Learner-Centered Syllabus Outline

Overview

A learner-centered syllabus focuses on the needs of the learner, addressing basic course information and going beyond to anticipate questions and promote academic success. The syllabus sets the tone for a course, lets learners know what to expect, establishes a rationale, shares grading strategies and provides learner resources.

An effective learner-centered syllabus will:
- Set the tone for the course
- Communicate what, when, and how students will learn
- Establish what students need to do in order to succeed in the course
- Communicate expectations in terms of student responsibilities and instructor feedback
- Articulate university policies
- Deter misunderstandings about course policies and requirements
- Motivate students to refer to the syllabus

How to use this outline

This Syllabus Outline is designed to be a guideline for developing a learner-centered syllabus. The outlined topics are elements that align with Quality Matters and are mindful of WASC standards and universal design. See References for more information.

Instructions:
- Incorporate the topics below in your learner-centered syllabus.
- Click the triangle (▷) to the left of each topic to expand for more guidelines.
- Look for the orange asterisk (*) to indicate elements that are not required or may be recommended for online courses.

Topics

Course Information

- o Course:
  Title, quarter, year

- o Instructor:

name, website url, office location, office hours; best mode of contact

o Instructional/Teaching Assistant:
  name, website url, office location, office hours; best mode of contact

o Course materials:
  textbook, reader, library resources, supplies and materials

o Course site:
  TritonEd the Learning Management System (https://tritoned.ucsd.edu)
  Other online resources

o Required or recommended tools and technology resources
  iClicker
  Software (include links and instructions for downloading)
  Publisher digital materials and assessments
  Technical Support

Course Description and Learning Outcomes

o Course description:
  Add the general course catalog description or extend it to address the questions below:
  What is the course about: its purpose, rationale? What are the general topics or focus? Who is the course aimed at? Why does this course exist? How does it fit in with the rest of the field/area's curriculum? Thinking from the prospective students' point of view, what general outcomes is the course designed to achieve? How will it contribute to them professionally? How does it fit with other courses in the department or on campus? Why would students want to take this course and learn this material? Does the course have a Prerequisite; is the course a prerequisite for other courses? Are there required skills or competencies this course builds on?

o Teaching Methods and Learning Process *
  This is your opportunity to invite students into the course, set the tone, convey positivity, and communicate the value and importance of this topic. Why should students care about this course? What is compelling about this topic? Why are you as the instructor passionate about this? How does this course fit into a curricular pathway/major if applicable? Consider any global/national/regional current events or issues that can also help reinforce the importance of this topic
  How is the course structured and how will classes be carried out? If the course has multiple formats (like lecture & recitation, lab and discussion, group learning projects and/or presentations) these should be explained clearly.
  *Include a welcome video or a photo.**
  *Invite students to introduce themselves.**

- o Learning Outcomes

  List measurable outcomes that clearly define what learners will know, be able to do (skills), value (disposition), and create as they progress through the course. Will learners be expected to demonstrate core competencies, analytical skills, express their understanding through forms of communication? Outcomes should be specific, speak to skills and performance rather than just knowledge and understanding. Outcomes should align with course content, assessments, and activities. See Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs.

- o How to succeed in this course

  List what you believe students need to do in order to succeed (how many hours per week they should dedicate, class attendance and participation, etc.). Note that students may vary in their learning and that achieving course goals requires work on the students' part.

How Learning Will be Assessed

- o Assignments and Activities

  Include graded and non-graded assignments. Choose assignments that (a) align with the course objectives; (b) require students to learn the expected material and demonstrate the competencies; (c) teach and test; (d) are appropriately demanding; and (e) foster active learning.

- o Attendance, Participation policy, Expectations

  Statement on attendance and participation:
  What are acceptable/unacceptable reasons for missing a class, activity, or assessment? What should a student do if they have to miss class? What are the consequences of an unexcused absence? What are the expectations for class participation and engagement in a face-to-face course and in an online course? *
  Does participation account for a portion of the student's grade?

  Include UCSD policy on excused absences:
  Absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance, or practice will be accommodated where reasonable. **(See Academic Regulations and Policies)**

- o Grading Procedures

  Describe how students will be graded and evaluated: On a curve or absolute scale? Clarify weighting of course components. Keep in mind, the weight of different assignments and activities will have a major impact on learners' effort distribution. For example, if you have many homework assignments and/or quizzes, but not any one of them will count significantly toward the final grade, students may invest less time and commitment to doing them. If a certain percentage of the students' grades are based on class participation, what criteria will be used to make that assessment: quantity or quality? authoritarian?

Define when students should expect to receive feedback. Clarify the form of evaluation and feedback (digital feedback, handwritten feedback, rubric/grading forms, peer reviews, etc).

o Incompletes, pass/non-pass Policy*****

Explain policies regarding requests for incompletes and documentation supporting the learner's request.
https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Regulations/500#B

If students wish to change their selected grading option after enrolling, they may use WebReg in TritonLink, or complete an add/change/drop card and file it at the Office of the Registrar. The last day to change grading options is the end of the fourth week of instruction.

Only a grade of P or NP is to be assigned for courses numbered 97, 98, 99, 195, 197, 198, and 199. Subject to the approval of the Undergraduate Council, departments may impose additional limitations or restrictions.

Only a grade of P or NP is to be assigned an undergraduate student's work in a noncredit (zero-unit) course.
Note*: See "Undergraduate Colleges" section for further information regarding the P/NP grading option.*

o Extra Credit Policy*****

Explain the policy on Extra Credit if any. How is extra credit evaluated and what is its point/weight value?

o Regrade Policy*****

Explain the regrade policy if applicable. How do students submit a request for a regrade?

o Late or Missing Assignments

Statement on late papers, missed exams: What should a student do if a paper will be late or if an exam will be missed? What are the consequences?
Check with department chair about any other department norms or policies that should be here

o Attachments

Rubric and Grading Forms at the end of the syllabus.

