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| Syllabus Toolkit | Focus on Teaching and Learning 🔥 Spark Up Your Syllabus  Telling the Story of Your Course:  How and Why to Communicate  the Design of a Course to Students  February 10, 2023 |
| **Does your syllabus look like something you would be interested in reading?**  Table of Contents  Visually Interesting Syllabus Tips 1  Creating a More Inclusive Syllabus 2  Syllabus Activities 3  Resources 4  Syllabus Examples 7 | Tips for a Visually Interesting Syllabus  * Consider using alternative formatting.   **ADD**   * + Fonts   + Color   + Photos   + Illustrations   + Quotes   + Table of Contents   + Memes   + Cartoons/Comics   **USE**   * + Word templates   + PowerPoint   + Piktochart   + Q&A format   + Pixton * Include graphics to make information stand out or convey big picture or complex ideas.   **USE**   * + Concept maps   + Matrices   + Pie charts or bar charts   + Timelines * Incorporate videos into a digital syllabus, make it “liquid” or dynamic, and/or create a course website or digital collaboration space.   **USE**   * + Your own phone camera to make videos (e.g., welcoming students, describing course learning objectives, etc.)   + Academic WordPress Hosting allows faculty to build a WordPress website for academic purposes. <https://expressions.syr.edu/>   + Google Sites (digital/liquid syllabus or course website)   + Wix.com (course website)   + Miro.com (collaboration space) |
| **Does your syllabus read like a welcoming invitation to a learning experience?**  **There is a peculiar aesthetic pleasure in constructing the form of a syllabus, or a book of essays, or a course of lectures. Visions and shadows of people and ideas can be arranged and rearranged like stained-glass pieces in a window, or chessmen on a board.**  **A.S. Byatt** | Creating a More Inclusive Syllabus  * Read through your syllabus with a critical eye and consider first impressions. Are you using a welcoming tone and explaining things clearly and collegially? Do your personal course policies reflect your current practice? Revise statements to be clearer. * Review for jargon. Do you include language and acronyms that are easy if you know them but may not be to those who are new to campus/college? Examples include office hours, learning objectives, weighted grades, etc. * Include an introductory statement to begin the course on a warm and positive note. Convey the learning experience as a partnership between you and the students (“we” and “us”). * Organize the document around important questions or big themes. * Acknowledge that all students struggle at various times in their academic career, and this is part of the college experience. Consider including a student support section, which could cover how to succeed in the course and how to get help (available resources and indicating those that are fee-based). * Communicate your preferred title. What should students call you? If you want to use their preferred names and pronouns, share that with students. * Describe course goals/learning objectives and why they are important and relevant to future career plans. * Add a preface before institutional policies that describes why they are important. Frame them as mechanisms for ensuring student success and express your willingness to be a resource if students have questions about the policies. * **Important!** Check accessibility of the syllabus. Syracuse University’s [Accessibility Technology Toolkit](mailto:https://answers.syr.edu/display/ITHELP/Accessible+Technology+Toolkit) is a helpful resource.   Source: Fisher, G. R., & Keenan, S. M. (2020, February 3). Tips for creating a more inclusive syllabus. The Teaching Professor. |
| **Do you simply read through your syllabus with students on the first day or not cover the syllabus at all?**  **Try one of these activities instead to increase students’ engagement with and understanding of the syllabus contents.**  Willy Wonka Syllabus Meme | Syllabus Activities  * **Icebreaker** | Assign students to become an expert on a section of the syllabus, then give them time to introduce themselves to one another and learn about the syllabus from their classmates. Students can be organized into groups. * **Seek and Find** | Give students an “open book” quiz on important content in the syllabus so they can practice locating information on the syllabus. This could be framed as a friendly competition working in groups.   Example Questions   * + - When do you need to post your first response to the weekly discussion board?     - What topics are we covering on September 21?     - What is the policy on late work?     - What is due on October 8?     - What happens in discussion sessions?     - What is the academic integrity policy? * **Annotate the Syllabus** | Have students annotate the syllabus. Following that, respond to their questions in class and/or create an FAQ page in Blackboard. * **Hidden Message** | Within the syllabus, hide instructions for an activity. It could be something fun and/or something related to the course (e.g., a message telling students in a food studies course to post a pic of their favorite foods). * **Co-Create** | Make space for students to develop the syllabus with you. Consider what you are willing to adjust and set parameters if needed. Ask students to provide the rationale for their recommendations. * **Discussion Board** | Require students to post a question or comment about elements of the syllabus. It gives students practice posting and an opportunity for them to share what they see as important and what is unclear.   