



Telling the Story of Your Course: How and Why to Communicate the Design of a Course to Students

Focus on Teaching and Learning 🔥 Spark Up Your Syllabus

February 10, 2023

Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence

Institutional Effectiveness



Session Outcomes

- Explore options for authoring syllabi as dynamic documents to convey your course design.
- Consider how different groups of students experience syllabi.
- Discover activities you can use to engage students in diving deep into the story of your course.

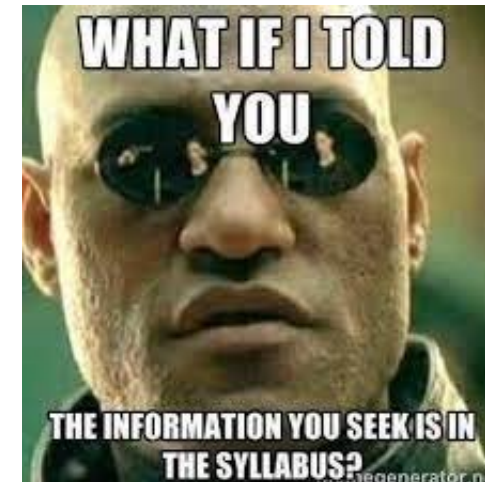
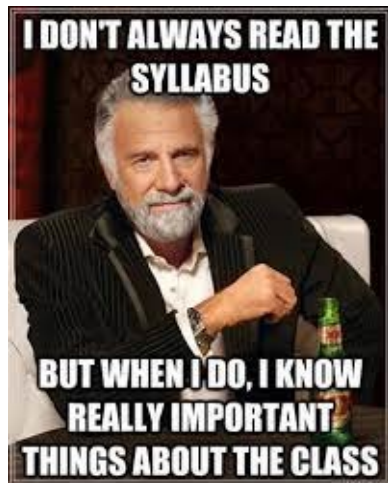
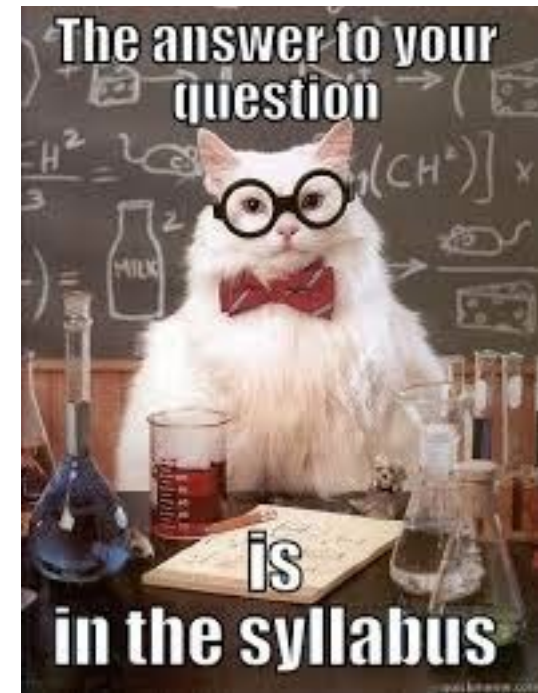
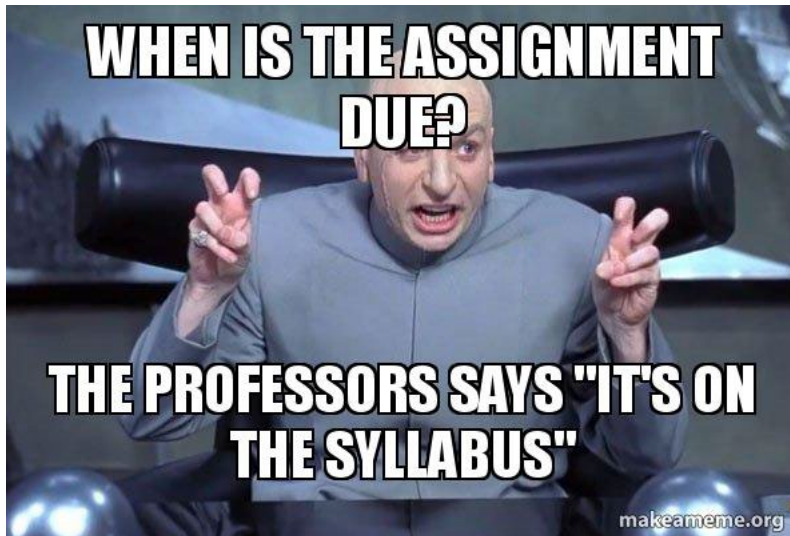
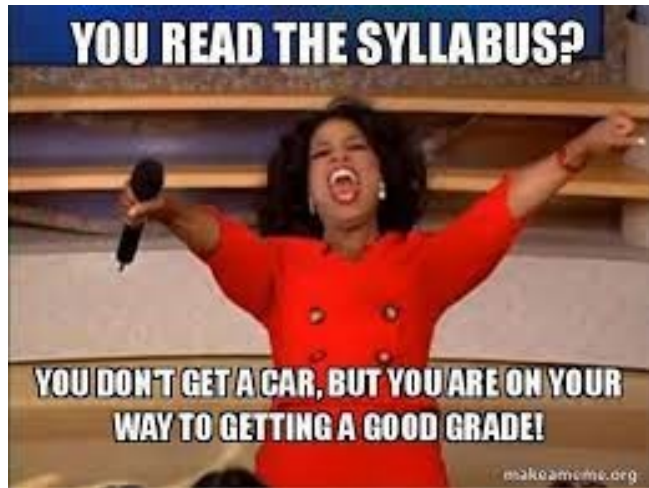
Syllabus Story: English Language Institute

