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عمادة تطوير المهارات

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Deanship of Skills Development

King Saud University 1957

PREPARING SYLLABI

JEFFREY L. HELMS AND G. WILLIAM HILL IV
KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

BOOKLET

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عمادة تطوير المهارات

إنجاز متميز .. والتزام بالتطوير

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Preparing Syllabi

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Preparing Syllabi

Arguably, one of the most important documents to engage students initially in a course is the syllabus (Davis, 2009; Grunert O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2008). It is often the first piece of information students see in a course. As result, preparing an excellent and comprehensive syllabus is at the top of many instructors' list of preparatory steps for each course they teach. The overarching importance of a syllabus is due to its contractual nature. By "contractual," we mean that it provides an agreement between you, the instructor, and the student taking the course. The content of the syllabus lets the students know what to expect from the course and the instructor as well as what you, the instructor, expects of the student. It provides critical information for all parties involved in the educational process. More specifically, the syllabus provides a framework and a guide for both the instructor and the student in their journey through the course. In addition, the syllabus substantiates that the instructor gave careful consideration to the development and planning of the course (Svinicki & McKeachie, 2011), which in turn, may increase the student's engagement in the course and acceptance of the instructor's content expertise decisions regarding the conduct of the course. Finally, the syllabus undoubtedly sets the tone for the course including both the students' and instructor's roles and responsibilities.

Because of its importance, we devote time not only to the preliminary steps of syllabus development but also to the elements that make up an exemplary syllabus. We firmly believe that an excellent syllabus will remove ambiguity for both the students and instructor as they navigate the course. It can provide the foundation for a smooth and fruitful educational endeavor.

Preliminary Steps in Developing a Syllabus

There are dozens of aspects to good syllabi. However, before enumerating and discussing the elements and idiosyncrasies of exemplary syllabi, it is important to look first at several preliminary steps. These steps provide a general orientation that underpins the final syllabus product. These suggested steps are (a) development of a sound teaching philosophy, (b) selecting and writing measurable course objectives, and (c) selecting assessments that are appropriate for the stated learning objectives.

The first preliminary step is thinking about and developing a sound teaching philosophy. Every instructor has an individual perspective or philosophy about teaching and learning that guides decisions about how to construct the learning experiences in a course and expectations about the instructor's and the students' roles in the course, which are major components of a syllabus. Another important preliminary step is the articulation of explicit and measurable course learning objectives. Both of these preliminary steps ultimately influence our selection of assessments of student learning-our assessments must evaluate student achievement of the stated learning objectives and our teaching methods must assist students in learning the expected material as well as successful completion of assessments of learning. Understanding how you view the educational process, especially for a particular course, forms the foundation for your philosophy, articulation of learning objectives, and selection of assessments. These three steps are the essential foundation for everything in the syllabus.

Although another booklet in this series entitled "Writing Student Learning Objectives" (Smith, 2011b) addresses the topic in detail, we briefly address some strategies for writing course learning objectives here. An excellent starting point for developing learning objectives is Bloom's taxonomy of learning (Bloom, 1956) and its subsequent revision (Anderson et al., 2001; Krathwohl, 2002). For brevity, we include a question that will help you evaluate the importance of each of the six levels of learning identified by Anderson and colleagues with respect to your teaching philosophy and the selection of learning objectives. As you answer them, keep in mind the particular course you are developing, especially its difficulty level.

- Remembering: What is the relative importance in this course of increasing students' memorization of and ability to recall course-specific material?

- Understanding: What is the relative importance of increasing students' ability to interpret written information and summarize perspectives?

- Applying: After completing the course, do you want students to leave with an increased ability to implement specific procedures learned in the course?

- Analyzing: Do you want students to be able to compare and contrast competing explanations for situations?

- Evaluating: Is an overarching goal of your teaching for students to make independent judgments about your subject matter based on available data?

- Creating: What is the relative importance in this course of helping students invent or create new knowledge?

