The Course Syllabus
A Guide for Student Success

Whether you’re a seasoned faculty member with many syllabi in your files or a beginning faculty member, please check out this information about the syllabus at ECU.

Office for Faculty Excellence
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“The syllabus should serve as a **map for your journey through the semester.** It should provide enough detail to direct your students, but not so much that they feel overly programmed. Think of your role as that of a tour guide: you want your schedule to indicate the major activities, but allow freedom to explore side roads according to the interests and needs of your class, serendipity, fate, and human elements. “ (Schoenfeld & Magnan, page 198)

Howard Altman quote: Since the course syllabus becomes a written legal covenant between the instructor and the students in the course, each syllabus should end with a **caveat** of the following sort: “The above schedule and procedures in the course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.” This caveat protects the instructor and department if changes in the syllabus need to be made once the course is underway. (page 198)
M. Orientation of Courses

At the opening of each semester, faculty members should provide the following information during the initial class meetings:

- The prerequisites of the course, if any, and the required class standing, that is, freshman, sophomore, etc. Students not eligible for the course should be sent to the Office of the Registrar immediately.
- The content of the course
- The objectives of the course and the value to be derived from the course
- The complete requirements of the course, such as textbooks, other materials required, number and nature of reports to be submitted, outside reading, notebook requirements, types of quizzes to be used, and class attendance regulations
- The weight of the various requirements of the course in determining the final grade
- Smoking is prohibited in all ECU classrooms

The first meeting of each class should consume the full time allotted by the schedule.

Faculty members are expected to have in their possession a syllabus for each course they teach. It is the responsibility of each dean and chairperson to have syllabi for all courses taught in the college, school, or department.

[Note: Many faculty hand out and review the syllabus at the first class meeting. Online instructors often include a beginning assignment where student review and take a quiz on the syllabus.] For more, see http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/facultymanual/part5/part5.htm.
The ECU course approval process requires submission of a syllabus. The following proposals provide information to guide faculty in creating syllabi for their teaching of those classes.

Graduate course proposal
http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/gcc/upload/12_05_07_HLTH_6005_Course_Proposal_Form-3.doc

Undergraduate course proposal
http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/committee/cu/courseproposalformWord.doc
ECU Syllabus Resources

• In order to be prepared should a disaster require teaching from a distance, all courses (on campus and distance education) have a BlackBoard site. Once your department has assigned you a course, that course will be listed on your BlackBoard site. If nothing else, you should upload your syllabus. Go to https://blackboard.ecu.edu and sign in using your userid (Banner ID) and password.

• Departmental copies of approved syllabi. Check with your department to see if syllabi are on file for courses you will teach.

• Teacher Awards syllabi. Examples of syllabi from award winning faculty are available in the Office for Faculty Excellence (Old Cafeteria Complex, 2306).

• New Faculty Blackboard site: https://blackboard.ecu.edu/ (guest sign in: newfaculty for both id and password). See Introduction to College Teaching, Session 4 for more information.

• Resource books on developing the syllabus are available in the library and in the Office for Faculty Excellence
Course Information: Includes course title, course number, credit hours, location of the classroom, days and hours of class/ lab/studio/etc.

Instructor Information: Includes name, title, office location, office phone number, office hours, teaching associates (TAs).

Textbooks, Readings, and Materials: Includes title, author, date, publisher, and why it or they were chosen. Text(s) should be chosen for representation and treatment of course content and goals. Authors should be chosen for their treatment of multiple perspectives. Readings and materials should be chosen for their representation of diverse perspectives.

Course Description and Goals: Includes course and multicultural goals and why these goals are important for teaching and learning. Might include a rationale for instructional methods. Instructional methods should capitalize on students’ experiences, learning, and cognitive styles. Course objectives for multicultural teaching and learning should address cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Kitano, 1997).

- **Course Calendar and Schedule**: Includes a daily or weekly schedule of class activities such as readings, assignments, and due dates, lecture topics, quizzes, and exams. Assessment strategies should provide students with a variety of ways for mastering course content.

- **Course Policies**: Includes attendance, lateness, class participation, missed assignments and exams, lab safety, academic misconduct, and grading. Communicates a tone of high expectations for all students and a knowledge of the research on differential interaction patterns of underrepresented groups.

- **Available Support Services and Resources**: Includes a statement for students who may require support services from offices such as disability services, academic learning center, tutoring center, [SI], library, and computer center. Resources should accommodate the social and cultural characteristics and experiences of the students.
Attached at the end of this presentation is a template that you may find helpful. It is a suggestion only. It does include the recommended sentences about disruption and disabilities.

**Course Policies:**

- Attendance – How do you feel about attendance, lateness, class participation, missed assignments and exams. Do expect students to read your mind; lay out your expectations. Sometime professors engage student in developing course expectations.

- The University has policies related to lab safety, academic misconduct, class conduct (disruption policy), and grading.

- Caveat for change if necessary. Include a statement that you reserve the right to adjust the syllabus if necessary.
Attached at the end of this presentation is a template that you may find helpful. It is a suggestion only. It does include the recommended sentences about disruption and disabilities.

