Walla Walla University Course Syllabi Guide

**Purpose of a syllabus**
A syllabus is an important communication tool for the instructor, the student and a variety of individuals inside and outside the institution. It provides students with information and structure, and encourages their development as learners through an overview of what to anticipated, and what the instructor expects. In one respect, a syllabus is like a contract, which incorporates a student’s job description and describes the measures to be used to evaluate their performance.

A syllabus is also an indicator of the quality of a course and the professionalism of the instructor. Parents and students may use a syllabus in their enrollment decision about a course or an institution. Syllabi are also reviewed by outside evaluators as part of a program or institutional accreditation review. Academic personnel also review syllabi as part of the transfer course evaluation process. In some instances, a course syllabus has been important in resolving student complaints and in litigation.

**Syllabi database**
The university maintains a database of course syllabi. Each course should have the syllabus in the D2L course site. Syllabi in a D2L course site are automatically incorporated into the database each term as long as the syllabus file has a recognizable name. The recommended file name forma is: “Course Number, Course Title, Term, Year, and the word Syllabus. For example: GRDN 107 How to Grow Potatoes - Fall 2020 Syllabus.

**Required sections of a syllabus** (must have the following sections)
1) **Title**
The heading of the syllabus must include “Walla Walla University - Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education”, the department or school, the current term and the phrase “Course Syllabus”. An institutional logo is desirable but not essential. For Example:

![Walla Walla University logo]

**Walla Walla University - Seventh-day Adventist Higher Education**
**Department or School**
**Fall 2019**
**Course Syllabus**

2) **Basic course information**
Include course number, course title, number of credits, meeting time and location. For Example:

   **GNRL 121 – Introduction To Syllabus Construction (1 credit)**
   **Class Schedule: M/W 2:00-3:50 pm**
   **Classroom: KRH 205**

3) **Instructor information**
Instructor’s full name, professional title, building and office number, office phone number, university email address, and office hours. Should also include a brief description of how a student can make an appointment with the instructor. Faculty may choose to include additional information such as cell phone number, preferred contact hours, etc. Do not include a personal email address. All email communication should be though WWU email. For Example:

   **Instructor:** Charles Smith, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Mycology
   **Instructor Office:** ADM 334
   **Office Hours:** M 11:00-11:50; R 12:00-12:50; or by appointment
   **Email:** Charles.Smith@wallawalla.edu
   **Phone:** (509) 527-2222 office;
4) **Course description**
The minimum requirement is the course description as it appears in the current university bulletin. Other details may be helpful for courses that are part of a sequence or that include special projects, laboratory components, field trips, etc. If the course has content or processes that may be controversial, the instructor may wish to inform students and briefly explain why the content, etc., is included.

5) **University core themes/values**
Articulate how the university core themes are integrated into the course. The table below is the recommended format. Not all courses will integrate all core themes or to the same extent. Expectedly, courses will have a strong contribution to Excellence in Thought but it is important to describe how other core themes are integrated. For a concise description of each core theme, see the Core Themes Description at the end of this handout.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Core Theme</th>
<th>Summary of How The Core Theme is Actualized in the Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence in Thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generosity in Service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Beauty in Expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith in God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6) **Learning outcomes or objectives**
Specific course level student learning outcomes or objectives must be articulated. They could include such thing as the understanding of specific information, the expression of specific professional behaviors, or the demonstration of specific skills. Course level outcomes should relate to the program/department outcomes. **The specific articulation and assessment of student learning outcomes is required to meet various accreditation standards.**

7) **Textbooks and materials**
List all required items (not including common supplies). The complete title, edition, and ISBN number (if possible) should be given for each required published work. The US Department of Education requires that students can readily determine the cost of course materials. All other uncommon items such as calculators, safety goggles, etc., should be indicated with an approximate cost. Any recommended materials should be indicated but the cost does not need to be identified.

8) **Course requirements**
List each requirement a student should complete and the point value or weight toward the final course grade. It is helpful to provide a brief description of each item and an indication if the assessment of an item is qualitative, quantitative, or pass/fail.

