

General Syllabus Guidelines

A syllabus is a detailed guide to a course, presenting general course information, policies, and a schedule. All courses and syllabi should be designed in accordance with relevant academic policies in the *Undergraduate Catalog* and *Graduate Catalog* (e.g. academic terms, contact hours, final exams) and relevant course guidelines elsewhere in this *Handbook*. The following guidelines outline what should appear on a syllabus for a course in the department, and it presents optional items that instructors might include. While the material below appears as a list, the specific organization of items could vary by course and instructor. Courses cross-listed with or taught for other departments might need to include other information.

Syllabi and Department Records

By the end of the second week of classes, all instructors should send a copy of the complete syllabus for each of their courses that semester, including those taught for other programs (such as Honors) to the department Administrative Assistant. The syllabus is often a single document, but some faculty members find it easier to submit multiple documents, e.g. a course overview/policies document and a weekly schedule document.

Syllabi need to be submitted for each course each semester, even if it is being taught with little revision from a previous term. While minor elements of a course might change over the term, it is expected that most course elements will remain consistent with the submitted syllabus.

The main audience for the syllabus is the students enrolled in the class and syllabi should be written for this audience. In addition, syllabi are consulted by the Chair and colleagues for a variety of purposes, including course planning, grade appeals, faculty evaluation, and program assessment. Former students also routinely request copies of course syllabi to submit to other institutions as part of the process of transferring courses to other institutions.

Design and Accessibility

As syllabi have grown, the information in them can become overwhelming. Instructors might find it helpful to divide their syllabi into separate documents to make the information more navigable. When creating a single document, it is worth considering the placement of information, putting the most salient details at the front of the syllabus, and other course policies and statements after the schedule. Instructors could disseminate parts of the syllabus incrementally over the first couple of weeks. Whatever the approach, the entire syllabus (course information, policies/statements, and weekly schedule) should be submitted to the department at the beginning of the semester, even if it has not yet been shared with students.

Instructors should take care to create clear, readable documents, thoughtfully laid out with ease of reading and locating information in mind, as well as accessibly, particularly the needs of students who use screen readers. The ITRC can help with formatting a syllabus according to principles of universal design for learning (UDL). We encourage instructors to write syllabi with a straightforward, even welcoming tone. When incorporating images into a syllabus, instructors should thoughtfully curate these for professionalism and tone and, where at all possible, choose images that reflect a diversity of backgrounds and experiences.

Syllabus Elements

Part 1: General Course Information

Course Information

Course number and official *Catalog* title, e.g. ENGL 1102 Writing and Rhetoric II

Course description, i.e. from the *Catalog*, instructor's own description, or both. Note: ECP requires the course description copied directly from the *Catalog*.

Description of course delivery mode / plan, avoiding jargon where possible, e.g. fully online, no set times (rather than AO); or via Zoom, set times (rather than synchronous online).

Course meeting time(s), for all courses except those fully online, no set times

Course meeting location or information about accessing the course meeting (e.g. zoom link + password), when relevant

Instructor Contact and Communication

Instructor email

Instructor phone number, when relevant

Instructor physical mailbox location, when relevant

Office location, when the instructor has an office on an ISU campus

Office hours, although sometimes labeled in other ways, such as "drop-in hours," "hang-out hours," even "happy hours!"

Information about accessing office hours via an online meeting (e.g. meeting link), when relevant

Communication expectations, i.e. what students can expect in terms of response times to messages

Course Materials

Required books, when relevant, including full bibliographic information and ISBN, which will help students find books from any vendor. Non-ECP: please include a link to the university bookstore.

Other required materials and supplies, when relevant, e.g. Eli Review; non-print media purchases or subscriptions; post-it notes

Technology requirements, i.e. internet access, tech equipment (microphone, webcam, etc.), programs, and devices students will need to complete the course successfully.

Course Outcomes

All syllabi should list specific course outcomes.

General Education Courses: Copy and paste into the syllabus the current general education course outcomes as listed in the ISU *Undergraduate Catalog*. Note that for ENGL 1101 and Gen Ed Objective 4 courses, only some of the Gen Ed outcomes will apply. Please consult the Chair with questions. N.B. Instructors can add additional course outcomes, if they would like to.

All other courses: Please create a list of specific course outcomes, ideally using action verbs keyed to Bloom's taxonomy (define, identify, analyze, apply, etc.). For some courses with multiple sections, such as PHIL 2230 or ENGL 3307 and ENGL 3308, this list might be standardized.

Program Outcomes

Courses in the English and Philosophy majors, minors, and graduate programs and certificates: Please identify and list the relevant outcomes that your course supports. For English and Philosophy, these outcomes can be found in the University Catalog. Additional, for English, these outcomes are available on Department website, under "Resources."

Courses supporting endorsements in Education (Elementary and Secondary English; ESOL): faculty must include the relevant English Education Standard that the course supports.

Optional Course Information

Course Prerequisites

Course Section Number(s)

Brief professional biography / profile of the instructor

Picture of course instructor(s)

Preferred professional form of address (Professor; Dr., Ms.; first name)

Instructor's preferred pronouns

Recommended textbooks and materials

Part 2: Policies and Statements

Grading Policies

List of elements of final grade and weighting for each (in percentages or as point values)

Attendance and participation policy, when relevant

Grade scale: Indicate what numerical average or points accumulated equate to a final letter grade.

Late work policy

Statements/Policies:

Academic (Dis)honesty & Plagiarism: The statement should define academic (dis)honesty and plagiarism and indicate potential consequences. The ISU Attendance Policy is [here](#). A departmental policy example appears elsewhere in the *Department Handbook*.

Disability Services: An example statement is available on the [Disability Services Website](#).

Optional Policies

Student Decorum

Policy on electronic devices in class

Netiquette

Guidance on writing an email to you

Expectations for time spent on the course. Note: Highly recommended for ECP instructors.

Optional Information about Student Resources

Library
Counseling and Testing Center
Student Success Center or Writing Center
Veterans Services
Title IX Office
Gender Resource Center
Diversity Resource Center
ITRC
Help Desk
Financial Aid
Scholarships
Central Academic Advising
Student Health

Optional Statements (some examples are available elsewhere in the *Handbook*)

Content note. Very highly recommended for Early College syllabi.

Land acknowledgement

Inclusivity statement

Veterans statement

Statement on Student Success (from the [Counseling and Testing Center](#))

Part 3: Weekly Agenda / Schedule

Schedule Elements

Overview of the weekly activity pattern. Required for AO courses (fully online, no set times) and blended/hybrid classes, which are scheduled with reduced meeting times and additional asynchronous activity; Optional for in-seat and SO courses (fully online, set times)

Week-by-week agenda / schedule of topics, homework, major assignment due dates, and other pertinent information, e.g. dates of tests and quizzes, peer review sessions, library research sessions, etc.

Days and dates corresponding to the current semester, i.e. W Aug 24, not Week 1 – Weds

Days and dates of the final exam, when relevant

Optional Schedule Elements

Division into major modules / conceptual units of the course

Add/drop dates. Note: required on ECP syllabi.

Withdrawal date. Note: it is helpful to add a note to talk to academic advisor. Note: Required on ECP syllabi.

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