by Amy Walker, College of Professional Studies

- Grading: The Final Exam Is Not The Be-All And End-All
- Syllabus: A Living Document
- Syllabus: A Grounding Tool/Psychological Anchor
- Syllabus: Having Soul

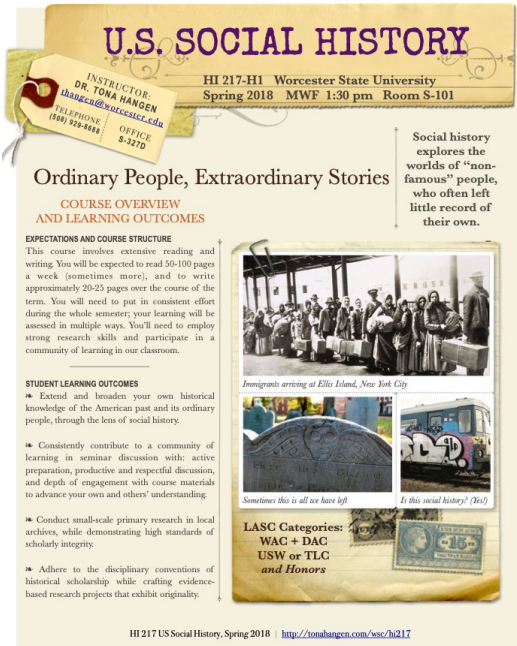
- ❖ If I had to give one piece of advice about writing a syllabus to a new faculty member, what would I say?
- ❖ If my syllabus could talk, it would say . . .
- ❖ What role does my syllabus play in my class?

It's in the Syllabus!



Creating an Engaging Syllabus

Consider using alternative formatting



ADD

Fonts	Color
Photos	Illustrations
Quotes	TOC
Memes	Cartoons

What happens in Discussion Section (DS)?

- Each week, you will work on a set of Discussion Section homework questions **on your own**. You'll turn this in at the start of DS.
- During DS you will work in small teams to complete the DS homework again, and ask questions if you had trouble. Your **TA can also answer any questions** you might have about the extra homework, reading, or the lecture class material.
- Each week, you will also have an individual homework assignment, which is **not graded** but supplements the DS work. The Weekly Homework Quiz (on Canvas) will be a problem(s) adapted from the DS and individual homework set of questions.



How can I contact my professor or TA?

Professor: Dr. Jen Moon
 Office: NMS 2.104
 Office Phone: (512) 232-4011
 Email: jen.moon@austin.utexas.edu (but use Canvas for course related-email)
 Office Hours*: Mon 10am-11am in RLM 6.112
 Thurs 2pm-4pm in NMS 1.106
 or by appointment (just email me!)



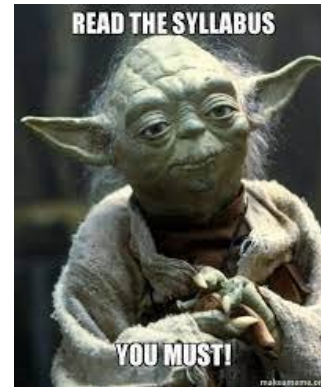
*My office hours are 'group-style' office hours. Please be welcome, even if you're not sure of what to ask or how to ask it! If you have a grade or personal concern, it's better to email me for an individual appointment.

