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MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 21, 2018

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, and School Directors

FROM: Gary Perry, Provost and
Vice President for Academic Affairs 

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Course Syllabi (Supersedes all prior memoranda and policies)

A comprehensive syllabus facilitates clear communication between students and faculty about a course and is an important component of effective instruction. Syllabi inform students about what is expected of them to meet course requirements and must be disseminated to students in all courses in an appropriate written form, e.g. hard copy or electronic version, at the beginning of the semester. A copy must also be made available to the Department Chairperson/School Director.

It is understood that the format of syllabi may vary by academic unit but that certain information is essential. The attached *Guidelines for Course Syllabi* was developed by a Syllabus Committee, which was composed of representatives from the Undergraduate Programs Committee and the Graduate Programs Committee. These *Guidelines* were originally approved by the University Faculty Senate on January 22, 2010.

It is understood that the format of the syllabi may vary by academic unit, and Colleges and departments/schools may have additional syllabi requirements. A professional Code of Ethics statement may be important in some units. The use of plagiarism prevention services, such as SafeAssign, may be important to note as well.

Also attached is a *Template for Course Syllabi*. This was developed at the suggestion of faculty, to ease the construction of syllabi with all the required information. This is provided for use by faculty if needed but is not required; units with their own templates may continue to use those, so long as the required information articulated in the *Guidelines* is included.

It is recognized that while an instructor makes every effort to honor the syllabus as originally presented, circumstances may dictate a need to change the organization or content of the course. If there is a compelling reason to change the grading policy for the course after the syllabus has been distributed, students should be informed of this change in writing (e.g. hard copy or electronically).

Cc: Michele Hawkins, Vice Provost
Academic Affairs

Russell Ivy, Associate Provost
Programs and Assessment

Mary Walsh, Director of Credentialing

Kevin Wagner, President
University Faculty Senate

Guidelines for Course Syllabi

A well-crafted syllabus benefits student and instructor alike by minimizing misunderstandings about course requirements and expectations. The syllabus provides students a clear understanding of course objectives and learning outcomes. It also offers students a roadmap for how those objectives and learning outcomes will be met. The syllabus should not only include information on course content, readings, assignments and activities, exams, and the grade weighting of course components but also should state what students are expected to learn or be able to do as a result of taking the course. Expectations should be clear, especially in terms of assignments and due dates. In extraordinary circumstances, the Office of the Provost will issue instructions on how to handle missed classes.

1. Course title/number, number of credit hours
2. Course prerequisites, corequisites, and where course fits in program of study (if applicable)
In addition to listing prerequisites and corequisites, note if the course meets a particular requirement, such as WAC (with grade of “C” or higher), Intellectual Foundations Program, required course for entry to particular program of study, etc.
3. Course logistics
 - a. Term
 - b. Notation if online course
 - c. Class location and time (if classroom-based course)
4. Instructor contact information
Instructor’s name, office address, office hours, contact telephone number, and email address
5. TA contact information (if applicable)
TA name, office address, office hours, contact telephone number, and email address
6. Course description
The course description should be consistent with the description found in the University Catalog.
7. Course objectives/student learning outcomes
Provide the students an understanding of what they will be expected to learn as a result of successfully completing the course.
8. Course evaluation method
Include a breakdown of the graded course components and their weight in determining the overall course grade (e.g. Midterm exam--20%, Essay #1--15%, Attendance and Participation--10%, etc.). Students are entitled to know how they are progressing in a course based on the individual grades received. If you have a policy about how unexcused class absences will affect the final grade, clearly state your policy. Please note that the University Provost, in order to identify and assist students at academic risk, requests that courses with freshmen have graded assignments well before midterm. If applicable, also note the minimum grade required to pass the course (if not a “D-“).

9. Course grading scale

Many faculty include in their syllabi some type of grading rubric: what constitutes “A” work in the course or in particular assignments, “B” work, what constitutes a “Pass” or “Fail,” etc. The equivalent letter grade in the course is the decision of an individual faculty member. If a faculty member plans to exercise the option to use a unique grading scale or curve, that needs to be stated in the syllabus.

10. Policy on makeup tests, late work, and incompletes (if applicable)

If you do not accept late work or apply penalties to late work, state so. Please note that students may not be penalized for absences due to participation in University-approved activities, including athletic or scholastics teams, musical and theatrical performances, and debate activities. Instructors must allow these students to make up missed work without any reduction in the student’s final course grade. Reasonable accommodation must also be made for students participating in a religious observance. Also, note that grades of Incomplete (“I”) are reserved for students who are passing a course but have not completed all the required work because of exceptional circumstances. If your college has elaborated on this policy, state so here.

11. Special course requirements (if applicable)

State if any requirements are associated with the course, such as mandatory field trips or film viewings, special fees, or purchase of course-related materials.

12. Classroom etiquette policy (if applicable)

If you have a particular policy relating to student behavior in the class, such as relating to tardiness or on the use of electronic devices in the classroom, state so here. Recognizing the unique relationship between faculty and student and adhering to the principles of academic responsibility, any such policies must be reasonable, non-discriminatory and not impede the educational mission. If you have a policy on the use of recording devices, please include a statement here.

13. Attendance Policy Statement

Students are expected to attend all of their scheduled University classes and to satisfy all academic objectives as outlined by the instructor. The effect of absences upon grades is determined by the instructor, and the University reserves the right to deal at any time with individual cases of non-attendance.

Students are responsible for arranging to make up work missed because of legitimate class absence, such as illness, family emergencies, military obligation, court-imposed legal obligations or participation in University-approved activities. Examples of University-approved reasons for absences include participating on an athletic or scholastic team, musical and theatrical performances and debate activities. It is the student’s responsibility to give the instructor notice prior to any anticipated absences and within a reasonable amount of time after an unanticipated absence, ordinarily by the next scheduled class meeting. Instructors must allow each student who is absent for a University-approved reason the opportunity to make up work missed

without any reduction in the student's final course grade as a direct result of such absence.

14. Disability policy statement

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and follow all SAS procedures. SAS has offices across three of FAU's campuses – Boca Raton, Davie and Jupiter – however disability services are available for students on all campuses. For more information, please visit the SAS website at www.fau.edu/sas/.

15. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center

Life as a university student can be challenging physically, mentally and emotionally. Students who find stress negatively affecting their ability to achieve academic or personal goals may wish to consider utilizing FAU's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Center. CAPS provides FAU students a range of services – individual counseling, support meetings, and psychiatric services, to name a few – offered to help improve and maintain emotional well-being. For more information, go to <http://www.fau.edu/counseling/>

16. Code of Academic Integrity policy statement

Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see [University Regulation 4.001](#). If your college has particular policies relating to cheating and plagiarism, state so here or provide a link to the full policy—but be sure the college policy does not conflict with the University Regulation.

17. Required texts/readings

18. Supplementary/recommended readings (if applicable)

19. Course topical outline, including dates for exams/quizzes, papers, completion of readings

*Include a breakdown of topics covered (generally, by class day or by week), deadlines for course assignments/requirements, and dates of exams and quizzes. The Provost's *Policy and Procedure: Definitions of a Credit Hour* needs to be followed in developing out-of-class assignments.*