SYLLABUS GUIDE FOR FACULTY
Fall 2009 – Spring 2010

(Tips For Creating A Conflict Free Syllabus)

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This **Guide** lists tips on what you may want to include in your syllabus to avoid confusion and disputes with students. These suggestions have been compiled in response to concerns that I have heard from students and faculty.

The **Guide** also includes the syllabus guidelines as outlined in **OP 32.06**, Faculty Responsibility, for including learning outcomes and grading criteria in course syllabi. For more detailed information, refer to the TLTC Handbook entitled **Writing and Assessing Course Level Expected Learning Outcomes** which can be accessed at: [http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/content/asp/assessment/handbook.asp](http://www.tltc.ttu.edu/content/asp/assessment/handbook.asp).

I hope that the information is helpful. If you have comments or suggestions for items to be included, please contact me.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Faculty Information:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Building and office number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail address (indicate your preferred way to communicate with students)</td>
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List the same information for any others involved in teaching the course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Course Information:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Course name and number</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Meeting place and time</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Labs or Discussion sections</em></td>
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<td><em>Pre-requisites for the course</em></td>
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<td><em>Required and recommended textbooks</em></td>
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<td><em>Supplies needed for the course and where to get them</em></td>
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<td>Required class trips or event attendance and any related financial obligations.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Course Description and Purpose (Goal):</strong></th>
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<td>State the intent of the course and if applicable how it contributes to the major.</td>
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<td>State any expectations regarding the students’ prior knowledge of the subject.</td>
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Course Outline: The organization or schedule of the material to be covered. May be specific (day-by-day) or general (weekly or in units).

Expected Learning Outcomes:
Make a specific statement about what the student should know and be able to do (knowledge, skills and abilities) as a result of completing the course.

Methods of Assessment of Learning Outcomes (Specific Course Requirements and Policies)
Assignments (include due dates)
  • Reading assignments from the textbook and all other sources
  • A description of papers, projects, presentations, portfolios
  • Examinations (include the type of exam – multiple choice, essay, etc.)
  • Rules related to writing assignments such as:
    ✓ Length requirements
    ✓ Acceptability of handwritten work
    ✓ Writing style requirements including punctuation, attribution (footnote, endnote) style, spelling and typographical errors and related grading implications
  • Any informal assessments of student learning outcomes
  • The date, time and place for the final exam

Indicate any flexibility you will allow in these assignments and how changes can be negotiated. Explain how you will make changes if needed. Let students know if they are to be held responsible for knowing about oral announcements or requirements not listed in the syllabus.

Criteria for Grading:
Indicate how the above methods of assessment will be used to determine the final grade in the course.
  • Percent, weight, points, etc., associated with each assignment
  • Percent, weight, points, etc., associated with absences, participation, etc.
  • Tell how grades are announced – Texas Tech University Operating Policy 34.12 states that instructors may not post grades for any examinations, including final examinations, unless permission is granted by the department chairperson and a substantiated random identification procedure is in place. Leaving papers with social security numbers visible for students to pick up violates confidentiality as well.
  • Clarify any curve applied and how it works
  • Describe any grading consequences for missing deadlines
  • Explain any opportunities for extra credit and specifically how it will count toward the final grade
• Emphasize if there is any portion of the course that is required to PASS the course
• If class participation is counted in the grade, state what that means:
  ✓ Student asking instructor questions
  ✓ Student answering instructor questions
  ✓ Student responding to other students’ questions
  ✓ Student initiating discussion
  ✓ Lab participation
  ✓ External requirements such as field trips, lecture/concert attendance
  ✓ Discussion group participation
  ✓ Participation in group projects

Describe your expectations for preparation for class. The Texas Tech University Catalog states that students are expected to spend approximately two hours in preparation for each hour of lecture.

Class Attendance:
• Absence and tardy policy - if excessive or unexcused absences or tardiness will lower the grade in the class be very specific about how points will be deducted.
• Policy regarding make up exams
• Absence due to religious observance - The Texas Tech University Catalog states that a student may be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused for this purpose may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. (p.50)
• Absence due to officially approved trips – The Texas Tech University Catalog states that the person responsible for a student missing class due to a trip should notify the instructor of the departure and return schedule in advance of the trip. The student may not be penalized and is responsible for the material missed. (p.50)
• Whether an absence is excused or unexcused is determined solely by the instructor with the exception of absences due to religious observance and officially approved trips described above. The Center for Campus Life will notify faculty, at the student’s request, when a student is absent for four consecutive days with appropriate verification of a health related emergency. This notification does not excuse the student from class, it is provided as a courtesy. The service is explained as follows and can be found on the Center for Campus Life website.

Illness and Death Notification:
The Center for Campus Life is responsible for notifying the campus community of student illnesses, immediate family deaths and/or student death. Generally, in cases of student illness or immediate family deaths, the notification to the appropriate campus community members occur when a student is absent from class for four (4) consecutive days with appropriate verification. It is always the student’s responsibility for missed class assignments and/or course work during their absence. The student is encouraged to contact the faculty member immediately regarding the absences and to provide verification afterwards. The notification from the Center for Campus Life does not excuse a student from class, assignments, and/or any other course requirements. The notification is provided as a courtesy.

Academic Integrity

Academic Misconduct:
- You may wish to quote the university’s statement on academic integrity found in the Texas Tech University Catalog (p.50) and (OP 34.12):
  “It is the aim of the faculty of Texas Tech University to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of students to present as their own any work that they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.”

- You also may wish to include the descriptions of Cheating and Plagiarism found in the Texas Tech University Catalog (p.50)

- It is helpful to also include interpretations of plagiarism and academic misconduct especially relevant to your discipline.

Civility in the Classroom:
- Include a statement regarding your expectations for acceptable behavior in the classroom. More information about this topic is available on-line.

Students with Disabilities

ADA Statement:
- Include a statement in the syllabus and make a verbal announcement at the beginning of class that students should inform you of their special needs as soon as possible. Student Disability Services recommends the following statement:
Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office at 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

Student Disability Services publishes a **Desk Reference for Faculty and Staff** that is very helpful when working with disabled students. You may call the Student Disability Services Office at 742-2405 to request a copy.

**Ombuds for Students**

- If you would like for your students to utilize the [Ombuds Office for Students](#) for solving problems they have with the university, you can add the following statement to the syllabus:

  The Ombuds for Students is available to assist students with any conflict or problem that has to do with being a student at Texas Tech University. You may visit the Ombuds in 024 East Basement Student Union Building or call 742.SAFE.