What's in this syllabus

How to take this course	2
Course Requirements	2
Grading Scale & Syllabus	3
Details of the "Document Duel"	4
Policies and Resources	5

USE

Word templates
 PowerPoint
 Piktochart
 Q&A format
 Pixton



LOS ANGELES SOUTHWEST COLLEGE
FALL 2012

ANTHROPOLOGY 102: HUMAN WAYS OF LIFE

Section 0418
Mon/Wed, 9:35-11:00am
SSEC 315

Course Description and Approach

Welcome to an introduction to the field of sociocultural anthropology! Anthropology is the study of what it means to be human—anthropologists are interested in everything from chimpanzees (our closest primate relatives) to ancient civilizations, religious beliefs and practices, war, and social inequality. This class is focused on current social and cultural practices and institutions around the world as well as the key concepts, questions, and methods that anthropologists have used in their attempts to make sense of cultural difference.

Our goal is not just to understand “others” but to learn to see ourselves, as well, as the products of particular social, cultural, political, and historical processes. We will learn to make sense of beliefs and behaviors that may at first seem strange and will try to look at the world from another point of view. At the same time, we will start to question what we see as normal and explore the limits of ideas about “human nature.”

This class is wide-ranging and examines the diversity of human life around the world. Topics covered include the “culture” concept and ethnography; language, family, gender, and religion; social stratification and inequality; economic and political systems; cultural change and contemporary globalization.

“Anthropologists! Anthropologists!”

Your Instructor

Dr. Angela C. Jenks
 Office: SSEC 216M
 Phone: 323-242-5513
 Email: jenksa@lasc.edu
 Find me in my office:
 Mon or Wed, 3-6pm

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Examine human ways of life holistically and comparatively, applying an anthropological perspective to the analysis of current events and social issues
- Demonstrate an understanding of and respect for human similarities and differences
- Analyze your own cultural biases and perspectives

Fall Semester 2002, MW 8:30 – 11:20 am, MM115
Karen Moyer and Dan Boyarski, instructors
Soojin Jun, TA

Typography

has one plain duty before it
and that is to convey information
in writing.
No argument or consideration
can absolve typography from this duty.
A printed work which cannot be read
becomes a product without purpose.

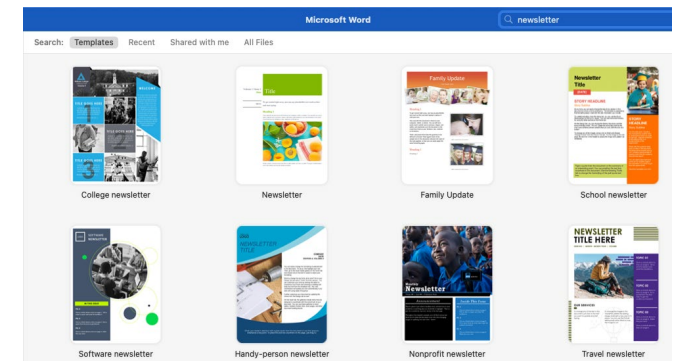
Emil Ruder
Typographie
1965

Today, at the level of mass-communications,
it appears that the linguistic message is indeed
present in every image:
as title, caption, accompanying press article,
film dialogue, comic strip balloon . . .
We are still, and more than ever,
a civilization of writing.

