

# Syllabus Checklist

Use this checklist to help design a course syllabus to best meet your teaching style, course content, activities, and departmental requirements. Consider creating a learner-centered (LC) syllabus that targets student learning and success!

## **Course Information**

- Designator and number (for example: UNIV 101)
- Section number
- Course Title
- Number of credit hours
- Classroom location
- Course meeting day(s) and time
- Semester/Term (for example: Spring Semester 2018)
- Related lab, recitation, studio locations
- Course Blackboard quick link, if applicable: <https://webcourses.niu.edu>

- Course Description** – Include the catalog course description and how the students will benefit from the course, the specific content that will be covered, and how the course fits into the curriculum. In this section, list any pre-requisites associated with the course (actual courses, competencies, requirements, etc.).

## **Instructor/TA Contact Information**

- Name and title (and how you would like to be addressed)
- Office location
- Office telephone or alternative such as Skype for Business (SFB). Students have access to SFB via their University Outlook email account. Faculty can use SFB from their office computers with a headset/microphone, or a built-in laptop microphone. There is also an app to access SFB on mobile devices. Information on SFB is available at <https://products.office.com/en-us/skype-for-business/online-meeting-solutions>
- Email address
- Office hours
- Preferred method of contact
- TA information (if one is assigned for the course) including name, office location, email address, and office hours
- Your professional website (if applicable)

- Teaching Philosophy** – Consider including your teaching philosophy or a welcome statement to familiarize students with your approach to teaching and your willingness to guide their learning. You can also include a statement regarding your expectations on students' responsibility for their learning and your responsibilities as their instructor. Also, this is a good area to add a more informal, personalized course description!

- Instructional Methods** – Include a list of the instructional methods you will use in the course (there will be a difference between a face-to-face course versus an online course).

**Example:** This course is taught using a variety of instructional methods including lecture, class discussion, small group work, projects, online discussion, and group presentations.

- Course Goals and Objectives**

- What will students gain from this course?
- How is each objective aligned to specific course outcomes, activities, and assessments?

- Learning Outcomes**

- Describe the major concepts, skills, attitudes, and knowledge students will accomplish by the end of the course.
- Describe how these outcomes will be aligned to the course objectives, standards, or other principles that drive the curriculum.

- Course Assessment** – Provide a clear explanation of evaluation on the assessment process and measurements. Be explicit! Describe assessment types (quizzes, exams, journals, observations, performances, projects, etc.), how much they will count toward the overall course grade, descriptions of papers and projects and how they will be assessed (criteria, rubrics, etc.), and how the overall grade will be determined. **NOTE:** Detailed instructions, job aids, guides, and worksheets can be posted in Blackboard to reduce syllabus page numbers.

**Sample course assessment policy:** There will be one mid-term examination and one final examination (25% each). Homework assignments will count for 15%, laboratory exercises for 10%, quizzes for 10%, and course project for the remaining 15% of the course grade. Overall course grades will be determined as 90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, and ≤ 60% = F. Include a point range if it will help your students understand how grades are derived (Ex: 405-450=A, 360-404=B, 315-359=C, 270-314=D, ≤269=F).

- Course Resources** - List the required and supplementary resources for the course and other resources such as facilities, laboratories, and studios.

- Required textbook and readings and where students can acquire them
- Suggested readings
- Course packs
- Electronic reserves
- Personal response system (a.k.a. clickers, if applicable)
- Blackboard course website URL
- Laboratories, studios, learning/ writing/ reading centers, and study groups available for the course

- Course Policies**

- Attendance plus late arrivals and early departures
- Late submission of work
- Missed and make-up work
- Individual and collaborative work
- Extra credit work
- Use of copyrighted materials
- Use of cell phones and other civility considerations in the classroom
- Dress code, materials handling, safety, etc.

- **Syllabus Change Policy** – Sometimes it may be necessary to make changes to the course syllabus for a number of reasons such as unexpected university closure due to weather-related emergencies or to adjust content based on course and student progress. Therefore, it can be beneficial to include a syllabus change policy statement such as the example below.

