

Contra Costa College Syllabus Guidelines- Spring 2021

A syllabus sets the expectations for the course each semester. It is important that students know what is expected of them for success in the course right from the beginning, and it is equally important that students know what they can expect of you, the teacher. The syllabus is a major part of the way you introduce yourself to students. It documents the start to your relationship with each student in the class. Please take the time to make sure it reflects who you are as a faculty, both as a professional and as a person.

“Equity-Minded” practitioners question their own assumptions, recognize stereotypes that harm student success, and continually reassess their practices to create change. As equity-minded practitioners, we need to put deliberate care into our syllabus to be sure that we are creating a welcoming tone for all. An equity-minded syllabus cultivates inclusivity that empowers all students to achieve their full intellectual capacity.

<u>Syllabus Checklist and Index</u>	
<u>Required Syllabus Elements</u>	
	1. Course Information: Course title, Course number, Number of credits, Current year and term, Meeting days, times, and locations, any required synchronous meetings (online courses), and Zoom information (if available)
	2. Instructor information: Instructor name, Office location, Office phone number, Email address and any other contact info (Skype, SMS, etc.), Office hours and related procedures
	3. Course Management System information
	4. Prerequisites/Corequisites/Recommended Preparation
	5. Course Description and Objectives
	6. Official Course Student Learning Outcomes
	7. Required textbooks and any other required materials, including software/technology
	8. Evaluation and Grading Policies, including exam proctoring modality if online
	9. Hours By Arrangement Information (if applicable)

Recommended Syllabus Elements: <i>(These are not absolutely required, but are often really useful to students)</i>	
	10. Any requirements that the course may satisfy: IGETC, CSU GE, DVC CCC GE, or major requirements or electives
	11. Course Schedule--if not included in syllabus, should be a separate document given to students the first day
	12. Important College Dates and Enrollment Policies
	13. Course Policies
	14. Statement on Appropriate Classroom Behavior, “netiquette” standards if online
	15. Academic Integrity Policy/Statement
	16. Missing Class for Religious Observances or College-Sponsored Activities
	17. Medical and Family Emergencies
	18. Accessibility information for students with disabilities--policies and support services available
	19. Wellness & Mental Health Resources
	20. General Student Service Resources, including tutoring and library, counseling, technology, financial aid
	21. Warm and Inviting Tone and Welcome Note
	22. Accessibility and Universal Design considerations
	23. Online Syllabus and Course Considerations

Once you’ve completed your syllabus, here are some steps to finalize it before distributing it to students:

- a. Review the document from a student point of view. Is it in language and does it have formatting that makes it easy for a student to understand the information you are sharing? Will a student want to read this?
- b. Have someone else look at your syllabus. Editing always makes any document better, and it’s hard to see errors in our own work. Another person can also help you see unwelcoming or confusing language that you didn’t intend.
- c. Think about different styles of your syllabus. There is not only one “right” way to compose a syllabus
 - a. Consider a liquid syllabus, which is mobile friendly and fully accessible. What is a liquid syllabus? See this [video explanation](#) and an [example of a liquid syllabus](#) using google sites
 - b. Here is an article on syllabus makeovers, showing the use of graphics and other design features: <https://nobaproject.com/blog/2019-03-06-give-your-syllabus-a-makeover-and-watch-your-classroom-transform>

Required Syllabus Elements¹:

1. Course Information

All syllabi must include:

- Course title
- Course number
- Number of credits
- Current year and term
- Meeting days, times, and locations--for online courses, please include any required and/or optional synchronous meeting times and dates

This information is available on Insite/Webadvisor, in the course catalog, and on your official course offer. You may want to include information on whether the course fulfills a GE requirement or program requirement (see Recommended Element 10).

For online courses, please include an estimate for the total number of hours per week a student will need to devote to class activities and homework. This information is useful to students in preparing to succeed in the course².

2. Instructor Information and Introduction

All syllabi must include instructor contact information and should clearly communicate your contact preferences and response times. You may also want to include a little information about yourself as a person and an instructor to help students get to know you, or consider having this information accessible to students through another means such as an introductory video or a welcome letter.

- Instructor name
- Office location
- Office phone number

¹ Appendix X of the CCCD United Faculty Contract includes information about required syllabus elements:

X1.3.13 Performance Criteria for Tenured Classroom Faculty states that faculty are responsible for:

X1.3.13.1.1 At the beginning of a course, provide a syllabus to students that is consistent with the course outline of record.