Roland Barthes
The Rhetoric of the Image
1977

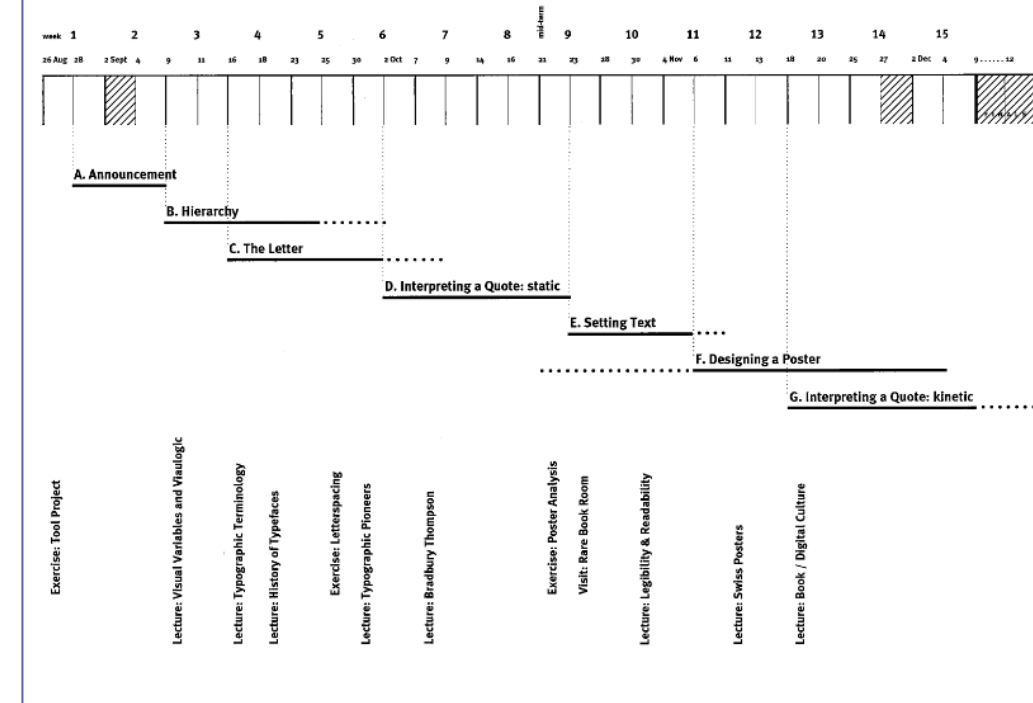
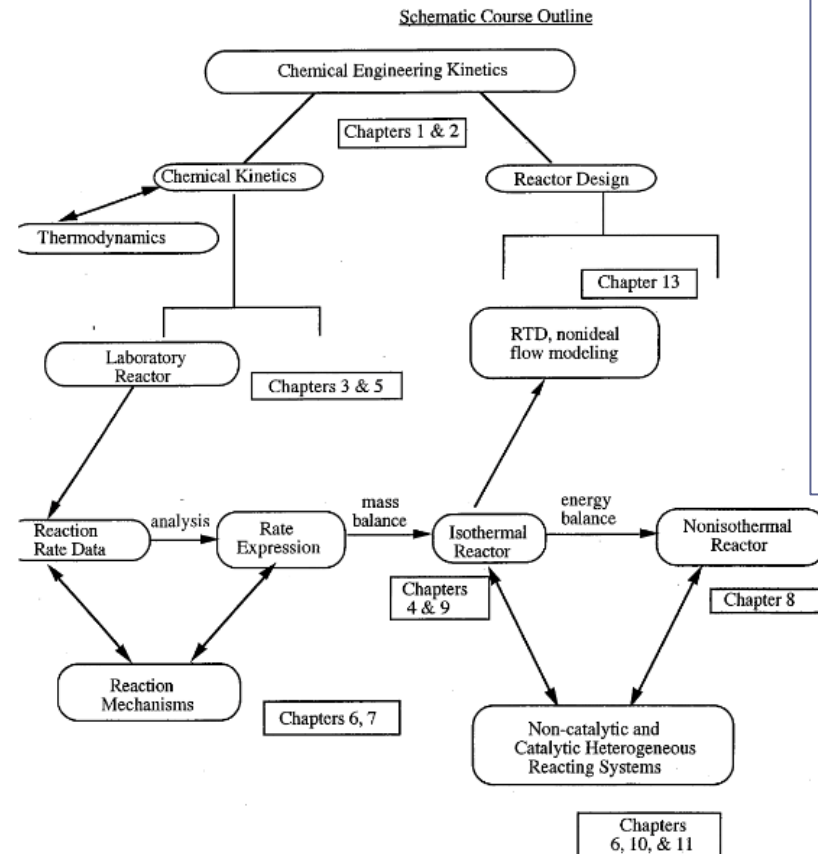
**Design must
seduce, shape,
and perhaps more importantly,
evoke emotional response.**

