Syllabus Creation 101

PIE Workshop - Spring 2020
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Department of Sport Science and Physical Education
Workshop Goals

1. Highlight basic components and best practice for syllabi construction;

2. Introduce a “Learner-Centered” approach to the syllabus;

3. Employ specific ideas and action-items for a syllabus you are creating or revising.
Why is the Syllabus Important?
FOR WHAT PURPOSE(S) DO FACULTY USE THE SYLLABUS?
Functions of the Syllabus for Faculty

1. Structural
2. Motivational
3. Evidentiary

(Slattery & Carlson, 2005)
The Many Functions of the Academic Syllabus for Faculty


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATIONAL</th>
<th>STRUCTURAL</th>
<th>EVIDENTIARY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Communication process</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Faculty promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>Calendar of events</td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>development</td>
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</table>
FOR WHAT PURPOSE(S) DO STUDENTS USE THE SYLLABUS?
Functions of the Syllabus for Students

1. Information

2. Performance Expectations

3. Get to “know” the instructor

(Slattery & Carlson, 2005)
### The Many Functions of the Academic Syllabus for Students

(Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Calhoon & Becker, 2008; Harrington & Gabert-Quillen, 2015; Saville, Zinn, Brown & Marchuk, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMATION</th>
<th>PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS</th>
<th>KNOWLEDGE OF INSTRUCTOR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course requirements</td>
<td>Grade policies</td>
<td>Teaching philosophy/style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar and due dates</td>
<td>Assignment descriptions</td>
<td>Teacher interest and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course rules</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Interest in student engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>Learning outcomes</td>
<td>Approachability</td>
</tr>
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What is the “Learner-Centered” Syllabus?

- Encourages students to...
  - take responsibility for their learning;
  - know what is required to achieve success;
  - recognize and identify skills they will learn to develop professionally.

“Tone” of the Learner-Centered Syllabus

- Language
  - Positive, challenging, encouraging, and inclusive

- Rationale
  - Class and assignments

- Self-Disclosure
  - Professionally appropriate

- Compassion

- Enthusiasm

(Harnish, et al., 2011)
Students’ Perception of Faculty who use a “Learner-Centered” Syllabus

• Creative
• Caring
• Receptive
• Reliable
• Enthusiastic
• Approachable

• Care about student engagement and success

(Harrington & Gabert-Quillen; Richmond, Slattery, Mitchell, Morgan, & Becknell, 2016, p.1)
BASIC SYLLABUS
INFORMATION
Basic Syllabus Information

1. Instructor Information
2. Course Description
3. Course Objectives
4. Required and Suggested Readings
5. Assignment Descriptions
6. Course Calendar
7. Course Policies and Procedures
8. Student Support Resources
9. The “Nuts and Bolts” or Design Aspects

(Appleby, 1999; Slattery & Carlson, 2005)
1. Instructor Information:

WHAT INFORMATION DO YOU INCLUDE ABOUT YOURSELF IN YOUR SYLLABUS?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Additional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Name</td>
<td>○ Teaching philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Office Phone</td>
<td>○ Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Email</td>
<td>○ Work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Office Location</td>
<td>○ Research interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Office hours</td>
<td>○ Outside interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Best way to contact me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Office Hours

TRADITIONAL
Office Hours: T & R 8:30 – 9:30
If you need to contact me, you may email me or contact the department and leave a message. I will return your call.

LEARNER-CENTERED
Student Hours: T & R 8:30 – 9:30
If you cannot make these hours, individual assistance is always available by appointment. I look forward to seeing you during student hours; please stop in.

(Adapted from Harnish et al., 2011)
2. Course Description:
READ THROUGH YOUR COURSE DESCRIPTION

- Does it stimulate interest in your course?
- Does it identify how your course fits into the curriculum as a whole?
- Does it identify how this course adds to the knowledge a professional in the field needs to have?
- Does it communicate how this course will facilitate students’ professional/academic development?
Course Description

TRADITIONAL

This course was designed to help students understand the purpose, nature, and application of scholarly research in the field of sport and physical activity. This class will explore the interpretation and analysis of research that relates to sport and physical activity. The following course topics will be covered: (a) the nature and purpose of research, (b) research question development, (c) techniques for writing a research report, (d) different types of research used in sport and physical activity settings, and (e) APA formatting. Primary focus will be on the development of an original research proposal related to an area of sport and/or physical activity.

