymous suggestion box on the web? E-mail?
 - Student feedback at midterm for instructional improvement purposes?
 - End-of-term student feedback? Supplement to departmental student feedback form?
- **Miscellaneous Information:**
 - Instructor biography? Instructor personal statement? Student information form? Other instructor information (e.g., TA)?
- **Additional questions to consider:**
 - How detailed, explicit should the syllabus be?
 - Will there be some flexibility built into the syllabus?
 - How to word the syllabus so that it is user-friendly?
- **References:**

Altman & Cashin. (1992). *Writing a syllabus*. IDEA Paper No. 27. Kansas State University. Graeber/Harris Communications & Productions, Inc.

Grunert, J. (1997). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing. Retrieved 14 February 2008 from: <http://www.udel.edu/cte/syllabus.htm#note>

*Cited in Kurfiss, J. G. (1988). *Critical thinking: Theory, research, practice and possibilities*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington, DC: Association for the Study of Higher Education.