9) **Course grade**
Indicate how the final grade is determined. This would typically include a table or “formula” showing how the points or percentages are determined. Specify how a student accesses the recorded score for each item to help they be aware of their performance and to provide opportunity for the student to discover any recording errors. It is advisable to include a statement that students are responsible for checking their scores on a regular basis.

Instructors must never record individual scores or grades in a manner such that they can viewed by others unless officially approved. If you need assistance, please contact the director of Academic Records or the associate VP for Academic Administration.

10) **Grade scale**
Include a grade scale similar to the example below. Screen reader programs for people with visual impairment read from left to right, not down columns.
Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11) Returned materials
All student works that have been graded must be viewable (even if temporarily) by the student for review. Indicate how a student can find graded items. If the student can only view an item temporarily, indicate so and state that they may not capture images of the item on any device. Because of the ease with which images can be captured (spy pen camera, watch with camera, etc.), students have access to materials from previous classes even if the items were not physically returned.

In order to help students understand expectations, the following statement was voted by University Senate as required in all syllabi:

“All materials submitted by a student will be evaluated in a timely manner (typically 2 weeks). Exams will be scored and be accessible for viewing by a student before the next exam in a given course. The score for each class requirement may be accessed by ____________.”

Complete the underlined portion to inform students how to find the score for each item in a course.

12) Academic integrity
Provide a link to the university academic Integrity Policy and state any specific information related to academic integrity regarding your particular course or academic discipline. A common response from students when confronted with an alleged academic integrity violation is that they did not know it was inappropriate. Students readily share ideas, information, and their work with each other as well as being part of a culture that readily “borrows” material from online sources so it may be advisable to be clear what your expectations are. Instructors should explain what the potential consequences are for a breach of academic integrity. The inclusion of a general statement indicating that depending on the violation a grade of “F” for the course may be assigned by the instructor is encouraged.

13) Accommodations for a documented disability
Include a statement indicating your willingness to provide appropriate accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Specific information on how to contact Disability Support Services (web link) and phone number (509-527-2366). Instructors should not provide special accommodations to students without a documented disability. Accommodations are not retroactive and occur once a disability is documented with the university.

14) Religious accommodations
State regulations require the university to reasonably accommodate student absences for reasons of faith or conscience, observance of religious holidays, or participation in an organized activity conducted by a religious denomination, church, or organization. The full Policy and Request Form can be found on the WWU website.

15) Emergency procedures
You should include the following statement: “WWU is dedicated to providing a safe campus and wants students to be aware of Emergency Preparedness Information available concerning fire, active shooter, injuries, etc. and our emergency notification system.”
16) **Title IX: Sex Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy**
You should include the following statement in your syllabus: “WWU prohibits all forms of sex discrimination and sexual misconduct including, but not limited to, sex-based intimidation and harassment, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual violence. If you have been subjected to, or are aware of, an instance of sex discrimination or sexual misconduct, you are highly encouraged to report it to the Title IX coordinator via email, through the Title IX webpage, or by calling (509)527-2141. The University has resources to help.

17) **Tentative schedule**
Include a tentative schedule that shows each class meeting and the intended topics to be presented or events that occur. Indicate when all significant assessments (exams, final exam, etc.), assignments, projects, reports, etc., are due. Consult the current final exam schedule for the correct day and time of the final exam. The instructor should consider including a statement that the schedule will be adhered to as much as possible but is subject to change based on the professional judgment of the instructor.

**Recommended sections of a syllabus**

18) **Integration of faith and learning**
Describe how the course content, discussion, assignments, etc., are influenced by faith. How would the course be different than one with a similar title at a secular campus or another faith-based University?

19) **Late policy**
Describe your policy for late work, missed classes, missed exams, etc. Generally, the less impact an assignment has on other course members the more flexibility that should be extended. The more central an item is to a student’s understanding, the less flexibility there should be for late work.

20) **Use of old course materials or materials from other courses**
Students are likely to access course materials (exams, reports, notes, etc.) from previous years or from similar courses at another institution. State what is and is not acceptable use of previous materials. It may be helpful to provide previous course materials online so all students have the same access.

21) **Use of technology**
Describe what devices students may or may not use in your classroom. This may include items such as cell phone use, audio recording, capture of power point presentations, use of laptops, IPads, “cheating” watches, etc.