With your personal answers to these questions in mind, begin thinking more specifically about the course you are developing. Your course objectives should flow readily from the combination of your teaching philosophy and your expectations about student learning and skill development in the course. For example, if you put more emphasis on "remembering" and less emphasis on "creating," your course objectives may involve more focus on the students' ability to relay factual information about the topics covered in the course without much unique analysis of the information. In contrast, if you put more emphasis on "applying," your objectives may focus on students' ability to carry out specified procedures based on a particular context.

As may be obvious from these examples, assessment of student learning springs readily from these objectives. Objectives that are more fact-based will lead to assessments of students' knowledge of more or less correct and incorrect information. These assessments would tend to be more objective (e.g., multiple-choice tests). For objectives that are more application-focused, assessments may tend to be more hands-on or in the field/outside the classroom. For a more detailed discussion of selecting and developing effective assessments of student learning, please refer to the booklet in this series entitled "Assessing Student Learning" (Smith, 2011a).

Ultimately, it is the combination of your teaching philosophy, course learning objectives, and selection of assessments that guide your selection of reading assignments, sequencing of material, and selection of graded assignments and method of testing. Not only are these three elements critical components of an exemplary syllabus, they also influence the content of other syllabus components (e.g., attendance expectations, course calendar). Increased clarity concerning these three preliminary steps results in a syllabus that more effectively communicates to students what they will learn, how you and the class will facilitate learning, and your expectations and methods of assessing learning in order to assign a grade.

Elements of a Syllabus

With these foundational guiding principles in mind, let's turn our attention to the plethora of possible elements to an exemplary syllabus. As we begin to approach this task, it is important to keep in mind that many universities have a set of elements that must be included in a syllabus. These required elements vary and may be specific to a course (e.g., required learning outcomes, mandated common final exam) or particular departmental or institutional policies (e.g., dealing with instances of cheating or plagiarism, attendance policies). We strongly recommend consulting with your department chair as well as other instructors in your discipline to identify any required elements. Even with these required elements, there is much room for personalization that reflects your particular teaching philosophy.

As we address the various elements, we are acutely aware that instructors differ in how they value each of these elements. In your reflection, you may want to borrow colleagues' syllabi for perusal. One excellent resource for model policies in several categories is Project Syllabus (Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology, 2011). Although the model syllabi on this web site are psychology-specific, given the breadth of psychology and available syllabi on such diverse topics as research methods, industrial-organizational psychology, and statistics, you may find the resource quite helpful for related disciplines that address similar content. In addition, Project Syllabus includes a repository of best practices for several syllabus elements that are independent of discipline (i.e., expectations of classroom behavior, course objectives, descriptions of class time, attendance and participation policies, and course calendars; OTRP Project Syllabus, 2011).

We are aware that although some of the listed elements of a syllabus are often short and simple, others can be longer, leading to a lengthier syllabus. We highlight syllabus length because students will often briefly review the syllabus, missing chunks of important material and policies that will affect their experiences and possible success in the course. As such, we encourage instructors to position what they feel (and what they believe the students will feel) are the most important elements earlier in the document and with more prominence (e.g., bold or larger font). We also encourage reviewing the syllabus at the beginning of a course with students. For example, Raymark and Connor-Greene (2002) found that administering a take-home quiz on the syllabus content both motivates students to review the syllabus and develop a better understanding of the course expectations.

Now we turn to the elements of an exemplary syllabus. The primary focus of the

following sections is to delineate content that should be in a syllabus. In hopes of decreasing confusion, we group the elements into broad categories, each of which addresses specific sub-elements. In addition, we provide a checklist of syllabus elements in the Appendix.

Basic Course Information

Course Name and Description. Include basic course information such as the course number, name, description, and any prerequisite knowledge/coursework. This information will help ensure that students are aware that you will be teaching with certain assumptions regarding their base knowledge.

Professor's Name and Contact Information. This element includes your name, title, and information on how to contact you. Contact information should include location of your office (building and room number), e-mail address, and office phone number. If you have a website, including the url is appropriate here. You might also indicate your typical response time so that students know how long it takes for you to respond to an e-mail or phone call. Additional information on any office hours is also helpful. For example, can a single student take up your entire office hours or are meetings limited so other students may access help from you at these times? Are students required to make appointments in order to see you during your office hours? If you use an online course platform for any or all of your course delivery, will you have times available when you are online and can chat?