**Example:** This syllabus is a guide and every attempt is made to provide an accurate overview of the course and its requirements. However, certain circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester for your benefit and the changes may depend, in part, on course progress and our needs. I will announce any change to the syllabus as early as possible so that you can adjust your schedule. The department/ school will also be notified of any change.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Changes to the syllabus after the 4<sup>th</sup> week of a course, or deviations from the standards set in the syllabus, can be a basis for grade appeal:

<http://www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/iii7.shtml>

- **Americans with Disabilities Statement & Non-Discrimination Statement** – NIU requires all syllabi to include a statement about disability accommodations, as specified in the Operating Procedures for Curricular Items (Section III, Item 3 of the Academic Policies and Procedures Manual). Students have the right to request disability-related accommodations for any course after registering with the Disability Resource Center, whether or not such a statement is included in the syllabus. Faculty may use the recommended statement, which is approved by the President’s Commission on Persons with Disabilities, or a similar statement of their own creation. The recommended statement is available at <https://niu.edu/disability/forms/syllabus-statement.shtml>
- **Policy on Purchasing, Developing, Maintaining and Using Accessible Electronic and Information Technology (EIT)** – All electronic and information technology must be accessible to people who have visual or hearing disabilities or who can’t use a mouse or a keyboard. That applies to everything from online course materials, to videos shown in class or assigned to be viewed outside of class, to web applications like myniu.niu.edu, to copiers and printers. Details about this mandated policy can be found at Technology Accessibility website at <http://niu.edu/technology-accessibility/procurement/policy.shtml>. Contact NIU’s accessibility officer for further information on this required policy.
- **Academic Integrity Statement** – Include a statement on academic integrity in your course syllabus. The following statement is from the NIU 2016-2017 Undergraduate Catalog:

Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university. <http://catalog.niu.edu>

- **Inclusive Statements for Syllabi** – The NIU Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has established the online [Faculty Toolkit](https://niu.edu/diversity/resources/toolkit/index.shtml) (<https://niu.edu/diversity/resources/toolkit/index.shtml>) where you will find a range of inclusive statements recommended to be included on course syllabi. The toolkit also provides resources to navigate classroom dynamics and create culturally responsive teaching.
  
- **Course Schedule** – Provide a detailed list of meeting dates, major topics that will be covered on those dates, assigned readings, homework assignments and their due dates, schedule of exams, due dates of projects and papers, etc. Use of a table format like the one shown below can help students easily read and follow the course schedule.

**Sample Course Schedule Table**

Week	Date	Topic/ Class Content/ Activities	Things to Do & Due Dates
1	<b>Mon 1/15</b>	<b>Dr. Martin Luther, Jr. Holiday - No Class – Review course syllabus</b>	
	<b>Wed 1/17</b>	<b>Syllabus &amp; course review; Course profile, Introductions</b>	<b>Review Blackboard course content; Submit <i>Course Profile</i> in Bb by 11:59 p.m.</b>
	<b>Fri 1/19</b>	<i>List topics here; Establish groups</i>	<b>Post Bb <i>Discussion #1</i> by 11:59 p.m.</b>
2	<b>Mon 1/22</b>	<i>List topics here</i>	<b>Submit <i>Phase 1 of Assignment 1</i> in class; Prepare for Quiz 1</b>
	<b>Wed 1/24</b>	<b>Quiz 1; In-class group work to finalize First Draft of Group Assignment</b>	<b><i>Quiz 1</i> on Text chapters 1-3</b>
	<b>Fri 1/26</b>	<i>List topics here</i>	<b>Submit <i>First Draft Group Assignment</i> at start of class</b>

**Syllabus Quiz** – To encourage students to read the syllabus and understand course policies and requirements, consider giving them an open-syllabus quiz sometime during the first two weeks of the semester. Quiz students on some of the key information covered in the syllabus, such as your office hours, late work submission policies, etc. Blackboard is an easy way to administer such a quiz and students can complete it in class using their mobile phones.

- **Acknowledgment of the Syllabus** - If your department/school/college policies permit, and you so desire, you could include a “Student Acknowledgement of Course Syllabus” statement to motivate students to read the information on the course syllabus and take the course requirements seriously. This statement can be in the form of an extra sheet placed at the end of the syllabus which students can sign and return to you. The form can also be given as a handout. The following is an example of this statement:

<b>Student Acknowledgement of Course Syllabus</b> (Please complete this form and return it to me by <date>)	
I, _____, have received a copy of the syllabus for <course number and title> for <semester, year>. I have read this syllabus and understand that I am responsible for abiding by the course requirements and policies mentioned in the syllabus.	
_____ Signature	_____ Date