



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

COLLEGE OF ARTS & LETTERS, OFFICE OF THE DEAN

6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819-6049

Phone: (916) 278-6502 • Fax: (916) 278-4588

College of Arts and Letters

Guidelines for course syllabi

approved by the Chairs' Council on September 12, 2006

A course syllabus should constitute a contract between the instructor and the student, so it should be thorough, carefully-conceived and consistently applied.

basic information

- course number and title
- semester and year of offering
- classroom
- regular days/times of class meetings
- instructor's name, office location, telephone number, E-mail and office hours

content

- a complete, verbatim quotation of the course description from the current catalog
- a one-paragraph description of content, learning objectives and instructional style (e.g., lecture, discussion, studio, activity, etc.)

curricular details

- intended student audience (majors, minors, newbies, advanced, etc.)
- brief explanation of any prerequisites (courses, skills, student status, etc.)
- the course's place in the curriculum (major requirement, gen ed, etc.)

materials

- a list of any books or materials the student will need
- any helpful notes on where to find the materials if they're at all unconventional
- any other course-related obligations that could involve personal expense
- any other course-related obligations involving travel (e.g., field trips)

assignments

- descriptions of assignments, exams, etc.
- any required or recommended activities that occur outside of class time

Some instructors include all the details in the syllabus, while others provide such information after the course is underway. In any case, the instructor must, in a timely manner, offer clear instructions on such matters as paper length, paper topic, the nature of exam questions, etc., all in order to establish boundaries and expectations so that students know exactly what's wanted.

a list of deadlines

a course calendar indicating the topics or material to be covered during each meeting or during each week (possibly add a comment to the effect that the schedule is subject to change but the instructor will provide appropriate notice)



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the date and time of the final examination, if any

grading policy

percentages or points by assignment or area; include all work that contributes to the grade criteria (should convey how an “A” differs from a “B,” etc.)

Be sure to specify if passing the course requires certain assignments to be completed or a minimum amount of work to be submitted, all regardless of the calculated grade (e.g., the student’s grade works out to a B-, but because she didn’t take the final exam, she can’t pass the course)

options

if the course offers variable units, a clear explanation of the expectations and requirements

if the course offers an option other than a traditional grade, an explanation of that option and its circumstances

policies

attendance, including late arrival and early departure

under what circumstances you accept late work

under what circumstances you allow a student to make up an in-class exam

under what circumstances a student may request an incomplete

consequences of violating the campus policy on academic dishonesty

(<http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umannual/UMA00150.htm>)

link to library’s page on plagiarism (<http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>)

whether or not you permit students to record class sessions

your expectations regarding cell phone etiquette

include a statement regarding accommodations for recognized disabilities