Course Meeting Times and Duration. For courses or portions of courses meeting face-to-face, identification of the room number and building are important because students will often have multiple courses during a single term. Because some courses may vary in length, change meeting locations (e.g., meeting one day a week in a computer lab and one in a regular classroom), or may not meet for an extended period during the semester, you will also want to include information about these variations in meeting place and times. For example, you will want to note if the course is a two-semester sequence or if it is in a shortened or condensed format that does not last the entire term that is typical of other courses. If your course meets in different rooms on different days, also incorporate room and day information into your course calendar (see below).

Checking for Announcements. Sometimes we convey additional course information between class meetings. (Of course, we convey all information online for exclusively online courses.) Therefore, it is important to communicate expectations about how often

students should check the online course website or support platform or their e-mail for announcements, discussions, changes in assignments, etc. For short courses that last only a few weeks, we encourage students to check daily. For longer courses, checking every other day seems sufficient. We also make sure that students are aware that we do not announce, e-mail, or post frivolous information. This way students can rest assured that all information that bears the instructor's name is important to read and address promptly. If you use a course platform to post announcements and course materials, include information about your expectations for the frequency that students should visit the online course platform site.

Classmates' Contact Information. The ability to contact peers is often helpful for students. For example, it facilitates the formation of study groups, easily available contacts for answering questions about location of resources (e.g., location of the writing lab or tutors), or obtaining notes or other information from a missed class. To accomplish this communication, we encourage including an online discussion board devoted to this type of community building and addressing its purpose in the syllabus. This capability is usually available with course platforms used to support face-to-face courses or deliver online and hybrid courses.

Course Goals and Approach

Course Objectives. The syllabus communicates to students what they will learn in the course. As discussed earlier, careful development of the course objectives will let students know in measurable terms what they can expect to gain from their successful completion of the course. For some courses, you might also include a statement on what the course will not cover (e.g., address any misconceptions about the course content). For some courses, students come with misconceptions about what will and will not be included in a course. If you do not dispelled these misconceptions, students may be dissatisfied with their experience in the course. In addition, consider including a statement of how successful completion of the course learning objectives are related to success in subsequent courses, especially if the course is foundational or a prerequisite to other courses in a discipline. Finally, many students consider courses to be something you make them do to get a degree. The syllabus can be a place that you establish how this course is relevant to their future career and success in "real life".

Course Methodologies. Students will also want to know about your teaching methods. What portion of the course will be online and what portion will be face-to-face? Will

the course be mainly lecture or seminar format? Will you expect student participation during class? Will you incorporate active learning activities during class? Remember, these methodologies should match your teaching philosophy and prepare students to achieve the course learning objectives and succeed on course assessments.

Course Materials

Required Materials. Students need to know what materials are required for successful completion of the course and by what date during the semester they must have these materials. These materials may include calculators (be sure to specify a particular model, if necessary), textbooks, laboratory equipment, etc. When appropriate, we like to add pictures of the materials and links to places where students can buy them. For example, pictures of textbook covers are often included on the publisher's website and can easily be downloaded and pasted into your syllabus. This suggestion is particularly helpful when a textbook has recently changed editions. We also note if there are varying formats to some materials. For example, some textbooks may be available in print and electronic format. If either format is acceptable or unacceptable, we inform the students.

Recommended and Optional Materials. Students also need to know if there are additional optional materials that may prove helpful to their success in the course (e.g., study guides, software, links to online materials that supplement the textbook and your lectures). As with the required materials, we provide pictures and links to the materials when available and appropriate.

Technology Requirements. If there are special technology requirements, state them clearly in the syllabus. These requirements may be particular software programs necessary to view online course materials (e.g., videos, Adobe Reader for PDF files) or complete assignments. Also, identify any required computer equipment or hardware that may not be standard but is necessary for your course (e.g., type of graphics/ video card necessary for course software).