22) **Safety and health (lab classes, etc.)**
For some courses specific safety information should be included in the syllabus or distributed as needed.

23) **Grading disagreements or errors**
It is helpful to the student and the instructor if the procedure and deadlines are specified for correcting grading errors or addressing grading disagreements. This encourages students to review graded material promptly and reduces the probability of end of term disagreements.

24) **Student conduct**
Some faculty have specific expectations for professional behavior in the classroom, laboratory, clinic, etc. Specify your expectations, along with how professionalism will be evaluated.

25) **Helpful resources (web links, etc.)**
List other resources that could be helpful for a student to be successful in your course. Web links are especially helpful.
26) **Tips for success**

Share useful tips. Should a student study the textbook more than notes? Should they do all the sample problems? Is the web page for the textbook from the publisher helpful?

**Other information**

1) **Workload**

According to the Department of Education, a credit hour is an amount of work represented by students in achieving learning outcomes as verified by documentable assessment. A credit hour is not less than:

a) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately 10-12 weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

b) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Put more simply a student should expect to invest about 30 hours per term per credit inclusive of all course related activities.

2) **Progress reports**

Although a student should be able to determine their tentative course grade at any time on their own, the institution has a special alert system (academic progress reports) for low academic performance.

WWU requires all instructors to submit two online progress reports **per term** (not including summer) for students who have been identified as 1) at “**high academic risk**” (instructor receives an email indicating student names), or 2) who have a **tentative grade of C- or below**. These reports are an important communication tool for students, academic advisors, mentors, residence hall deans, and academic administration. Instructors are always welcome to alert the academic advisement office or the associate academic vice president any time they are concerned about academic performance, attendance, behavior, etc.

3) **Accessibility Checker**

It is important for individuals with a visual disability to be able to access course syllabi by using a screen reader. To evaluate your Word document for compatibility with screen readers click on File>Info>Check for issues>check accessibility. When you try this, you should see a pop up box on the right of your Word document that indicates any “errors” and “warnings” (see example to right).

To locate each error or warning click on each item below the heading. In this example, you should click on “Table” in error section and “Table Cell” in the warnings section to find the problematic points in your document. One of the more common errors is the lack of figure captions.

**Core themes descriptions (summary)**

- **Excellence in Thought**
  Embodies the purpose of Walla Walla University: to educate students in preparation for effective careers, professions, or further study. The objectives identified for this core theme are to demonstrate effective student learning, provide a positive learning environment, and help students to identify and achieve their academic and career goals.

- **Generosity in Service**
As an institution of higher education in the context of the global community as well as in the tradition of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The objectives to accomplish this core theme are to address regional, national, and global humanitarian needs and inspire leadership within a Christian worldview.

- **Beauty in Expression**
  Relates to the environment, infrastructure and esthetics of the university as it communicates and accomplishes its’ mission. This includes enriching learning and social opportunities that may be inside or outside the classroom, demonstration of professionalism by students, promotion of positive interactions between students and between students and faculty, as well as participation in scholarly activities such as presentations, publications, and performances.

- **Faith in God**
  Faith in God is embedded in the history and purpose of the institution. This would include activities and interactions that encourage Christian faith development and spiritual growth, promote Adventist holistic living, life balance, and the discussion or adoption or Christian ethics.

**Resources**

**Principles of a good syllabus**
- [Constructing Legally Sound Syllabi](#) - Hampton University General Counsel.
- [Does Your PR Course Syllabus Excite, Intrigue, and Motivate Students to Learn?](#)
- [University of West Florida: Best Practices for Designing a Learning-Centered Syllabus](#)
- [Does the Document Matter? The Evolving Role of Syllabi in Higher Education](#)

**Syllabus guides or examples**
- [How To Make A Syllabus](#)
- [How To Create A Syllabus Advice Guide](#) – Chronicle of Higher Education
- Michigan Technical University [Syllabus Requirements](#)
- University of Delaware [Syllabus Templates](#)
- Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching – [Syllabus Design](#)
- University of Connecticut - Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning - [Syllabus](#)

**Online Videos**
- [Creating Engaging Syllabi](#)
- [Syllabus Best Practices](#), Iowa State University.
- Sloan Consortium – [Course & Syllabus Design](#)

*Updated August 2020*