(Adapted from Appleby, 2018 – PE 6640 Research and Writing)

LEARNER-CENTERED

We live in a world in which decisions are made according to research. Based on the findings of all types of studies, we choose foods, universities, and majors always with the goal to make our lives better and safer. Because of this, two issues are very important. We need to distinguish between good and bad research, and we need to be able to conduct research to make persuasive arguments. This course is designed to help you in both of these areas so that you can be a discriminating consumer and a responsible producer of information.

(Adapted from Grunert-O’Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008, pp. 52-53)
3. Course Objectives:

**READ THROUGH YOUR COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Do they clearly identify...
  - what you want your students to **KNOW**?
  - what you want your students to be able to **DO**?
    - Action items that can be measured
    - Rationale for why this is important for student learning and professional development
Course Objectives

TRADITIONAL

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. **Recognize** the skills, tasks, knowledge, and competencies needed to gain successful employment in your chosen field;

2. **Conduct** and **Present** research-based project related to a current issue in your professional field;

3. **Create** and **Present** a professional planning portfolio that includes (but is not limited to) your professional dispositions, curriculum audit, and professional resume.

(Adapted from Appleby, 2020 – PE 4454 Senior Capstone)

LEARNER-CENTERED

Whether you are planning to enter the workforce or start graduate school, this course is designed to help you develop professional skills to help you be successful. This course is designed to have the opportunity to reflect on your curriculum, specifically how it relates to your profession, further practice your research and communication skills, and have a strategically outlined plan for your career development. Therefore, by the end of this semester, you should be able to:

1. **Recognize** the skills, tasks, knowledge, and competencies needed to gain successful employment in your chosen field;

2. **Conduct** and **Present** research-based project related to a current issue in your professional field;

3. **Create** and **Present** a professional planning portfolio that includes (but is not limited to) your professional dispositions, curriculum audit, and professional resume.
4. Required and Optional Readings

IS THERE A RATIONALE FOR OPTIONAL READINGS?

- **WHY** are these readings optional?

- **HOW** will they be useful to the student?

- **WHY** have these specific resources been chosen?
TRADITIONAL

OPTIONAL READING:


LEARNER-CENTERED

OPTIONAL READINGS:

Why optional readings? I developed the optional reading list for a number of reasons. Foremost, the readings provide an opportunity for those interested in sport psychology to go beyond the material provided in the required text and examine in more detail specific topics that are of interest to sport psychologists. Second, too often students simply accept what they see in a text as truth without critically evaluating the information. My hope is that you will start (if you haven’t already) being critical of what you are reading by drawing upon your own experiences and other knowledge. I have carefully selected the optional readings because they are provocative and provide a different perspective to the required text. Each has been placed on our Moodle page and will enhance your understanding of the course material in this class.

(Adapted from Harnish et al, 2011)
5. Course Calendar

WHAT INFORMATION IS INCLUDED ON YOUR COURSE CALENDAR?

- First Impression
- **WHAT** will happen?
- **WHEN** will it happen?
- Clear and organized
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>LEARNER-CENTERED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>Learning objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Additional course readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readings</td>
<td>Statement of accommodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignments</td>
<td>Workload balance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
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6. Assignment Descriptions

HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR ASSIGNMENTS?

- CONNECTED with course and learning objectives?
- ALIGNED to professional skills?
- ENOURAGE students to take responsibility for their learning?
TRADITIONAL
Case Analysis Summaries
Each student will submit a case analysis summary for the case study at the end of each chapter (unless an alternative case is provided).

LEARNER-CENTERED
Case Analysis Summaries
As future sport managers, you will regularly problem-solve and decision-make through difficult situations. In order to prepare you for this, I have developed several case summaries that align to the content in each chapter. You will submit a one-page analysis for each of these cases. These summaries are designed to help you think critically about a situation of relevance to the sport concept we are discussing that day and apply it to your current or future work as a sport manager. We will discuss your reflections in class so please be prepared to share your thoughts and be an active participant in a meaningful conversation with your colleagues!

Adapted from Appleby, 2020
7. Course Policies and Procedures

WHAT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DO YOU INCLUDE? HOW ARE THEY ARTICULATED?

- Attendance
- Participation
- Grading
- Missed Exams or Assignments
- Academic Honesty
Attendance

**TRADITIONAL**
Professors are required to keep attendance records and report absences throughout the term. Any student failing to attend class for two consecutive weeks, without an approved excuse from their instructor, will be administratively withdrawn and notified via email that you have been withdrawn and a grade of “WH” will be recorded.

**LEARNER-CENTERED**
Your contributions and classroom citizenship are valuable to me and to other class members! Therefore your attendance is not just required, it is critical to our learning environment. Attendance is worth 5 points every day. If you are tardy on these days, you will be docked 50% of these points.