University, Instructor, and Course Policies and Expectations

Course policies are among the most controversial elements of a syllabus. Although faculty members agree that syllabi include certain policies that we list, the exact nature of the policies generates disagreement among faculty. Faculty opinions and policies vary on questions like whether to allow students to make up missed tests, students turning in late assignments, cheating and its consequences,

and what constitutes proper etiquette during class. We do not advocate a particular policy over another, only that you include your position on a policy in the syllabus. However, we argue that a careful consideration of whether a policy is realistic and fairly and consistently applied to all students should guide your final decision. That is, we believe that setting a policy and then making exceptions for individual students is unfair and unethical.

University-mandated Policies. As noted earlier, some universities and departments within universities have specific statements, policies, and information that are mandatory to include in the syllabus. Some common mandatory policies may include information on grievance procedures and grade disputes, assignment of grades, mobile phone usage in the classroom, or expectations of academic integrity (see below for more on this issue). When teaching a course for the first time, be sure to check with senior faculty and administrators (e.g., chairs and deans) about potential institutional or departmental policies.

Academic Integrity. Many universities have specific policies for instances of academic dishonesty (i.e., plagiarism and cheating), which are often mandated syllabus components. Sometimes these policies are very specific about what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences for instances, while in other cases the policies are more global, requiring you to specify your expectations and standards to the students. Do not assume that your students have a complete understanding of what constitutes academic dishonesty that matches your own! For example, you will want to let students know if and when they may collaborate on assignments, whether it is acceptable to use a paper in more than one class, or your expectations concerning proper citation in papers. Additionally, and especially important for online courses and work, you will want to state if it is acceptable to use resources like books when completing testing online. Are exams open book or open notes? This information will reduce student uncertainty and anxiety about proper test procedures.

Another aspect of dealing with academic dishonesty is the consequences for proven cases. Frequently, even if there is an institutional policy on academic dishonesty, the policy leaves the application of consequences (i.e., punishment) to the instructor's discretion. Include the specific consequences as part of your syllabus (e.g., a zero on the assignment, redoing the assignment for reduced credit, or a failing grade in the course) to insure fair application and communicate up front to students the consequences. In a sense, including these consequences becomes a stated part of your grading policy, albeit one you hope not to apply.

Attendance, Participation, and Late Arrival Policies. Decide whether attendance and class participation are required elements of the course and clearly articulate your expectations, including how they affect student grades (see grading policies below). Because unforeseen circumstances occur, establishing your expectations and proper etiquette for entering class late or leaving early will also help students navigate the course. Again, we caution you to be fair and consistent in your expectations, including your own behavior. For example, if you set a standard of being on time for class for students and you are consistently late for class, what is the message you are communicating to your students?

One major factor impacting students' participation in class is their advance preparation for class. Include your expectations concerning adequate class preparation (e.g., completing assigned readings, completing out-of-class assignments). Also, address how advance preparation contributes to student success. If you are grading participation, be clear about assessment procedures for participation and its impact on students' grades in the course. A good resource for ideas concerning attendance and participation polices is a summary of best practices provided by Project Syllabus of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP Project Syllabus, 2007a). Although provided by a psychology organization, these policies are not discipline specific.

Classroom Etiquette and Professionalism. Although students may value this information differently than information on grading, providing information about your expectations about classroom behavior and professional standards on communication is helpful. Because of changes in communication (e.g., e-mail, texting), student communications may be less formal than desired by an instructor. As a result, you may want to inform students of expectations regarding the level of formality of communications in the course, including for assignments. For example, do you allow students to use slang in their discussions or must they use proper grammar? You might also encourage students to contact you should they have concerns regarding another student's exchanges or the content of a particular discussion in class. If you use a particular writing style for assignments, you will want to inform students of this requirement as well as point them in the direction of getting resources that will help with that particular style (e.g., a book, a tutor, a course). Lastly, noting the importance of respect among students in discussion will set the tone for such exchanges in class and online. It is also a good idea to note your policy on mobile phone use and computer use in class.

