

# Developing a Course Syllabus

The development of a course syllabus is an integral part of an instructor's overall pedagogy because the syllabus provides students with a comprehensive overview of the course's aims and objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment strategies. In many ways, the course syllabus functions as text itself for each course. Because of this, much care must be taken in developing a syllabus that communicates all aspects of a course to students. Below is a list of strategies that has been adapted from Davis' text *Tools for Teaching* (1993).

## Provide Basic Course Information

Course information should include: current year, semester, course title and number, and meeting time and location. The instructor should list her/his name, office address, and a map for offices that are difficult to locate. Also include an office telephone number, the instructor's email address, website URL, fax number, and office hours. Outline guidelines for how students should book appointments during office hours. List the contact information for all teaching assistants (T.A.s) for the course.

## Describe Course Prerequisites

List all required knowledge, skills, and experiences that students should have prior to taking the course. Provide students with specific strategies for how they might prepare for the course if they do not have the required knowledge.

## Describe the Course's Purpose

Provide an overview of the aims of the course (often from the Course Calendar).

## State Learning Goals & Objectives

List course objectives. List specific skills or knowledge that students will acquire with successful completion of the course.

## Explain the Course's Rationale

Provide students with an overview of why you structured the course in the manner what you did, for example, using a particular sequence of an arrangement by theme.

## **Describe the Course's Format**

Outline the various activities that students will be engaged in throughout the course. For example: fieldwork, research projects, lectures, field trips, and so on. Outlines required versus recommended activities and state how required activities will be assessed.



## **Texts & Materials**

Clearly outline all required readings and texts. If possible, link readings to themes being examined in the course, especially if readings are assigned out of sequence from a text book. Indicate whether texts can be purchased from local bookstores and whether texts will be placed on reserve at the library.

## **Additional Materials**

Identify materials needed beyond texts, such as lab equipment, safety equipment, art supplies, calculators, computers, drafting materials, and so on.

## **Assessment**

Explain evaluation methods and the manner in which grades will be assigned. Give students a breakdown of how much each assignment will be weighted at the start of the course. For example, if students are able to drop their lowest mark, clearly indicate this.

## **Assignments**

Clearly describe all assignments that are required for the course. Include the expected length of each, with corresponding deadlines. Also include dates for quizzes and exams. Where possible, outline the format of each assignment (term paper, research essay, take home examination, and so on).

## **Other Course Requirements**

Clearly list whether students are expected to participate in online forums or study groups.

## **Discuss Course Policies**

State course policies regarding attendance, late submissions, make-up tests, extra credit, extensions, illnesses, copyright, and so on. The instructor may also outline expectations for student behavior and student responsibilities with respect to learning.

## **Academic Integrity**

### **Definition of Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as presenting another's ideas or phrasing as one's own without proper acknowledgement. Examples include: copying and pasting internet, printed source, or other resources without proper acknowledgement; copying from another student; using direct quotes or large sections of paraphrased material in an assignment without appropriate acknowledgement; submitting the same piece of work in more than one course without permission of the professor(s); using another researcher's data without proper acknowledgement, or specifically allowed by the instructor and the author; submission for publication of articles published elsewhere except where clearly indicated to be a republication

## **Unfair Means (UMC) / Plagiarism**

### **Unfair Means in Examinations**

In order to keep a standardized code of conduct in examination, the following are some manifestations of unfair means in an examination.

- Objectionable gestures during an examination.
- Divulging information to a participant(s) pertaining to the examination paper.
- Possessing or concealing notes on clothing, hands, shoes, pockets, wallet or anything that has been explicitly prohibited in the examinations.
- Exchanging of answer book, extra sheet or question paper or any portion thereof.
- Communication written / oral or otherwise with other participant(s).
- Writing incorrect or someone else's ID/Name on the answer / extra sheet / question papers.
- Impeding conduct of examinations through any means.
- Influencing, threatening or any other misconduct with Resource Person/Invigilator during the examination may lead to disciplinary action as well.

Using Unfair Means in final term exams may lead to one or more of the following penalties

- Grade "F" in the subject; and / or
- Fine up to Rs 10,000; and / or
- Suspension from the program
- Expulsion from the University
- Penalties for violation of examination rules during sessional evaluation are given below:
- Financial Penalty ranges from Rs. 1,000 – 15,000; and / or

- Zero in the instrument (quiz / assignment); and / or
- Deduction of marks from the sessional ranges from 5 to 10; and / or
- Warning letter; and / or
- “F” grade in the course

The Office of Controller Examinations also deals with Unfair Means Cases reported by the Resource Person or Invigilators during Mid-Term, as well as Final-Term Examinations.

Controller Examinations compiles the cases and records the proceedings of the meeting as member and secretary of the Unfair Means Committee. The Committee supervises and maintains the highest standards of academic honesty, integrity and discipline in the examinations.

## **Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

Clearly state those students with physical and learning disabilities must contact the instructor in order for accommodations/modifications for course expectations to be made (where necessary).