A Guide to Syllabus Writing for Continuing Studies Faculty

A course syllabus is many things:

- student introduction to the subject and to you as the teacher
- document that communicates your goals and expectations to students
- official notice to students of policies and requirements
- blueprint for the entire course
- marketing material for your course

General Guidelines

- The syllabus will be the potential student’s first substantive contact with you as an instructor. As with any piece of writing, think about (a) how you want to present yourself, (b) the characteristics of your audience (e.g. advanced or beginning students) and (c) what information you need to communicate.
- Consider how the syllabus conveys your philosophy of teaching and the environment you wish to create. Students want to know how you plan to teach the course: Will you primarily lecture? Will there be independent or group projects? Discussion? Will students be able to work on projects of their own design? What do you consider the roles of student and instructor?
- Because students will view the syllabus as a kind of “contract,” it is important to be as clear as possible. Avoid changing major aspects of the syllabus after the semester starts. If you feel significant changes are warranted, contact your Program Director immediately.
- There is no hard-and-fast rule about the proper length for a syllabus. If in doubt, it is usually best to err on the long side to ensure that important course information is fully covered. At the same time, students appreciate having key information presented clearly in distinct categories: Course Description, Course Objectives/Learning Objectives, Course Policies, Schedule, Assignments + Projects, etc.
- Organize the document logically, and use bold-faced type, all caps, etc. to establish a visual hierarchy and to help students find information. Please spend time proof-reading your syllabus before submitting it. Pay particular attention to spelling and assignment/project/meeting dates throughout. Also include handouts for students with your syllabus.
- **Make certain you are aware of and meet any deadlines set forth by your Program Director regarding when syllabi are due.** As CE + PIE students often review the syllabus of a course they are interested in prior to registering, it is essential you meet all deadlines.
- Don’t neglect to go over the syllabus in detail on the first day of class, and to allow time for questions. Students won’t necessarily read the syllabus word-for-word unless you underscore its importance. Also reserve time at the top of the second class meeting to answer further syllabus-related questions.
Course Information + Instructor Information + Course Description

Course Information can be found in your offer letter. Instructor Information requires your contact information and includes a brief bio which gives you the opportunity to share details regarding your professional experience and credentials with your students.

Course descriptions are composed by Program Directors in collaboration with faculty. The course description defines what the course covers, and why the subject is interesting. It should include statements that identify the educational outcomes you want a student in your course to be able to demonstrate. Course descriptions can be found on the Continuing Studies website (cs.uarts.edu) and pre-requisite courses are also included within the description. Course descriptions listed in syllabi should match what is printed in brochures and available on the CS website.

If you want to make any changes to a course description, please contact your Program Director.

Faculty should thoroughly review the description for their course prior to accepting any teaching assignment to ensure they are capable of fulfilling all aspects of the course as described.

Syllabus: Course Title
Course #: Section | Semester

Course Information:
Location:
Dates:
Note:

Instructor Information:
Name:
Email:
Email Policy:

Instructor Bio

Course Description:

Pre-requisites: (if applicable)
Course Overview + Course Objectives/Learning Objectives

The Course Overview provides students with a summary of the skills they will learn during the duration of the course. The Course Overview can list specific topics to be covered during course sessions as well as a general description of final project(s).

Clearly stated objectives are the foundation on which the structure of the syllabus is constructed. The extent to which students achieve the course objectives is the measure of your teaching effectiveness. Clearly articulating your objectives is a deceptively simple task, but can take several hours, since everything else in your course is determined by them. Content, methodology, reading material, exercises, and assessment are all derived from working out what end result you desire for those who complete your course.

Course Overview

Course Objectives/Learning Objectives:
At the end of this course, students will:

Course objectives should be specific, measurable and realistic. You should be able to list 3-5 course objectives for the course.

Additionally, it is best when course objectives are expressed using action verbs. By the end of this course, students will:

- define
- describe
- identify
- recall
- recognize
- state
- distinguish
- explain
- interpret
- paraphrase
- summarize
- translate
- apply
- compute
- differentiate
- demonstrate
- manipulate
- predict
- analyze
- compare
- create
- discriminate
- examine
- test
- assemble
- construct
- defend
- design
- develop
- formulate
- appraise
- argue
- evaluate
- judge
- support
- understand


Example:

Below is a list of course objectives one might present to students in a Web Design I course.