Again, we recommend reviewing a summary of best practices in expectations for classroom behavior provided by Project Syllabus of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology (OTRP Project Syllabus, 2010). This document addresses and provides suggestions of policies covering a wide variety of classroom situations that are independent of discipline (e.g., classroom discussion etiquette, mobile phone use, attendance).

Missed Exams and Late Assignments Policies. Students will definitely want to know what will happen if they miss an assignment or miss the deadline for submitting an assignment. Clearly articulating this policy is very important, as students should view it as fair. Because extenuating circumstances sometimes occur, we often use certain percentage penalties for late submissions. For quizzes and exams, we often include an "extra" quiz or exam so that we can drop the lowest grade before calculating final grades in a course or apply a percentage penalty for each day the student delays taking the exam.

Graded Course Requirements

From the viewpoint of most students, graded course requirements is the most important section of the syllabus. This section should communicate clearly your assessment methods for the learning outcomes, evaluation of the assessments, and weight of each assessment toward the students' final course grade. It is important that you be clear and detailed about your performance expectations in this section.

Examinations and Quizzes. You will want to be clear on the number, type, and worth of each examination and quiz. You will also want to articulate how the examinations and quizzes are graded, for example, through the use of grading rubrics. If so, you will want to include copies of those rubrics as attachments to the syllabus, if possible, or state when you will make them available. It is also important to provide information on the format of the quizzes and examinations. Will they be oral or written? In person or online? Open book or closed book? Multiple-choice, essay, short answer, or a combination? Are the exams or quizzes timed?

Assignments. This section of the syllabus will describe any lab reports, skill attainment or proficiency, projects, term papers, or research studies required in the course. Providing as much information as possible will decrease both student anxiety and student questions as the course progresses. When appropriate, provide examples of excellent or model assignments or a list of common student errors or omissions for an assignment via links to your course web page. Inclusion of grading rubrics is strongly encouraged because it will tangibly demonstrate your commitment to fairness

when grading. It also can provide students with a checklist to use for their work prior to submission. On this same note, students will also need to know exactly how to submit assignments (e.g., online or in-person, file format, typed or handwritten).

Attendance and Participation Grades. As noted earlier in the section on course policies, you will want to articulate clearly any grading associated with attendance and participation. Is attendance and/or participation part of the grade? If so, how do you assess and weight it?

Grade Calculation and Progress in the Course. This part of the syllabus includes information on how the course grade is calculated. Different weighting of assignments (e.g., term papers count more than quizzes) often confuses students. Clear information on this aspect will be instrumental in avoiding problems later in the course. For example, you might construct a summary table listing each assessment, its weight, the due date, and the expected date that the assignment will be graded and returned to students.

You might also provide an example of how to calculate progress in the course and the final grade. Lastly, you will want to direct students to where they can find their grades. Will they be stored in an online grade book that they can access? Will they have to keep up with their own assignment grades?

Opportunities for Extra Credit. Students will want to know if there are opportunities to get extra credit to limit the impact of a poor grade in the course. They will also want to know if they can revise assignments for a better grade or extra points or have a second chance to pass a required practical proficiency. Instructors must grapple with these ideas and come to a comfortable conclusion in order to provide clear guidelines to students in the syllabus. Because extra credit is ultimately a component of the final grade, we recommend addressing it in the grading section. We also believe that addressing in the syllabus as to whether there are extra credit opportunities and what they are lets students know all grading policies at the beginning of the course. It also gives the instructor a reference point for a consistently applied standard when a student with a low grade approaches you late in the semester asking for extra credit to improve his grade.

Feedback and Grading of Assignments. This element of the syllabus includes information on when students can expect you to return assignment and examination grades and give them feedback about their work. This suggestion allows us to meet our obligation to be timely with feedback. Students will appreciate it.

Course Schedule

We encourage instructors to include all schedule information in one, one-sided document for student ease of use. We find students like this particular format as they can print and carry it with them if needed. Again, Project Syllabus of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology provides some model calendars you might consider (OTRP Project Syllabus, 2007b).

