

## Syllabus Guidelines

No single syllabus format or content applies to every university course. However, a number of components can make the course syllabus more informative, useful, and engaging. The course syllabus serves at least four functions: (a) a contract between you and your students that guides everyone's behaviour toward successful learning (b) a tool you can use in designing a new course or revising an existing course, (c) an historical record that documents the course structure and procedures, and (d) a resource for the external review of your teaching. Therefore your course syllabus should engage and inform students and focus your teaching; it should reflect the overall organization and purpose of the course; it should be a structured snapshot of the course that you can preserve in your teaching dossier; and it should facilitate evaluation of your teaching. Inclusion of the following components will help ensure that your syllabus serves these functions. Further, the suggested components below comply with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) requirements.<sup>1</sup>

Criterion	Component	Strength of Evidence		
		Well developed	Developed	Needs developing
General information	Course name, department, number, section, key dates and times, and location(s).			
	Instructor and TA office hours, locations, contact information, and communication protocol for the course			
	Course prerequisites and how the course fits into university programs			
	Instructor bio and teaching statement that includes relevant background, teaching experience, and research interests and experience			
	Website and/or Brightspace information			
	Opportunities for students to provide feedback, such as early, mid-term, and CES are described			

<sup>1</sup> For further information see: <https://mtsac.libguides.com/udl/syllabus>

Prepared by Cynthia Korpan, PhD, Director of Teaching Excellence. Adapted from: Grunert O'Brien, J. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, and *Preparing Your Course Syllabus* by Marty Wall

Course environment	Tone is positive, respectful, and inviting. "I," "we," and "you" are used instead of "students" and "instructor."			
	Active rather than passive voice is used (e.g. "I will assess your learning..." rather than "your learning will be assessed...")			
	Purpose and value of course is described as a series of opportunities rather than as a series of hurdles			
	Communicates high expectations and confidence of success <sup>2</sup>			
	Syllabus is well-organized, easy to navigate, and available both electronically and in hardcopy formats			
Intended learning outcomes	Course-level intended learning outcomes are clearly articulated so that students know what they need to do in the course to be successful			
	...with action verbs			
	...appropriately pitched			
	Unit-level intended learning outcomes are clearly articulated so that students know what they need to do in each unit to be successful			
	...with action verbs			
	...appropriately pitched			
Assessment activities	Assessments are aligned with intended learning outcomes			
	Summative assessments clearly described, percentages assigned, how they support intended learning outcomes explained, and if appropriate, links to examples			
	Formative assessments aligned with summative assessments			
	Assessments effectively spaced and sequenced			

<sup>2</sup> Clearly state what students need to do to be successful in the course. This may include having students set goals, self-assess, and establish criteria for judging their performance. As the instructor, design activities so that students take responsibility.

Prepared by Cynthia Korpan, PhD, Director of Teaching Excellence. Adapted from: Grunert O'Brien, J. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, and *Preparing Your Course Syllabus* by Marty Wall

	Formative assessments frequency provides sufficient practice opportunities			
	Grading information provided ( <a href="#">Undergraduate Grading Scale</a> )			
	Rubrics for assignments provided or indicated that they will be provided			
	Study guides, suggestions, or other aids to support learning provided			
	Multiple ways are provided to submit assignments			
Learning activities	Course schedule with unit-level intended learning outcomes			
	Major topics, questions, and dates listed			
	Learning activities are aligned with assessment and intended learning outcomes			
	Learning activities derive from evidence-based practices			
	Learning activities are active and provide timely formative feedback			
Required readings and materials	Required readings with complete citations, price, and where available explained, and accessible to students prior to the course beginning (to allow time for conversion to an alternate formats if needed)			
	Explanation as to why required readings were chosen			
	Additional resources required, approximate costs, and purposes			
Policies, university support services, and acknowledgements	<a href="#">Medical documentation for absences:</a> Faculty and instructors are asked to waive the medical documentation requirement (i.e. a physical or mental health care practitioner's note) for students—regardless of how long they are ill—for the summer and fall 2020 terms.			
	Attendance (lateness and absences) policy			
	Missed or late exams and assignments policies with rationale			

Prepared by Cynthia Korpan, PhD, Director of Teaching Excellence. Adapted from: Grunert O'Brien, J. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, and *Preparing Your Course Syllabus* by Marty Wall



Personal electronic devices use and civility policies			
Participation policy, <a href="#">expectations related to English usage</a> , and referencing system (e.g. APA), or other expected academic conduct related to your discipline or faculty			
<a href="#">Academic integrity<sup>3</sup> guidelines</a> Academic Integrity: Students are required to abide by all academic regulations set as set out in the University calendar, including standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism) are considered serious and may result in significant penalties.			
<a href="#">Accessibility and accommodation policy</a>			
Other: emergency preparedness, how to <a href="#">request for academic concession</a> , pronouns, explicit content, mental health and wellness, inclusivity and diversity, <a href="#">privacy and access to information</a> , and <a href="#">sexual misconduct</a>			
Territory acknowledgement and <a href="#">First Peoples House</a> link			
Support services: <a href="#">Centre for Academic Communication</a> , <a href="#">Math-assistance Centre</a> , <a href="#">Counselling Services</a> , <a href="#">Health Services</a> , <a href="#">Library</a> , <a href="#">Ombudsperson</a> , and <a href="#">Computer Help Desk</a>			

---

<sup>3</sup> Another way of phrasing this is to have a section about, “How you can protect your intellectual credibility.” Prepared by Cynthia Korpan, PhD, Director of Teaching Excellence. Adapted from: Grunert O’Brien, J. (2008). The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, and *Preparing Your Course Syllabus* by Marty Wall



	<p><a href="#">Centre for Accessible Learning</a>          Accessible Learning:          The University of Victoria is committed to creating a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please feel welcome to discuss your concerns with me. If you have a disability or chronic health condition, or think you may have a disability, you may also want to meet with an advisor at the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL). You can find more information about CAL here: <a href="https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/">https://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/</a></p>			
	<p><b>Online conduct statement:</b> The University of Victoria is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and supportive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to this experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. The University will not tolerate racism, sexualized violence, or any form of discrimination, bullying or harassment.</p> <p>Please be advised that by logging into UVic’s learning systems and interacting with online resources you are engaging in a university activity. All interactions within this environment are subject to the university expectations and policies. Any concerns about student conduct, may be reviewed and responded to in accordance with the appropriate university policy. To report concerns about online student conduct: <a href="mailto:onlineconduct@uvic.ca">onlineconduct@uvic.ca</a></p>			



	<p><b>Copyright:</b>  All course content and materials are made available by instructors for educational purposes and for the exclusive use of students registered in their class. The material is protected under copyright law, even if not marked with a ©. Any further use or distribution of materials to others requires the written permission of the instructor, except under fair dealing or another exception in the Copyright Act. Violations may result in disciplinary action under the Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations policy (AC1300).</p>			
Aesthetics	Layout logical			
	Fonts readable and images create interest			
	Visually appealing			

© University of Victoria, 2020

