

Creating a Syllabus

A syllabus is a tool to communicate with students what to expect from a course. If you lead a section or course, it's a good idea to distribute some form of syllabus on the first day. Because it will be referred to throughout the semester, it is important to spend time and energy constructing your syllabus.

Actual syllabi will vary from field to field and course to course. Keeping in mind your responsibilities and goals for the course or section, you may need to tailor your syllabus to meet the needs of your class. That said, most well-crafted syllabi include the following features (not necessarily in this order). **See the checklist on the next page.**

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Table 1: Syllabus Components Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Information - course title & number, discipline, semester & year, credits; meeting days, times & location; any prerequisites (i.e. assumed/required prior knowledge or courses)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Instructor Information - contact information for instructor(s) of record and all instructional assistants and/or GSIs, including email, office hours/location, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Resources - Canvas or course website; and required texts/software or other materials.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Description - explain the course's scope and purpose, relevance to students' academic/professional goals, and major deliverables (e.g., project, presentation, paper, exhibit)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Goals and Learning Objectives - articulate the course-level objectives, outcomes, and/or competencies that students should be able to do after successfully completing the course.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning Activities and Teaching Methods - describe the course format (e.g., lecture, recitation, lab, studio) and what teaching methods you will use to engage students in achieving the learning objectives. Reflect on teaching methods that will be a part of every class period as well as those that may be used at specific times during the course.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Assessments & Feedback - describe the assignments that students need to complete as part of the course (e.g., homework, exams, papers, projects, etc.), and how the instructor will provide feedback to the students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grading & Evaluation - Include components of the final grade, weights assigned to each course element, grading on a curve or scale, etc. Provide ways that students can easily calculate or find their grades at any point in the course.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Course Management and Policies - clearly communicate your expectations and university policies around, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● professional behavior in class ● classroom climate and inclusion ● attendance, engagement, participation ● academic integrity, including collaboration and plagiarism ● late or make-up work, and re-grading requests ● accommodations for students with disabilities and for religious holidays
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Resources for Student Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can a diverse group of students succeed in this course? ● Study Tips and resources that could help increase students' success ● Statement encouraging student wellness with relevant campus resource
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Schedule - outline the course week by week. Include content, activities and assignments with due dates.

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Transparency on your course syllabus:

- Clearly state your name as you would like to be addressed and do the same when you introduce yourself to the class on the first day.
- Share your preferences for how students should communicate with you, whether to ask questions or talk more broadly about course material.
- Ex: What kind of questions/topics are best for office hours, which are best for email, what do you want brought up in class, what should be addressed to other members of your teaching team, etc.
- Clearly state what level of collaboration is allowed.
- [See an example](#) on page 2 under the homework section. (Syllabus for UM course EECS 538, taught by Hafiz K. M. Sheriff, Jr.)
- Develop discussion guidelines or community agreements about class, lab, or team interactions.
- [See an example](#) syllabus (section 6.1) from UM course Biotechnology, Human Values, & The Engineer, ENGINEERING 100, taught in 2017 by Belmont, Sulewski, and Casper.

Inclusivity in your course syllabus:

- Add a section that contains a statement supporting the U of M Strategic Plan and the College of Engineering DEI Strategic Plan.
- [See an example](#) in this syllabus (in section 4) from UM course CEE 365, taught by Krista Wigginton.
- [See some suggested wording](#) for syllabus statements on accommodations for students with disabilities (from University of Michigan's Services for Students with Disabilities office).
- Deliberately choose course materials with students' range of financial resources in mind.
- [See an example](#) in the syllabus (See "references" section) for UM course EECS 589, taught by Necmiye Ozay.
- Communicate concern for students' well-being, and share information about relevant campus resources to support students with a broad range of experiences and identities (e.g. [C.A.R.E. Center](#), [CAPS @ CoE](#), [Sexual Assault Prevention & Awareness Center](#), [Services for Students with Disabilities](#), [Spectrum Center](#), etc).
- Include a resource list on syllabus or refer to a website with all the resources.

For more guidance, see CRLT's [Syllabus Design](#) page on their website.