Example Questions   * + - What two key points or parts of the syllabus piqued your interest and why?     - What two key points or parts of the syllabus are not clear? * **Personalize Course Learning Objectives** | Ask students to choose one learning objective from the syllabus that resonates with them for personal or professional reasons. In a discussion board post, ask them to explain why they chose that one, how it connects to their goals or interests, and how they can customize the learning objective to help them move toward their goal. |
| **Would you like to take a deeper dive in learning about syllabus development?**  **Here are some resources you might find helpful.** | Resources 5 activities to encourage students to engage with the syllabus. (n.d.). University of Pittsburgh, University Center for Teaching and Learning. Retrieved February 1, 2023, from <https://teaching.pitt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/5-Activities-to-Encourage-Students-to-Engage-with-the-Syllabus.pdf>  Baker, P. (2021, October). 4 alternative syllabus formats that promote equity. Every Learner Everywhere. Retrieved January 30, 2023, from <https://www.everylearnereverywhere.org/blog/4-alternative-syllabus-formats-that-promote-equity/>  Bayraktar, B. (2020, July 28). Tip: Creative syllabi, making syllabi more effective pedagogical documents: jumping on the infographic bandwagon. Tips for Teaching Professors. Retrieved January 30, 2023, from <https://higheredpraxis.substack.com/p/tip-creative-syllabi>  Berdahl, L. (2021, August 27). How to get students to read your syllabus. University Affairs. Retrieved February 1, 2023, from <https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/the-skills-agenda/how-to-get-students-to-read-your-syllabus/>  Breneman, D. and Broscheid, A. (2022). New teaching toolbox: Engaging students with the syllabus. Retrieved February 3, 2023, from <https://www.jmu.edu/cfi/_files/t-t_21-22/01.13.22-engaging-students-with-the-syllabus.pdf>  College students more engaged with teachers who have a 'friendlier' syllabus. (2022, August 14). StudyFinds Wire. Retrieved February 1, 2023, from <https://studyfinds.org/college-students-professors-engagement-syllabus/>  Davidson, C. N., & Katopodis, C. (2022, August 24). Starting off right with the syllabus. Inside Higher Ed. Retrieved February 1, 2023, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2022/08/24/creative-ways-use-syllabus-engage-and-teach-students-opinion>  Fanguy, W. (2022, July 6). How to create an infographic syllabus with Piktochart (Plus Templates). Retrieved January 30, 2023, from <https://piktochart.com/blog/create-infographic-syllabus-piktochart/>  Fisher, G. R., & Keenan, S. M. (2020, February 3). Tips for creating a more inclusive syllabus. The Teaching Professor. Retrieved from <https://www.unco.edu/nhs/stem-inclusive-excellence-collective/pdf/Fisher_Keenan_Tips_for_Creating_a_More_Inclusive_Syllabus.pdf>  Fulmer, S. M. (2016, June 18). Weekly Digest #64: Preparing a learning-focused syllabus. The Learning Scientists. Retrieved January 30, 2023, from <https://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2017/6/18/weekly-digest-64> |
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| **Would you like to check out the syllabi referenced in the presentation?** | Syllabus Examples Gannon, K. (2018). HST 380, History of Capitalism syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <http://www.thetattooedprof.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/CapitalismSyllabus.Fall18.pdf>  Hangen, T. (2011). HI 112, U.S. History II syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <http://www.tonahangen.com/wsc/us2/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/112.Spr11.pdf>  Hangen, T. (2018). HI 217, U.S. Social History syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <http://tonahangen.com/wsc/hi217/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/217HSoc.Spr18.pdf>  Jenks, A. (2012). Anthropology 102, Human Ways of Life syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://bpb-us-e2.wpmucdn.com/faculty.sites.uci.edu/dist/1/303/files/2013/08/Jenks-Anth-102-Fall-12-syllabus.pdf>  Ko, E. (ND). 06-301, Chemical Engineering Kinetics syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/syllabus/samples-creative/KineticsSyllabus.pdf>  Moon, J. (2017). BIO 315H, Adv Intro to Genetics: Honors syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.coursehero.com/file/36699007/BIO315H-Syllabuspdf/>  Mosher, A. *Syracuse University Course Tagging Toolkit*. MAX 302, Civic Engagement Research Seminar syllabus. Retrieved February 2, 2023, from <https://effectiveness.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Course-Tagging-Toolkit.pdf>  Moyer, K. and Boyarski, D. (2002). 51-201, Typography One: Type as Image syllabus. Retrieved January 20, 2023, from <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/syllabus/samples-creative/TypographySyllabus.pdf>  homework | The far side, The far side gallery, Far side comics Gary Larsen |