

HOW TO WRITE A COURSE SYLLABUS

A syllabus is a summary outline of a course of study. It can refer to a variety of printed materials, from a one or two-pager to a compilation of the course handouts for the entire semester. Content and format may vary widely among instructors, even those teaching different sections of the same course. The core however, that which describes and defines the content and guidelines of the course, should be the same. **An effective course syllabus informs the students of the course content, how it will be taught, and what will be expected of students who wish to complete the course with a passing grade. It serves as an informal contract between instructor and students.**

A syllabus must include:

1. Some of the same information that is on the course outline:
 - course name & number
 - pre- and co-requisites and/or advisories
 - course description and objectives
 - Intended Student Learning Outcomes
 - credit units
 - text(s) and other instructional materials
 - methods of instruction
 - methods of evaluation
2. **Grading policy** must be clearly delineated, showing how the grades on various assignments or accumulated points will be used in determining the course grade.
3. Instructor name, office location, scheduled office hours & phone number
4. **Daily or weekly schedule of topics to be covered.** (Lecture classes only) This should include exams and due dates for major assignments. (If students will be expected to plan their work to meet deadlines, they should be provided with this information. If concerned about being held to a defined schedule, emphasize that it is tentative and subject to change, according to the progress of the class.)
If not stating actual pages for reading assignments, session by session, at least give a sense of how much reading is required and how often. The same goes for writing assignments.

A syllabus should include the DSPS Statement (approved by the Academic Senate November 19, 2001)

"The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, requires Contra Costa College to make all programs accessible to qualified individuals with learning, physical, or psychological disabilities. Students who would like to receive accommodations for their learning, physical, or psychological disabilities should contact the Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS) office (H-19) and schedule an appointment at (510) 235-7800 ext. 7220."

A syllabus may also include:

1. "Ground rules:" class policies on attendance, dropping and reinstating students, missed assignments and exams, academic dishonesty, etc. (Keep in mind that some of these are governed by school policy, which must be observed.)
2. Lab safety
3. Available support services such as tutoring, library resources, computer and other skill labs
4. Any additional information pertinent to the class.
5. Faculty email address.

FACULTY MAY RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ALTER SYLLABUS