Assignment and Examination Schedule. A clear and logical schedule allows students the opportunity to know what is happening and when it is happening. It provides dates when assignments are due and when examinations will be given, which allows students and instructor to plan and rely on the plan throughout the course.

Topic and Reading Schedule. This part of the course schedule includes information on the topics covered for specific class meetings (if the course is face-to-face or hybrid). Note assigned readings here too. Students will also want to know when to complete the readings, either before or after the date scheduled. We have found that including a simple statement that specifies that we cover the readings on the date indicated prevents students' becoming confused about when they should complete their reading.

University and Academic Dates. The course schedule should also include dates for deadlines to drop or withdraw from courses. University-approved holidays and other university-associated dates of import to the course should be included.

Potential Additional Syllabus Elements

Tips for Course Success. This element of the syllabus can provide information on what strategies past students or you feel contribute to successful completion of the course. Information on number of hours a week to study, strategies former students have used to study for exams, and general information on workload may prove useful to students. Your encouragement to access useful university resources might also be included. For example, we often refer students to our writing assistance laboratories for help with grammar. For some of our courses, students find study groups helpful. For still other courses, some students have a misunderstanding about the workload for the course, so it is important to provide information about the level of commitment needed for course success.

Course and Career Resources. Although considered optional, some students who are particularly interested in the course topics welcome any additional resources that you can provide on the course content. Web links to resources and applicable professional organizations may help those students who wish to invest more of their

effort and time in the course. For the majority of students in the course, information on where and how to access resources that assist with writing (if a course component) and tutoring resources (e.g., math tutors) will prove useful.

Course Evaluation and Feedback. As we strive to develop professionally, we seek feedback from others on our performance. Even if not required by the university, we encourage providing students with an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback about the course and our conduct of the course. We encourage doing so at approximately the mid-point of the course and at the end of the semester. To this end, we inform students in the syllabus that they will have this opportunity. We also encourage them to provide feedback at other times, as they feel comfortable.

Brief Teaching Philosophy and Biography. This information is sometimes included with the basic information about the instructor noted earlier. We encourage inclusion of this information so that students have a fuller understanding of the expertise you bring to the course. We often include information on our teaching experience as well as research experience. All of this information increases our credibility in the classroom through demonstrating our training and that we are thoughtful in our teaching methods.

Syllabus Disclaimer

Because the syllabus represents a contract or at least a written agreement between you and the students, you will want to give yourself a way to change the course due to extenuating circumstances. Weather, university functions, unforeseen instructor absences, etc. may lead to necessary changes in the courses we teach. Having the ability to change the syllabus as well as warning the students in advance of these rare but possible circumstances can go a long way in smoothing these bumps in a semester. In making the disclaimer, you will want to indicate how any changes will be communicated to the students (e.g., via e-mail, via course webpage posting, via in-class announcement).

Reviewing Your Syllabus

After completing construction of the syllabus for the course, we encourage you to share it with colleagues and request feedback. Senior faculty members and faculty members with extensive experience in a particular course domain will often find information that we inadvertently forget to include or need to clarify more. Writing a syllabus and having it reviewed by others is, after all, a learning opportunity for us too! In reviewing your syllabus, we also encourage the use of Slattery and Carlson's "Guidelines for Preparing Exemplary Syllabi" (2011). Their document provides a list

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of "pointers" that you might find helpful. Here are several from their list that we find particularly useful. They note that exemplary syllabi are:

- Interesting and creative.
- Err on the side of inclusion rather than exclusion.
- Communicate positive expectations.
- Model desired behavior.

Again, we encourage viewing the preparation process as just that, a process. As such, we hope that you will approach the task as an opportunity to develop your teaching skills more thoroughly.

Summary

In closing, the important points to take away from this booklet include:

- Develop a sound teaching philosophy that will guide you through the syllabus development process.
- Springing from the teaching philosophy, develop learning objectives for the course.
- Construct the syllabus from the student's perspective. Keep in mind what is important to the students (e.g., course assignments, grading policy).
- Do not forget the "contractual" nature of the syllabus. As such, include all the relevant elements noted, not forgetting those elements required by your instructional unit. Brevity is not necessary.
- After creation, review your syllabus in light of the brief checklist provided in the appendix.
- Seek input on your syllabus from colleagues. Preparing an exemplary syllabus is a process.