Because my attendance policy is strict, and I understand that life does happen, I will allow you to do an alternative learning assignment to help you learn the material you have missed and to make up the points that you may lose from extenuating circumstances that result in an absence. If circumstances make you miss more than 3 classes during the semester, you may have overextended yourself and you should consider dropping the class.

(Adapted from Harnish et al, 2011) (Adapted from Appleby, 2019)
Missed Assignments/Exams

TRADITIONAL

No make-up exams or assignments will be allowed without documentation of illness, death in the family, or other suitably traumatic event.

LEARNER-CENTERED

While I do not allow make-up exams or assignments, I do understand that illness, death in the family, or other traumatic events unfortunately are part of life. If you have an extenuating circumstance, please communicate this with me within 24 hours of the missed assignment or exam.

(Adapted from Harnish et al, 2011)
Standard ISU Policies

Academic Dishonesty:
- ISU Undergraduate Catalog:
  [http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/academic_integrity_and_dishonesty_policy/](http://coursecat.isu.edu/undergraduate/academic_integrity_and_dishonesty_policy/)
- ISU Graduate Catalog:
  [http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/academicdishonesty/](http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/academicdishonesty/)

Attendance Policy:
- ISU Undergraduate Catalog 2019-2020:
8. Student Support Resources

WHAT SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS DO YOU INCLUDE?

- ADA Statement (REQUIRED)
- Mental Health
- Support for Veteran Students
- Student Success Center
- Central Academic Advising
- Career Center
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus Resource Links</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o ISU Disability Services: <a href="https://www.isu.edu/disabilityservices/student-accommodation-information/">https://www.isu.edu/disabilityservices/student-accommodation-information/</a></td>
</tr>
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Veteran-Military Students: If you are a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves, or a spouse or dependent, and an aspect of your present or prior service makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of the course, keep me informed about your situation and I will work with you. I realize that you have little to no control over prompt benefits processing, VA appointments, training schedules, deployments, and other aspects of service. Campus resources for veterans, service members, and families are located in the Veteran Student Services Center on the 3rd floor of the Pond Student Union Building near the Salmon River rooms. The VSSC can be reached at (208) 282-4245, veterans@isu.edu, or isu.edu/veterans.
Statement on Student Success: Success in this course depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. Recognize that stress is an expected part of the college experience, and it often can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. I encourage you to reframe challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. Reflect on your role in taking care of yourself throughout the term, before the demands of exams and projects reach their peak. Please feel free to reach out to me about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your performance in this course. If you are experiencing stress in other areas of your campus life, I am happy to help you get in contact with other resources on campus that stand ready to assist you. In addition to your academic advisor, I strongly encourage you to contact the many other support services on campus that are available.

Services and Resources: ISU Counseling and Testing Services (CATS) would like to remind all students who are enrolled in the current semester (part-time or full-time) they are eligible for free, confidential counseling services. CATS offers individual, group, and couples counseling, as well as Biofeedback Training. We also offers crisis intervention services Monday through Friday from 8-5. Locations: Pocatello: Graveley Hall, 3rd floor of the south side. To schedule an appointment call 208-282-2130 or just stop by. Walk-ins are welcome Monday-Friday from 8am - 4pm. Idaho Falls: Bennion Student Union, 2nd floor, Room 223. Please call 208-282-7750 to schedule an appointment. Meridian: Counseling services are available to Meridian students through the ISU Counseling Department. Please call 208-373-1719 to schedule an appointment. www.isu.edu/ctc
9. Design Aspects to Consider

IS YOUR SYLLABUS EASY TO READ? ARE YOU ABLE TO FIND INFORMATION QUICKLY?

○ “Readability” and “Legibility”  
  (Watzman, 2003, p. 269 as cited in Jones, 2018, p. 27)

  ○ Text that is easy to read (large font, bold, italics, etc.)

  ○ Bullet points and lists

  ○ Use of graphics (charts, pictures, tables, etc.)

  ○ Relevant headings/Headings as questions

(Jones, 2018)
Final Questions to Consider

- Does my syllabus help encourage interest in the course content?

- Does my syllabus communicate the value of the course (to a student)?

- What questions do students commonly have about the class after reviewing the syllabus?

- How would I feel about being a student in this class after reading/reviewing this syllabus?
QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? IDEAS?
References

Appleby, D. C. (1999). *How to improve your teaching with the course syllabus*. In B. Perlman, L. I. McCann, & S.


