Course Syllabus Policy

Students need a consistent level of basic information about the content and expectations for each course in which they are enrolled. A syllabus is a written document that informs students about course requirements and expectations.

Instructors of record are required to develop a syllabus for every course, regardless of delivery method (e.g. traditional, online, hybrid, etc.), and distribute the syllabus to students enrolled in the course in an appropriate written format. The syllabus must be distributed in class or posted electronically on Blackboard on or before the first scheduled day of the class. The Higher Learning Commission’s Credit Hour Policies, developed to enforce the U.S. Department of Education’s requirement related to credit hour definition, necessitates that a syllabus be available for review for each course taught.

Syllabi vary in format, but ordinarily include:

1. Course Information
   a. Course title
   b. Designator and number
   c. Section number
   d. Number of credit hours
   e. Semester/Term
   f. Course location (if applicable)
   g. Related lab, recitation, studio locations
   h. Course website (if applicable)

2. Instructor/TA Contact Information
   a. Name and title
   b. Office location
   c. Methods of communication (Two methods suggested, including office phone, email, fax, etc.)
   d. Office hours
   e. TA information (if applicable), including name, office location, email address, and office hours

3. Course Description
4. Intended Learning Outcomes
5. Student Assessment
   a. Assessment types (e.g. quizzes, exams, journals, observations, performances, etc.)
   b. Weighting of assessments
   c. Grading scale to be used

6. Course Resources
   a. Required reading assignments (if applicable)
   b. Required software, equipment including personal response system (if applicable)
   c. Suggested readings (if applicable)
   d. Course packs (if applicable)
e. Electronic reserves (if applicable)
f. Course website on Blackboard (if applicable)
g. Laboratories, studios, and learning centers available for the course (if applicable)

7. Course Policies, as appropriate (e.g. attendance, make-up work, extra credit, etc.)


9. Academic Integrity Statement
10. Proposed Course Schedule
11. Additional College or Unit Requirements (if applicable)

Exemptions: For nontraditional courses (e.g., theses, dissertations, independent studies, and internships), the syllabus may be replaced by a learning contract and/or proposal providing it includes items 1-5 above.

Use of Syllabi: Information from course syllabi will be used internally and for accreditation related purposes and will not be disseminated publicly.

Rationale: As described in the opening paragraphs, the need for a syllabus policy owes to the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission. The policy was constructed based upon the best practices guidelines that the NIU Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center. An ad-hoc committee comprised of members from the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) and the Graduate Curriculum Committee (GCC) met to discuss a first draft of the syllabus policy and make suggestions/corrections. The present document reflects the committee’s changes and is recommended for approval.

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