

and/or doesn't perform adequately. Spell out the course requirements.



Provide a clear course calendar. On your list of dates and assignments, give the topics as well. Students should be aware of whether you expect the reading assignment completed by a specific class or by the end of the week. The calendar should also include the due dates for papers, discussion forums, etc. This will help our student in their time management and is linked to student success.

Last, but not least, think about providing a video for your students. The importance of using video in your online course and even in your hybrid and supplemental courses cannot be overstated. We all know that today's learners are multimodal, they digest their information in different ways through different mechanisms. One type of video in your course that is often overlooked is a "Welcome" or "Introduction to the Course" video. Students in an online environment feel more connected when they know who is facilitating the learning process. Putting a face to course materials and discussion posts can help the learner feel closer to the professor.



While this type of syllabus and resources takes time and thought to prepare, you will also find that it helps you take a long hard look at what you are doing in the courses you teach. In other words, a good syllabus provides clarification for faculty as well as students.

Please contact the Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Technology if you require further assistance in the creation of the course syllabus, setting up rubrics in Blackboard, planning and recording your Welcome videos and any other type of resources you may need during the design and development of your distance learning courses at UNT Dallas.

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!



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Developing a Learning-Centered Syllabus: A Walkthrough

OVERVIEW

Syllabi serve several functions. First and foremost, they communicate individual faculty member decisions about teaching and learning to students. Syllabi also reflect disciplinary, departmental, and school and university wide norms regarding pedagogy, style, and the way faculty work together to develop curricula. In fulfilling the University's responsibilities to external accreditors, state agencies, parents, and other stakeholders, syllabi also play an important role in reflecting a vision of shared governance among faculty, students, and academic administrators across the University. The following points provide a reflective walkthrough of the syllabus development process.

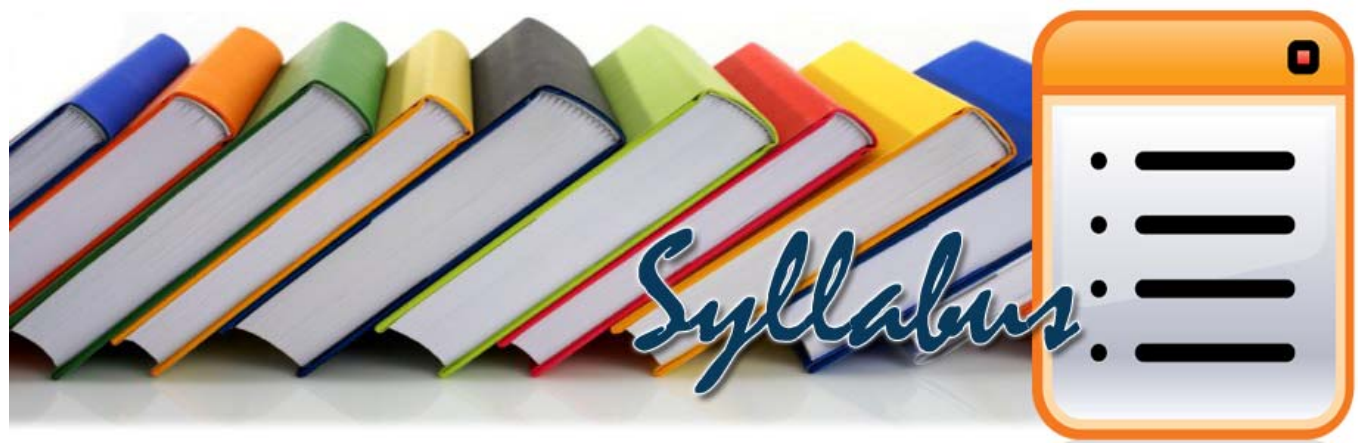


Describe the course and its goals and objectives. Here you will want to convey the course purpose and provide an overview of what will be covered as well as detailing the goals and specific learning objectives. You will need to be clear in your own mind as to how you plan to measure attainment of these goals and objectives. Students should also be given a sense of this. You need to provide clear standards and criteria for any assessment strategies you plan to use.

Describe the course format including details of presentation, procedure, and especially any elements that may be unique or nontraditional. If there are resources on campus that may assist students at various points in the course and/or with specific assignments you may wish to indicate this here. If you have specific guidelines for taking notes, doing papers, etc., they should be attached to the syllabus and provided at the beginning of the course.

Explain where the course fits within the general program of study. Students should be given some indication of how each course relates to other courses in the department/program. If a particular course has interdisciplinary connections that should also be explained and you may wish to indicate what other courses might be of interest.

Be very clear about what students can expect from you and what you expect from them. You need to present your grading policy, an indication of what weights are assigned to particular assign-



ments, and how you handle late or missed assignments and/or exams. Indicate when and how they can expect feedback during the term and the types of feedback they will get. If you have set out clear learning objectives, students may be able to partially monitor their own development. This is also the place to discuss any attendance policy in the online environment you have. If you expect class discussion through Blackboard on a regular basis, you need to inform the students and also explain how they should prepare for these. With assignments such as research papers, it is important to indicate what you expect in the paper, and how these expectations are factored into the grade. The use of rubrics is really helpful as they set up the standards against which work will be measured. **Rubrics** are multidimensional sets of scoring guidelines that can be used to provide consistency in evaluating student work. Rubrics are great for students too, they let students know what is expected of them, and demystify grades by clearly stating the expectations for a project. They also help students see that learning is about gaining specific skills (both in academic subjects and in problem-solving and life skills), and they give students the opportunity to do self-assessment to reflect on the learning process. Define what you mean by an "A" paper or exam, etc.

Sometimes you may want to provide exemplary coursework. You may also think about establishing an on-going process of assessment whereby students have the opportunity to indicate to you areas of concerns about the course material. For example, you may wish to ask students to give you a weekly summary of what they feel they have learned and what areas they feel need to be strengthened. This gives you the opportunity to either guide the student with problems to additional help, or, if many students are indicating the same concerns, to go back over some material before going on to the next unit. If you are going to do this, specify it on your syllabus.

Special projects, term papers, formal oral presentations via video or audio through the Internet, etc. should be described in detail. If you want students to turn in material for review prior to the final due date, make sure that they know when these interim materials are due and what the turnaround time will be for your assessment. If you are using group projects, be very clear how these will be assessed. You may also need to discuss what mechanisms are in place to deal with situations where a group member drops the course