April Greiman
Hydrid Imagery
1990



Include graphics to make info stand out or convey big picture or complex ideas

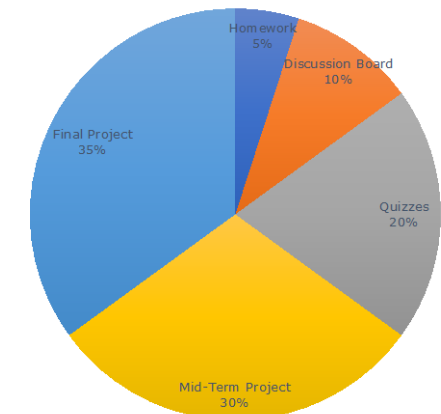
October 2018						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						29
30	1	2 Capitalism and Imperialism Appleby, Ch. 8. Lenin, <i>Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism</i> (excerpts) Pomeranz, from <i>The Great Divergence</i> , H&B, 171-180	3	4 Legitimizing Capitalism Kurz, Chs. 4-5. Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," in H&B, 283-288. ESE 3 due	5	6
7	8 Midterm Exam Distributed on 10/9	9 Technology and Capitalism: "Creative Destruction?" Kurz, Chs. 7-8. Richard White, excerpt from <i>Railroad</i> , H&B, 256-264.	10	11 Capitalism at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century H&B, Module 14. Veblen, <i>Theory of the Leisure Class</i> (excerpt)*	12	13
14	15	16 World War I & The Reconfiguration of Global Capitalism Appleby, Ch. 9. Dowd, Ch. 3, to the top of p. 114. Midterm Exam Due on Blackboard	17	18 The Great Depression Dowd, finish Ch. 3. Kaufman, "Wage Theory, New Deal Labor Policy, and the Great Depression."	19	20
21	22	23 The Great Depression, cont. Garraty, "The New Deal, National Socialism, & the Great Depression" J.M. Keynes, Excerpts from "The End of Laissez-Faire" * Kurz, Chs. 9-10.	24 Also for 10/23, read Robert Heilbroner, "The Heresies of John Maynard Keynes" Dowd, Ch. 4 to p. 153. H&B, Module 18. ESE 4 due	25 The Postwar Order	26	27



Your final course grade will be determined as follows:

90-100%
80-89%
70-79%
60-69%
0-59%

Total Possible



- ❖ Be sure to add alt-text for images and charts and check accessibility of the document.

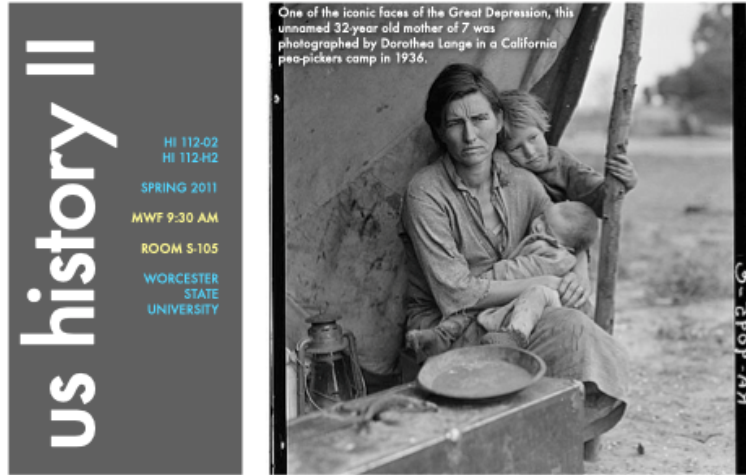
More examples:

how to take this course	wading	snorkeling	scuba diving
<p>It's not what you "get" in this course, it's how deep you go. People take a US History survey for lots of reasons, usually variations on "it's required." Think about why someone has decided that learning this material might be essential to your college experience, and what that means for you personally.</p> <p>It is entirely possible to do well in the class without being transformed by your new-found historical knowledge, but it would be a darn shame. I like to think that this (and indeed, any) course operates on three levels. Imagine we are standing on the seashore; the course is the ocean. Enter with me and go as deep as you dare...</p>	<p>you need the basic outlines of US history, the highlights, the main characters & ideas, the surface-level knowledge</p> <p>There's nothing wrong with staying in the shallows; this approach may work for you if this is likely to be your only history course, or if you've never taken one before & it's all new</p> <p>"Waders" will tend to assume that textbook, documents, and professor are mutually reinforcing, telling basically the same story. Waders are mainly concerned with WHAT happened in the past.</p>	<p>you have a grasp of the basics and are ready to think historically and explore what's below the surface</p> <p>Perhaps you've taken US history before, or are a beginning history major. You already know that history is a conversation among differing and/or contradictory perspectives.</p> <p>"Snorkelers" notice historical inconsistencies and they respectfully challenge assumptions through lively debate. Snorkelers are interested in HOW & WHY things happened as they did.</p>	<p>you want to go deeper into the past, using the cognitive equipment & tools of history as a focused critical thinker</p> <p>Experienced? You are well aware of historical controversy and how historical knowledge is constructed. You actively seek alternative sources, interpretations, and voices.</p> <p>"Divers" don't take any of the course's structure or content as natural or inevitable. They see (and then fill) the course's gaps. They are curious, passionate, and concerned with WHY HISTORY MATTERS.</p>