X1.3.13.1.2 Include in the syllabus a description of course content, contact information, the times and places where office hours are held, the means by which student work shall be evaluated, grading standards and other relevant information; it is especially important that students be made aware of exactly what is required of them in order to succeed in the course.

Title 5 CCR § 55002 (a) (3), "Standards and Criteria for Courses" states requirements for the course outline of record:

(3) Course Outline of Record. The course is described in a course outline of record that shall be maintained in the official college files and made available to each instructor. The course outline of record shall specify the unit value, the expected number of contact hours, outside-of-class hours, and total student learning hours for the course as a whole; the prerequisites, corequisites, or advisories on recommended preparation (if any) for the course; the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge. The course outline of record shall also specify types or provide examples of required reading and writing assignments, other outside-of-class assignments, instructional methodology, and methods of evaluation.

² CalWORKS students will not be compensated by Contra Costa County without this information included in the syllabus.

- Email address and other contact info, including response times and policies (Skype, SMS, etc.)
- Office hours and related procedures/how office hours will be held (for office hour procedures and requirements, see the [UF Contract, Article 7.8](#) and the [UF Part-Time Faculty Handbook, 4th edition, 2017, p. 15](#))
- Recommended: Communication policy (see item 13 in Recommended Course Elements)

3. Course Management System (CMS)

Students must know if you use a course management system, and if so, what you use it for. **If your course is online or a hybrid, you MUST use the DVC official CMS of Canvas.** Students need this information so they can see if the technology demands of a course are right for them. Please include the following information:

- URL or navigation instructions
- Login info
- Tech support info
- What you use the CMS for (e.g., grades only, repository of course materials, assignment submission, etc.)
- Any additional technology or apps used or required by the course, why you use it, and costs or access procedures
- Recommended: link to lab locations and times on campus in case students have limited computer access

4. Prerequisites/Co-requisites/Recommended Preparation

All syllabi must include information on classes, skills, and information required or recommended prior to enrolling in the course³.

5. Course Description and Objectives

All syllabi must include a course description and course objectives, including information on material to be covered, general themes, and course activities.⁴

6. Official Course Student Learning Outcomes

All syllabi must include the official course Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)⁵.

Course SLOs are the Objectives Section from the Course Outline of Record (COR). Access the COR through the Web Curriculum System (WCS): <http://wcs.dvc.edu/>. Accessing through WCS is important to ensure that you have the most up-to-date information. You should check the official course outline of record prior to every semester to ensure you have the current and accurate Course Objectives/SLOs.

Use the label “Student Learning Outcomes” on the syllabus and begin the list with the heading “Students will be able to:” etc.

³ [Title 5 CCR § 55002 \(a\) \(3\)](#)

⁴ Syllabi must be “consistent with the official course outline of record”, which, per Title 5, Section 55002 (a) (3) states that course outlines must include “the catalog description, objectives, and content in terms of a specific body of knowledge.”

⁵ Student Learning Outcomes are required on all syllabi by the [Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, Accrediting Standards 2014](#), Standard II A 3: “The institution identifies and regularly assesses learning outcomes for courses, programs, certificates and degrees using established institutional procedures. The institution has officially approved and current course outlines that include student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that includes learning outcomes from the institution’s officially approved course outline.”

7. Required textbooks and any other required materials, including software/technology

All syllabi must include information on required textbooks and materials⁶:

- Titles, authors, editions, and ISBN of assigned texts
- Additional course materials such as calculators or art supplies that the student must have to complete course requirements
- Consider addressing any unusual costs students may incur in the course
- Any additional technology or apps used or required by the course, why you use it, and costs or access procedures, including exam proctoring software if used (see item 8)
- Wifi requirements if online/hybrid course
- Access to a computer with audio and video capability, if required
- How to access the textbook if it is an Open Educational Resource

8. Evaluation and Grading

All syllabi must include information on evaluation and grading in the course⁷. Students need to know how they will be evaluated in your class and the major assignments and due dates they can expect:

- Grade Components (e.g. assignments, exams, projects, lab reports, etc.)
- Any assignment or category of assignments that factors into the course grade (Not every individual assignment must be included. For example, if you have a variable number of informal class assignments, you do not need to enumerate them all, but you should be clear about the categories of assignments.)
- If using exam proctoring software, students must be informed of the requirements of the software.
- Students should be notified if there is a substantial amount of online work in a F2F course.
- If participation is a component of the grade, explain how this category will be evaluated (e.g. speaking in class, number of times or quality of contribution, etc.).
- Consider explaining the goals of the assignments and grade components (Why are students being assigned this work? How do assignments relate to course objectives?)
- Grading Calculation (e.g. weights, points—how the grade will be calculated)
- If you curve scores or plan to offer extra credit, this should also be explained.
- DVC policy does not allow attendance to be factored into a course grade. However, participation and in-class work are valid grading categories (Although instructors may drop students for missing more than the equivalent of two weeks in a full-term course, grades may not be lowered due to absences alone).