Course Structure and Learner Interaction

o Outline of course content/readings/assignments/activities

Provide an outline of the content of the course with dates for reading assignments, midterms, quizzes, papers, etc.

Organize by theme or topic. Include a narrative description of what each topic is about, how it connects to the theme and objectives of the course, how assessments scaffold, etc.
Be clear about what will happen in class and what students should do in advance of class. Indicate when assignments will be handed out, when they are due, when exams will occur, etc. Check the Registrar's webpage for the Academic Calendar, so you can be sure to prepare for holidays, etc:
https://blink.ucsd.edu/instructors/resources/academic/calendars/2018.html

o *Identify the format of the course*
Provide instructions on how the course will be delivered via LMS or other synchronous tool, when lectures occur, how learners access instructional materials and non-text alternatives, how learners submit assignments, participate in labs or activities, and how to take a proctored exam, etc. *

Student Resources for Support and Learning

Use this section to provide students with resources available to them if they seek assistance. Sample language is provided which you may or may not choose to edit. You can add additional resources here as well that may be unique to your course.

o *Library Help*
For questions about eReserves and research tools:
https://library.ucsd.edu/ask-us/triton-ed.html

o *Learning Resources*
Writing Hub
Supplemental Instruction
Tutoring
Mental Health Services

o *Community Centers*
Learn about the different ways UC San Diego explores, supports and celebrates the many cultures that make up our diverse community.
https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html

o *Accessibility*
Campus Approved Language:
Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) which is located in University Center 202 behind Center Hall. Students are required to present their AFA letters to Faculty (please make arrangements to contact me privately) and to the OSD Liaison in the department in advance so that accommodations may be arranged.
Contact the OSD for further information: https://disabilities.ucsd.edu/.

osd@ucsd.edu | 858. 534.4382

Whenever possible, use universal designs that are inclusive. For example, choose colors that are distinguishable by most colorblind and non-colorblind people, and use a font that is designed to be dyslexic friendly.

o Inclusion
Express a commitment to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspective, experience, and identities. Encourage students to participate in discussion and contribute to the field from their perspective. Invite anonymous feedback as an option.
Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
858.822.3542 | diversity@ucsd.edu | https://diversity.ucsd.edu/
https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/diversity/index.html
https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/governance/policies/4400.html

o *Technical Support*
For help with accounts, network, and technical issues:
https://acms.ucsd.edu/contact/index.html

For help connecting to electronic library resources such as ereserves and e-journals:
https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-and-technology/connect-from-off-campus/

*For help installing Zoom for video conferencing, virtual office hours, synchronous lectures:**
https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/file-sharing/zoom/index.html

UC San Diego Academic Regulations and Policies

o Academic Integrity
Campus Approved Language:
Each student in this course is expected to abide by the UC San Diego Policy on Integrity of Scholarship (https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2) and to excel with integrity (https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/index.html). Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work.
*[Add your own personal language that will clarify and reframe the perception and importance of academic integrity. Educate students on the specifications of collaboration, permissible and non-permissible discussion and group work, and how to develop deeper approaches to learning. Explain that integrity violations may lead to failure of the course and University disciplinary action.**]*

o Classroom Behavior Policy

Present policies to foster a positive learning environment, including use of cell phones, mobile devices, etc.
Express expectations for how learners are to communicate online and in the classroom including tone, awareness, and sensitivity.
Refer to:
[UCSD Student Conduct Code](#)
[Principles of Community](#)

o Religious Accommodation
It is the policy of the university to make reasonable efforts to accommodate students having bona fide religious conflicts with scheduled examinations by providing alternative times or methods to take such examinations. If a student anticipates that a scheduled examination will occur at a time at which his or her religious beliefs prohibit participation in the examination, the student must submit to the instructor a statement describing the nature of the religious conflict and specifying the days and times of conflict.

For final examinations, the statement must be submitted no later than the end of the second week of instruction of the quarter.
For all other examinations, the statement must be submitted to the instructor as soon as possible after a particular examination date is scheduled.

If a conflict with the student's religious beliefs does exist, the instructor will attempt to provide an alternative, equitable examination that does not create undue hardship for the instructor or for the other students in the class.

o Discrimination and harassment
The University of California, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and university policies, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy (including pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services). The university also prohibits harassment based on these protected categories, including sexual harassment, as well as sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. The nondiscrimination policy covers admission, access, and treatment in university programs and activities.

If students have questions about student-related nondiscrimination policies or concerns about possible discrimination or harassment, they should contact the Office for the Prevention of Harassment & Discrimination (OPHD) at (858) 534-8298, ophd@ucsd.edu, or reportbias.ucsd.edu.

Campus policies provide for a prompt and effective response to student complaints. This response may include alternative resolution procedures or formal investigation. Students will be informed about complaint resolution options.

A student who chooses not to report may still contact CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center for more information, emotional support, individual and group counseling, and/or assistance with obtaining a medical exam. For off-campus support services, a student may contact the Center for Community Solutions. Other confidential resources on campus include Counseling and Psychological Services, Office of the Ombuds, and Student Health Services.

CARE at the Sexual Assault Resource Center
858.534.5793 | sarc@ucsd.edu | http://care.ucsd.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
858.534.3755 | http://caps.ucsd.edu

Subject to Change Policy

Include a statement indicating that the information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be – under certain circumstances such as mutual agreement to enhance student learning – subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

References

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