

Syllabus Checklist

Use this checklist to help design course syllabi to best meet your teaching style, course content, activities, and departmental requirements.

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: fall 2014)
- Related lab, recitation, studio locations
- Course Web site, if applicable

- 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 and fax numbers (home or cell phone number?)
- Email address
- Office hours
- Preferred method of contact
- Your professional website (if applicable)
- TA information (if one is assigned for the course) such as name, office location, email address, and office hours.

- 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. This is a good area to add a more informal, personalized course description.

- Instructional Methods** – List the instructional methods you will use in the 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 related to specific course outcomes and activities?

- **Learning Outcomes**
 - Describe the major concepts, skills, attitudes, and knowledge students will achieve by the end of the course.
 - Describe how these outcomes are related to the course objectives, standards, or other principles that drive the curriculum.

- **Course Assessment** – Provide a clear explanation of evaluation, including a statement 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 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, supplementary resources for the course, and other resources such as facilities and laboratories and studios.
 - Required textbook and readings and where students can acquire them
 - Suggested readings
 - Course packs
 - Electronic reserves
 - Personal response system (if applicable)
 - Course website on the course management system
 - Laboratories, studios, and learning centers available for the course

- **Course Policies**
 - Attendance
 - 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

- **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 the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester for the benefit of the students and the changes may depend, in part, on course progress and students' needs. Changes to the syllabus will be made with advance notice to students and approval by the department.

- **Americans with Disabilities Statement & Non-Discrimination Statement** – NIU’s Disability Resource Center offers a *Suggestion for Syllabi Statement*, available at (http://www.niu.edu/disability/accessibility_statement/index.shtml). You can devise a non-discrimination statement for your course syllabus by reviewing information at the Human Resources Services/Affirmative Action and Diversity Resources website at <http://www.hr.niu.edu/ServiceAreas/DiversityResources/Index.cfm>

Other sample statements:

“NIU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stipulates that no student shall be denied the benefits of an education ‘solely by reason of a handicap.’ Disabilities covered by law include, but are not limited to learning disabilities and hearing, sight or mobility impairments. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations please see me so that such accommodations may be arranged.”

“Your success as a student is of utmost importance to me. If you have a disability or any other special circumstance which may have some impact on your work in this class, and for which you may require special accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner.”

- **Academic Integrity Statement** – Include a statement on academic integrity in your course syllabus. The following statement is from the NIU 2013-2014 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>

- **Course Schedule** – If possible, 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 date 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	Topics/Content	Assignments and Due Dates
1	Mon, 8/25/14	Syllabus Review, Course Overview, Self-assessment, Introduction to ...	Begin reading Chapter 1
	Wed, 8/27/14	<i>List content/topics here</i>	Discuss Chapter 1, sections 1-5
	Fri, 8/29/14	<i>List content/topics here</i>	Post to course blog by 11:59 pm today
2	Mon, 9/1/14	Labor Day – No class	
	Wed, 9/3/14	<i>List content/topics here</i>	Quiz 1 – Chapter 1
	Fri, 9/5/14	<i>List content/topics here</i>	Assignment 1 due today at the beginning of the class period

- **Acknowledgment of the Syllabus** - If your department/college policies permit, you can consider including 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 sheet can also be given as a handout. The following is an example of this statement:

Student Acknowledgement of Course Syllabus (Please complete this sheet and return it to the instructor 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

Another way to motivate students to read the syllabus and comprehend course policies and requirements is to give an open quiz at the end of the first class or the beginning of the second class period. Quiz students on some of the key information covered in the syllabus, such as your office hours, late work submission policies, etc.

PLEASE NOTE

Changes to the syllabus after the 4th 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>

<http://www.niu.edu/provost/policies/appm/III8.shtml>