9. Hours By Arrangement

All syllabi for courses that include hours by arrangement (HBA) or hours to be arranged (TBA) must include the following:

⁶ ACCJC Accrediting Standards 2014, Standard I C 6: “The institution accurately informs current and prospective students regarding the total cost of education, including tuition, fees, and other required expenses, including textbooks, and other instructional materials.”

⁷ CCCCD United Faculty Contract Appendix X, X1.3.13.1.2: “Include in the syllabus a description of course content, contact information, the times and places where office hours are held, the means by which student work shall be evaluated, grading standards and other relevant information; it is especially important that students be made aware of exactly what is required of them in order to succeed in the course.”

- Students must be informed via the syllabus/first day handout of the specific block of times when the TBA/HBA hours must be fulfilled.
- The Syllabus/First Day Handout must provide specific instructional activities (same as listed in the course outline) to be conducted during TBA/HBA hours. Please emphasize that participation is mandatory and will be factored into final grade.

Recommended Syllabus Elements:

Syllabi should seek to strike a balance between providing critical course and college policy information and length and readability constraints. Where your syllabus falls on a continuum of length and comprehensiveness is up to you as an instructor. You may choose to include all, none, or some of these elements. However, all instructors should consider their audience, readability/usability optimization, and the function of the syllabus as a document and contract when deciding what to include.

10. Requirements Satisfied by the Course

It is suggested that syllabi include information on any requirements satisfied by the course: IGETC, CSU GE, DVC GE, program requirements or electives.

11. Course Schedule

It is suggested that syllabi include the scheduled dates for each of the course meetings, and indicate finalized or tentative readings, assignment due dates, quizzes, and exams. Any meetings scheduled outside of normal class time (such as field trips) should be clearly indicated, and the instructor's policy for making up those meetings if missed, should be stated.

It is also important that the college-specified exam schedule for finals week be followed, and the date, time and location of the finals week meeting/exam be listed. Consider including a link to the DVC website finals schedule for the term.

12. Important College Dates and Enrollment Policies

It is suggested that syllabi include information on important college dates and enrollment policies.

- Important Admissions and Records Dates
 - Last day to add a full-term class
 - Last day to drop a full-term class and be eligible for a refund of fees
 - Last day to request a refund for **the student activity fee ?? Take this out?**
 - Last day to drop a full-term class, in-person, without a "W" appearing on transcript
 - Last day to drop a full-term class, online, without a "W" appearing on transcript
 - Last day to request P/NP option for a full-term class
 - Last day to withdraw from a full-term class with a "W" appearing on transcript

~~Instructor, department, or college policies on enrollment and attendance. For college policy see: <http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html>~~

13. Course Policies

It is suggested that syllabi include information on the instructor's policies on:

- Late Work/Make-ups
- Absences and Tardiness. For **DVC CCC** policy information on attendance, **please see Academic Policies in the CCC Catalog**. ~~please visit:~~
<http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html>
- Drop Policy: You should clearly communicate your drop policy to students.
- ~~DVC policy is “The instructor may drop students who miss more than the equivalent of two weeks of a term-length course.” You should let students know how you plan to approach and enforce this policy.~~ **CCC policy is that instructors may drop students who are 1) Absent from the first class meeting or 2) Absent for the equivalent of more than two weeks of full term class meetings.**
- Communication policy (Consider including: response times to emails and messages, availability, times you will not be checking email or messages, your preferred means of contact and any other preferences, such as specifics of email subject lines, encouragement to attend office hours, or similar. You may also want to include a statement on student privacy rights, including the legal rights of students that prevent information from being disclosed to parents/guardians. ~~Please see [Student Privacy Rights](#) on the DVC website for the DVC policy and a link to FERPA, the federal law that mandates these policies.~~)
- Students with disabilities who have recording class lectures as an accommodation must be permitted to do so. However, these recordings may be restricted to private study and may not be copied, shared, or publicly posted. Recording by students without approved accommodations during class may potentially violate FERPA or California wiretapping law. Consider including policies on the use of recording devices and permissions in your class, and making it clear to students if there is recording occurring in your classroom. Sample language for inclusion in a syllabus on recording policy is: *“students are not permitted to record a class themselves by any means without **prior permission from express authorization of** the course director. Violation of this policy may be deemed a violation of the **CCC- Student Code of Conduct**. For the purposes of this policy, “recording” is defined as audio, still photo, or video, whether by audio, digital, or future recording devices.”*