Program student learning outcomes	Course goals	Course learning objectives	Learning activities	Assessment	Criteria used to assess your work
Design costumes for plays set in various time periods.	Design costumes for plays set in 18 th century.	Design two period costumes for an 18 th century play showing headwear, garment, and shoes to specifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Character analysis Online design modules Peer critiques of your design exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eportfolio of sketches Journal documentation of your research Final design Statement of principles guiding your designs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costume design rubric located on course website Journal documentation criteria located on course website

CCE PROGRAM VALUES & Learning Outcome Statements	MAX 302 Course Learning Objectives. This semester you will:	Course Assignments	Two Syracuse University Shared Competencies Stressed in MAX 302
RESEARCH & DISCOVERY – Students will be able to utilize social science research methodologies to discover community and societal facts and values.	Explore Civic Studies research and the research that is associated with your companion major(s).	Reflections #1 and #2	SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY & RESEARCH SKILLS: Application of scientific inquiry and problem solving in various contexts. Analysis of theories, replication of procedures, and rethinking existing frameworks. Supporting arguments through research, data, and quantitative and qualitative evidence that can generate new knowledge.
	Research and write an annotated bibliography, literature review and final research report.	Annotated Bibliography Literature Review Final Research Report	
	Learn about and practice social science research design.	Research Prospectus Revise & Resubmit	

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
welcoming students,
describing course learning
objectives, outlining
course topics, etc.



Course Description and Objectives

In this course, we explore US history since the end of the Civil War & Reconstruction

You will learn about broad themes in the history of modern America, including immigration, race and ethnicity, social and political reform, mobility and population growth, contested meanings of freedom, industrialization, cycles of prosperity and recession, popular culture, modernity, and rights movements. You will also develop ways of thinking historically through critical analysis of primary and secondary sources; setting events, documents and people in their historical

contexts; and crafting interpretations and historical narratives from the "raw material" of the past. In this course, you should expect to do much more than memorize facts or dates – you will be busy actively doing history, not passively learning about history.

Since it fulfills your "Constitutions" requirement, the course will also cover relevant aspects of the US and Massachusetts state constitutions. This is in accordance with MA General Laws, Chapter 73, Section 2A, which reads: "In all state colleges the constitutions of the United States and of the commonwealth shall be taught as

required subjects for the purpose of fitting the students, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship and of school teaching."

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course details

Website: <http://tsonahangen.com/psyc121>

LASC: USW, CON

Required texts: James West Davidson et al, *Experience History: Interpreting America's Past Volume 2, From 1845* (McGraw Hill 2011), ISBN: 978-0077368326

David Emory Shi and Holly Mayer, *For the Record: A Documentary History of America: From Reconstruction through Contemporary Times 4th edition* (WW Norton), ISBN: 978-039394045



USE
Academic Wordpress Hosting allows
faculty to build a WordPress website
for academic purposes.

<https://expressions.syr.edu/>

Google Sites (digital/liquid syllabus)
Wix.com (course website)
Miro.com (collaboration space)

Creating a More Inclusive Syllabus

Does your syllabus read like a welcoming invitation to a learning experience?

- ❖ 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.

More tips for a more inclusive syllabus:

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Check accessibility of the syllabus.
- ❖ 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.

Source: Fisher, G. R., & Keenan, S. M. (2020, February 3). Tips for creating a more inclusive syllabus. The Teaching Professor.

- ❖ Does my syllabus take anything for granted?
- ❖ How can I take what I have learned and apply it to my own course?

Syllabus Activities

Instead of reading through the syllabus or not covering it at all with students, try one of these 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.
- **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 course message telling students in a food studies course to post a pic of their favorite foods).

More syllabus activities:

- **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.
- **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.

Have you used any of these activities before?
What other ideas do you have?

Example Questions

Seek and Find

1. When do you need to post your first response to the weekly discussion board?
2. What topics are we covering on September 21?
3. What is the policy on late work?
4. What is due on October 8?
5. What happens in discussion sessions?
6. What is the academic integrity policy?

Discussion Board

- 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?

- ❖ What remains unclear to you?
- ❖ Imagine you've shared your syllabus with students. It was a huge success! What was it that made it a success?

Thank you for joining us!

Focus on Teaching and Learning

A Collaborative Series from the Center
for Teaching and Learning Excellence
and Institutional Effectiveness



Syllabi Referenced in the Presentation

- 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>
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- 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>