References

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– Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology. (2011). *Project syllabus*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/ otrp/syllabi/index.php OTRP provides a bank of peer-reviewed syllabi on this web page. Although the syllabi are for psychology courses, they provide excellent models for general syllabus construction and course policies.

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research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec OTRP Project Syllabus. (2007a). *Attendance & participation policies*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php?category=Best%20Practices OTRP provides best practice examples of attendance and participation policies via their website. It is an excellent source when developing your own policies in this area.

–   Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec OTRP Project Syllabus. (2007b). *Calendars*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php?category=Best%20Practices OTRP provides best practice examples of course calendars via their website. It is an excellent source when developing your own course calendars.

–   Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec OTRP Project Syllabus. (2010). *Expectations of classroom behavior*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php?category=Best%20Practices OTRP provides best practice examples of policies regarding classroom behavior via their website. It is an excellent source when developing your own expectations, including how to communicate the expectations to your students.

–   Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec OTRP Project Syllabus. (2011). *Best practices*. Retrieved April 8, 2011 from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/index.php?category=Best%20Practices OTRP provides a series of documents on this webpage that address various course and syllabus development issues including developing course objectives, descriptions of class time, and course policies.

–   Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Raymark, P. H., & Connor-Greene, P. A. (2002). The syllabus quiz. *Teaching of Psychology, 29*, 286-288. This article describes a process by which instructors can increase the likelihood of students carefully reading the course syllabus.

– Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Slattery, J. M., & Carlson, J. F. (2011). *Guidelines for preparing exemplary syllabi*. Retrieved from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology's Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology Project Syllabus web site: http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/guidelines.php The authors provide a series of bulleted points that are useful when developing a syllabus. It is an excellent resource to use as a checklist for your own syllabus.

– Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Smith, R. A. (2011a). *Assessing student learning*. Deanship of Skills Development Booklet Series, King Saud University. As the title suggests, Smith addresses the various components involved in assessing student learning in a course.

– Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Smith, R. A. (2011b). *Writing student learning objectives*. Deanship of Skills Development Booklet Series, King Saud University. As noted elsewhere, clearly articulating your course objectives is imperative. This booklet will prove invaluable in that endeavor.

– Bligh, D. A. (2000). *What's the use of lectures?* This author also takes a research-based approach and provides a timely summary about the effec Svinicki, M., & McKeachie, W. J. (2011). *McKeachie's teaching tips: Strategies, research, and theory for college and university teachers* (13th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. This book provides a plethora of tips on teaching including such topics as facilitating student learning, preparing a course, meeting a course for the first time, assessment issues, advising, and distance education.

Appendix

Brief Checklist for Elements of an Exemplary Syllabus.

Basic Course Information

- Course Name and Description.
- Course Meeting Times and Duration.
- Professor's Name and Contact Information.
- Checking for Announcements.
- Classmates' Contact Information.

Preparing Syllabi

Course Goals and Approach
- Course Objectives.
- Course Methodologies.

Course Materials:
- Required Materials.
- Recommended and Optional Materials.
- Technology Requirements.

Course Policies and Expectations
- University-mandated Policies.
- Academic Integrity.
- Attendance, Participation, and Late Arrival Policies.
- Classroom Etiquette and Professionalism.
- Missed Exams and Late Assignments Policy.

Graded Course Requirements
- Examinations and Quizzes.
- Assignments.
- Attendance and Participation Grades.
- Grade Calculation and Progress in the Course.
- Opportunities for Extra Credit and Assignment Revisions.
- Feedback and Grading of Assignments.

Course Schedule
- Assignment and Exam Schedule.
- Topic and Reading Schedule.
- University and Academic Dates.

Potential Additional Syllabus Elements
- Tips for Course Success.
- Course and Career Resources.
- Course Evaluation and Feedback.
- Brief Teaching Philosophy and Biography.

Syllabus Disclaimer