14. Statement on Appropriate Classroom Behavior

It is suggested that syllabi include information on appropriate classroom behavior. This may include:

- The instructor’s general behavioral expectations (e.g. note-taking, asking questions, discussion participation, active-listening, etc.)
- For online courses, guidelines on “netiquette” and interactions in the course between students and student to instructor.
- The instructor’s policy on electronics in the classroom
- ~~DVC’s Disruptive Behavior Policy (See DVC Disruptive Behavior Policies and Procedures: <http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/disruptive-behavior.html>)~~

15. Academic Integrity

It is suggested that syllabi include information about what constitutes academic integrity and how violations will be handled should they occur⁸. **DVC CCC** has an official policy on what constitutes a

⁸ ACCJC Standard I C 8: “The institution establishes and publishes clear policies and procedures that promote honesty, responsibility and academic integrity. These policies apply to all constituencies and

violation of academic integrity. Guidelines on academic integrity apply to online courses as well. As an instructor, you have discretion on how to interpret and enforce academic integrity in your classroom, but your policy should be clearly stated and consistently applied (consistency ensures an unbiased and fair application of standards). If you have course-specific guidelines on collaboration, please include them so students know what your definition of acceptable collaboration is. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

*Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is a violation of the **DVC CCC Student Code of Conduct** and will not be tolerated. This includes giving or receiving assistance on any assignment, quiz, or exam unless specifically authorized by your instructor. These actions are grounds for academic consequences, such as receiving no credit for the assignment or a reduced grade in the class, and disciplinary consequences from the college. ~~If you have any questions about academic dishonesty or plagiarism, please see the DVC Academic Integrity Policy:~~ <https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/studentrights/academic-integrity.html>*

16. Missing Class for Religious Observances or College-Sponsored Activities

California state law ~~and DVC policy~~ **requires** that students must be allowed to make up missed coursework due to absences for religious holidays not observed in our calendar. It is suggested that syllabi provide this information, along with information about how the instructor will handle student absences for college-sponsored activities. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

*California state law ~~and DVC policy~~ **requires** that a student be allowed to make up missed classwork due to absences for religious holidays or observances. If you celebrate a religious holiday not observed in the school calendar, you must notify your instructor at least one week in advance of any days you will miss. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor and complete any missed work within one week of the absence.*

If you must miss class due to a college-sponsored activity (including school-sanctioned field trips, school team activities, academic conferences, etc.), reasonable accommodations will be made to allow you to complete missed assignments. You must notify your instructor at least one week in advance and be prepared to provide appropriate documentation. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor and complete any missed work within one week of the absence.

~~This is DVC official academic policy~~
~~(<https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html>)~~

17. Missing Class for Medical or Family Emergencies

It is suggested that syllabi include information regarding the instructor's policies on student absences due to medical or family emergencies. This information should include, at minimum, the instructor's policies and requirements for making up missed work due to these emergency situations and expected time-frames and procedures for contacting instructors in case of such an emergency.

18. Disability Statement

include specifics relative to each, including student behavior, academic honesty and the consequences for dishonesty."

It is suggested that syllabi include information about how students with specific disabilities can access support and how instructors will provide reasonable accommodations. Materials posted online are required to be accessible, including video of course sessions. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

*Students who require alternative formats for course materials, adaptive equipment, or other support or accommodations due to a specific disability may request these services through **the Disabled Student Services (DSPS) Disability Support Services (DSS) office**. Instructors are only **required authorized** to provide accommodations authorized by the **DSPS** office. If you have questions, please see your instructor. For more information related to **Disabled Student Services Disability Support Services**, you may visit the **DSPS office in the Student Services Center (room 109)**, contact them via telephone at (510) 215-3969, or view their webpage: [https://www.contracosta.edu/student-services/disability-services/DSS-office-in-the-Student-Services-Center-\(SSC-248\)](https://www.contracosta.edu/student-services/disability-services/DSS-office-in-the-Student-Services-Center-(SSC-248)), contact them via telephone at (925) 969-2182, or view their webpage: <http://www.dvc.edu/student-services/disability-support-services/index.html>.*

19. Wellness & Mental Health Resources

It is suggested that syllabi include information about how students can access mental health and other wellness services available on campus. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

Several resources are available to help meet the wellness and mental health needs of DVC students. These include access to a mental health counselor and short-term personal counseling. These also include access to Contra Costa County Supported Education Services, which can help actively enrolled DVC students find and access appropriate community resources. For more information, or to make an appointment, you may self-refer in person to the Counseling office in the Student Services Center (SSC-201) or via e-mail at WellnessDVC@email.4cd.edu.