Disabilities Statement
East Carolina University seeks to comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting accommodations based on a disability must be registered with the Department for Disability Support Services located in Slay 138 ((252) 737-1016 (Voice/TTY)).

For more information, go to http://www.ecu.edu/cs%2Dstudentlife/dss/

Academic Integrity
http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/eai/DEStudentIntegrity.cfm
Disruption Statement – Undergraduate Catalog
http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ugcat/regulations.cfm#disruptive

POLICY ON DISRUPTIVE ACADEMIC BEHAVIOR

East Carolina University is committed to providing each student with a rich, distinctive educational experience. To this end, students who do not follow reasonable standards of behavior in the classroom, or other academic setting may be removed from the course by the instructor following appropriate notice. Students removed from a course under this policy will receive a grade of “drop” according to university policy, and are eligible for a tuition refund as specified in the current tuition refund policy.

This policy also appears in the Faculty Manual Part 5, Y. More about this policy and other considerations may be found in the document: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/cfe/upload/classroom_disruption.pdf. It is a good idea to identify your expectations in your syllabus.
Other items that might be useful to include in your syllabus:

Possible weather and other emergency statement:

University emergency notices (including closings):

- University emergency information can be found on the ECU homepage. It is usually highlighted with a red bar that will specify the alert.  [http://www.ecu.edu](http://www.ecu.edu) or go to [http://www.ecu.edu/alert](http://www.ecu.edu/alert)

- Emergency hotline: 252-328-0062
ECU Continuity of Instruction Plan (4/28/09)

The University has developed a contingency plan for face-to-face and DE courses. Faculty need to be prepared to continue instruction should the university be closed for face-to-face instruction and/or internet access be lost. To view the University DE Contingency Plan, go to http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/learningplatforms/contingency.cfm

Faculty Checklist - The following is provided in order to facilitate and focus attention on preparation for a catastrophic event.

• Answer the Questions to Consider
• Attend a Continuity of Instruction Session
• Attend Blackboard Training Sessions
• Test Communication Tools
• Select Communication Tools to Implement
• Develop a Continuity of Instruction Outline
• Revise Syllabus – Continuity Syllabus
• Continuity Syllabus Readily Available to Students
• Ensure Just-In-Time and Just-In-Case Content Readily Available
• Ensure Just-In-Time and Just-In-Case Assignments Readily Available
ECU Continuity of Instruction Plan (4/28/09)

Elmer Poe - Academic Outreach/Academic Affairs
Quick Start to Continuity of Instruction

• Determine how you will communicate with your students (ECU or other email, Blackboard announcements or discussion forum, etc) and how often you will communicate.
• Include a general Continuity of Instruction statement in your syllabus or Blackboard course that explains how you will continue instruction if face-to-face classes are suspended. A sample is provided below:

  “In the event that face-to-face classes are suspended due to a pandemic or other catastrophe, I will strive to continue instruction to those that are able to participate. If and when face-to-face classes are suspended, you will receive an email from me and a Blackboard Announcement that detail how we will communicate, where you can locate course information and what you can expect during this time period. I realize that some of you may be affected by the event and not able to participate; however I will continue to provide instruction to those that are able to continue.”
• Have Content readily available in Blackboard. Content varies from lecture notes, recorded lectures, PowerPoint presentations, reading assignments, etc.
• Determine teaching objectives for the time period.
• Communicate with students.
Below is a template you may find useful in creating your syllabus. Following the template are examples of six syllabi from different areas from the portfolios of teaching award winning faculty.

Template: [Syllabus_format_2010.doc](#)

Burns – CHEM: [Burns_CHEM_2750.pdf](#)

Prividera – COMM: [Prividera_COMM_4135.pdf](#)

Mahar – EXSS: [Mahar_EXSS_6201.pdf](#)

Hunt – Business: [Hunt_MGMT_4842.pdf](#)

Ballard – Gerontology: [Ballard_CDFR_2400.pdf](#)

1. The syllabus conveys enthusiasm for the subject.
2. The syllabus conveys the intellectual challenge of the course
3. The syllabus provides for personalization of content.
4. The syllabus conveys your respect for the ability of students.
5. Course goals are attainable and stated positively.
6. Grading policies convey the possibility of success.
7. The syllabus adequately specifies the assignments.
8. Assignments vary in type of required expertise.
10. The syllabus conveys your desire to help students individually.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the OFE at 328-1426/2367.
Syllabus Activity – Think, Pair, Share

Introduce yourself to the person beside you. Take a few minutes to review the example syllabus and its inclusion of the following:

- **Course Information**
- **Instructor Information**
- **Textbooks, Readings, and Materials**
- **Course Description and Goals**
- **Course Calendar and Schedule**

**Course Policies:** Includes attendance, lateness, class participation, missed assignments and exams, lab safety, academic misconduct, class conduct (disruption policy), and grading. Caveat for change if necessary. Communicates a tone of high expectations for all students and a knowledge of the research on differential interaction patterns of underrepresented groups.

**Available Support Services and Resources:** Includes a statement for students who may require support services from offices such as disability services, academic learning center, tutoring center, [SI], library, and computer center. Resources should accommodate the social and cultural characteristics and experiences of the students.

**Comments from your own experience**