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and use basic HTML tag elements and attributes
- Identify CSS and use CSS selectors to style HTML
- Create complex layouts using CSS with an understanding of static and fluid layout as well as floats and positioning
- Differentiate between absolute and relative URLs and identify appropriate use cases for both
- Revise a web page based on user feedback
- Implement various design elements using best practices and limit the number and size of images
- Create user-friendly navigation and architecture that provides quick access to varied content

Note: For some courses, objectives have been developed in committees composed of Program Coordinators, faculty and professional staff. Your Program Director will make you aware of the particular course objectives if they have already been determined for your course.

Course Resources + Additional Course Materials

This section of the syllabus allows you to list any required and/or optional textbooks, software, websites or articles to be used during the course. Additional course materials could pertain to studio materials and/or tools.

**COURSE RESOURCES**

Software
Textbooks (s)
- required; optional

**Additional Course Materials | Supplies**

Note: For some courses, textbooks or other reference materials have been developed in committees composed of Program Coordinators, faculty and professional staff. Your Program Director will make you aware of the particular course resources if they have already been determined for your course.
Course Activities

Course Activities give students a sense of the type of in-class and out-of-class assignments they are expected to complete during the course. Please refer to these activities again when completing the Grading chart later in the syllabus.

**Note:** All students will receive in-class assignments; however credit and/or certificate students are expected to do work outside of class. Out-of-class assignments factor into grades for certificate students.

### COURSE ACTIVITIES
- Readings + Responses
- Presentations
- Written Assignments
- Critques

Course Policies + University Policies

University policies have already been populated within syllabus templates. Course Policies allows you to provide specific information to your students regarding assignment submission and your preferences regarding student communication and feedback.

### COURSE POLICIES (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INSTRUCTOR)
- Student Feedback/Communication
- Submitting Electronic Files

- Attendance + Participation (PRE-POPULATED FOR SYLLABUS TEMPLATE)

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES: (PRE-POPULATED FOR SYLLABUS TEMPLATE)
- Academic Honesty/Integrity Policy
- ACT 48 Activity Hours (PIE AND CE ONLY)
- Student Code of Conduct
Grading

Please refer to the Course Activities section of the syllabus to explain to students how you will determine a grade for the course. The University of the Arts grade scale has been included within the syllabus template for student reference.

Below is an example of how to complete the Grading section of the syllabus. Refer to Course Activities when providing students with the components of their grade for the course.

**GRADING: (if applicable)**

Your grade will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation (incl Responses)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Presentations</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio + Statement</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*UArts grade scale is pre-populated within the syllabus template

Your grade will be calculated using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100 – 93%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92 – 90%</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89 – 87%</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86 – 83%</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82 – 80%</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79 – 77%</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76 – 73%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72 – 70%</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69%</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66%</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% or less</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schedule + Assignments + Projects

Each session should include detailed information regarding the topic to be covered during the session and any assignments and/or projects that are assigned related to that topic. The Schedule is another area in the syllabus for you to relate course content to course objectives. Whenever possible, refer to appropriate course objectives in the syllabus. “Mapping” course objectives to your syllabus shows students how they develop skills and knowledge in the course. Please include session information for each session of your course.

Assignments + Projects allows you to list all in-class and out-of-class assignments to be completed during the course in one area along with details regarding assignment goals and guidelines.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SESSION + DATE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TOPIC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Project 1: Resume</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignments/ Projects:

**Project 1: Visual CV/Resume**

**Synopsis:** Students will be asked to create a more visual version of a preexisting resume using InDesign. Students will be encouraged to carefully consider visual hierarchy, font selection and color choice when creating a .pdf version of their individual resumes.

**Goal:** To create a visually stimulating, thoughtful resume that expresses who you are and what type of job you are looking for.

**Guidelines:** The resume will be printed in full color, with a full bleed (if needed) on 8.5 x 11 paper.

**Presentation:** Students will be asked to bring a finished, digital copy of the finished resume, and will be asked explain it in detail to the class.
Conclusion

The course syllabus is an important document as it articulates the expectations of the course and of students as well as the role of the instructor for the course. It also serves as a contract between the University and you and the students. Should you have any questions regarding syllabus writing, please contact your Program Director. Thank you.