20. General Academic and Student Service Resources, including tutoring and library

Instructors may want to include a general statement about the availability of tutoring, library and student service resources in their syllabi. Please consider using some or all of the following language in your syllabus:

Many student service resources are available to students enrolled in classes at Diablo Valley College. These include the DVC Financial Aid and Scholarship offices, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Disability Support Services, the DVC Career and Transfer Center, tutoring services, and support services for DREAMers, veterans, and foster youth, among others. If you have questions, your instructor may be able to help guide you to these resources. You can also find more information at <http://www.dvc.edu/student-services>.

*Tutoring at Diablo Valley College is available free of charge to all DVC students who seek help or are referred by an instructor. **Online tutoring is also available, with 24-hour support**. Tutoring instructional assistance for college success and in various academic subjects is provided by trained peer tutors, instructional assistants, **and through the NetTutor program**. See <https://www.dvc.edu/current/tutoring-services/index.html> for more information on the hours, locations, and services provided.*

The DVC Librarians are available to help with your research! Librarians help students find and evaluate appropriate resources and prepare citations for articles, books, websites, statistics, and more. Drop by the library's reference desk, call 925.969.2592; or click the [Ask a Librarian](#) chat to submit a question 24/7.

21. Syllabus Tone

Your syllabus is a contract between you and the students you teach. However, it does not need to read like a legal agreement! Often you will create more connection between yourself and your students through considering the tone of your communication and trying to make it as warm and welcoming as possible. Look at the chart below for some examples of warmer versus colder language (taken from “Effect of syllabus tone: students' perceptions of instructor and course.” Harnish, Richard J. Bridges, K. Robert Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal; Dordrecht 14.3 (Sep 2011): 319-330.)

“Colder”	“Warmer”
Some of the specific skills you should obtain in this course are listed below. Because you are not yet a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior, all of these activities will help you become one, and if you are motivated enough, use the skills in your daily life	Some of the specific skills I hope you will obtain in this course are listed below. Being a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior is important; all of these activities will help you become one, and it is my hope that you will use the skills in your daily life
Come prepared to actively participate in this course. This is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more interesting ...	I hope you actively participate in this course. I say this because I find it is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more fun) ...
Unfortunately, illnesses, death in the family or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are no excuse for not contacting me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation. If you contact me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation, a make-up exam will be given.	Unfortunately, illnesses, death in the family or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are unwelcomed and because I understand how difficult these times are, if you contact me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation, I will be happy to give you a make-up exam.

22. Accessibility and Universal Design considerations

Your syllabus should be as easy to read as possible. Sometimes, large blocks of text can be difficult to read, and difficult to re-find specific information (policies, dates, grades, and the other stuff you HOPE students are checking the syllabus for frequently!) There are design principles that can be used to make your syllabus easier for all students to read and to find things in. Consider reviewing and using Universal Design (UDL) principles and considerations as you construct your syllabus. Link: [The UDL Syllabus](#)

24. Online Syllabus and Course Considerations

There are many unique considerations for teaching in an online environment. The Professional Development and Distance Education committees and Instructional Technology departments provide resources for instructors seeking to create syllabi and course materials for use online.

See items 1, 7, 8, 14, 18, and 20 for more specific information on online course syllabus material.

Updated and endorsed in Spring 2021 by CCC's Academic Senate Council

References used in the preparation of this guidance:

1. DVC's Academic Senate Council generously provided their syllabus guidance, which we used as a starting template
2. "Syllabus Review Guide" from the Center for Urban Education (<https://cue-equitytools.usc.edu/>)
3. Los Medanos College Faculty Handbook (2013-14) Syllabus Guide (page 12 and 38)
4. California Code of Regulations: Title 5. Education, Division 6. California Community Colleges, Chapter 6. Curriculum and Instruction, Subchapter 1. Programs, Courses and Classes, Article 1. Program, Course and Class Classification and Standards
5. ACCJC Accreditation Standards adopted 2014: Standard IIa
- 6.