

Policy on Course Syllabi and Grading

I. Preamble

Faculty enjoy broad discretion as to the manner in which they conduct their courses but are expected to carry out their responsibilities in a manner that is fair and without arbitrariness or capriciousness. Of central importance to successful instruction is the formulation of a binding educational compact between instructors and students. Students have a right to know what is expected of them in a course including criteria for evaluation of their performance. Faculty have the right to expect an appropriate level of effort and performance from all their students. The most satisfactory outcomes for both faculty and students can be achieved only when the conduct of a course is grounded fully in both disclosure and understanding on the part of all parties to the classroom educational process. The following policy is established to facilitate and formalize the communication and application of equitable, nonprejudicial course requirements in a large, institutional setting.

II. Principle of the Policy

Faculty should fully inform students of all course requirements and make such requirements available to them with a comprehensive course syllabus by the first class meeting or, in extenuating circumstances, by the 10th day of instruction when approved by the program chair/coordinator. For web-based courses, the first day of instruction will be considered as the first class meeting day. Course syllabi shall be distributed in a format that meets the accessibility requirements¹. The course syllabus together with any amendments shall be kept on file in the department office for two years. These documents will constitute the official syllabus of the course. The syllabus serves as the defining document in clarifying

- A. The nature of the course and its delivery and
- B. The basis upon which an instructor evaluates student performance and assigns the appropriate grade.

III. Course Syllabi

The faculty shall include in the syllabus at least the following information pertaining to the course:

- A. Name of the instructor, official campus e-mail address, and if applicable, office location, telephone number, and office hours;
- B. Course number and title, number of units, prerequisites and the catalog course description, and fees, if any;
- C. Summary outline of course and tentative schedule of topics covered;
- D. Required text books and other supplemental materials together with a schedule of assigned readings;
- E. Required student-supplied equipment and materials necessary for course activities;
- F. Course calendar including projected dates, deadlines, and/or periods of time for readings, field trips, projects, exams, etc, and for hybrid classes, dates for in-person and remote attendance;
- G. Brief description of and instructions for significant course assignments (e.g., papers, field trips, and projects);

¹ Individuals with disabilities shall have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to that provided to those without disabilities unless an undue burden would be imposed on the providing entity (Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act; see APM 624, APM 237).

- H. Instructor course goals and student learning outcomes;
- I. Grading policy, which includes the weighting of assignments and examinations as well as the criteria for assigning grades, and the grading scale, identification of all requirements and due dates for course completion and eligibility for a final passing grade;
- J. Course attendance and make-up work policies (including final exam meeting), and any implications for grading (See APM 232);
- K. Instructor's policies regarding administration of the course (e.g., late paper penalties, tape recording lectures, and guidelines on the use of electronic devices);
- L. Reminder directed to students with disabilities about their responsibility in identifying themselves to the university and the instructor so reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation within the course can be made;
- M. In the case of a GE course, a reminder to students about their responsibility to submit a designated assignment(s) from GE courses to the GE Portfolio;
- N. Statement referring to the university's policies regarding adding and dropping courses, the honor code, including cheating and plagiarism, copyright, and computer usage; these may be satisfied by a statement that the university policies are located in the Catalog and the Class Schedule;
- O. Safety or other mandated issues in syllabus template examples where appropriate;
- P. Current contact information for Chair/Coordinator of the Program where the course resides. If a department chair is the instructor, include the contact information of the respective Dean.

Faculty may also wish to include statements on instructional philosophy and pedagogical methods, non-enrolled visitors or guests, General Education requirements met by the course, and other information of importance and concern to the instructor. Reference can also be made to university policies judged to be of particular importance to the conduct of the class (e.g., disruptive behavior). Faculty should be certain that any such statements are consistent with university policy. Faculty are encouraged to discuss the syllabus and the university and course policies during the first class meeting

Faculty should realize that the syllabus might be viewed as a legal covenant between the instructor and students. Therefore, a statement such as the following is recommended: "The schedule and procedures for this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances." The instructor shall be sure that any changes in the syllabus are clearly presented and are not unfair to students already committed to the class. When there are substantive changes in the syllabus that affect grading, issuance of a revised syllabus is strongly recommended.

Review the syllabus template example at the following:

<http://fresnostate.edu/academics/curriculum/instruction/syllabus.html> Although not an APM requiring presidential approval, the syllabus template example is in accordance with and governed by this policy. Management of the template example is under the purview of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies in consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies, Academic Policy, and Planning, Undergraduate Curriculum, Student Affairs Committee, and the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate.

Recommended by The Academic Senate

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