

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 1, 2024

TO: Deans, Department Chairs, and School Directors

FROM: Dr. Russell Ivy *Russell Ivy*
Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: **Guidelines for Course Syllabi (Revised)**

The syllabus serves as the fundamental means of communication between instructors and their students. It plays a pivotal role in establishing the course's atmosphere, outlining expectations and classroom guidelines, and fostering a sense of motivation for learning. Crafting a thoughtful and well-designed syllabus is essential for promoting student engagement and ultimately contributing to student success. While instructors maintain individual responsibility for shaping course content and choosing pedagogical methods, it is imperative to adhere to Florida Atlantic's policies, which mandates certain essential components to maintain consistency across the university.

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, and posting your syllabus in Simple Syllabus satisfies this requirement.

It is understood that certain aspects of 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. Faculty members are encouraged to include any use of plagiarism prevention services, prescribe the use of artificial intelligence, and articulate the level of tolerance and potential penalties for noncompliance to students for every assignment.

The Simple Syllabus management system was implemented in 2023. This electronic syllabus management system allows instructors to create digital syllabi, manage course materials, and engage with students through a user-friendly interface. Florida Atlantic policies, course information, including instructor of record, course number and section, course description,



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pre/co-requisites, course location and meeting times are automatically populated from the course schedule and placed in your syllabus. Textbook and instructional materials information are similarly auto-populated from your adoptions submitted to the campus bookstore. All preloaded information is automatically updated based on the new course information. **Syllabi must be available to students in Simple Syllabus by the first class and for general education courses at least 45 days before the start of the term.**

Senate Bill 7044, enacted in July 2022, requires general education syllabi to be posted 45 days before the start of the term to ensure students have sufficient time to review course expectations, materials, and requirements before enrolling in classes, promoting transparency and informed decision-making.

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).

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.

Cc: Dr. Stephen Engle, Associate Provost of Academic Personnel
Dr. James Capp, Associate Vice President, Strategic Planning and Student Success
Dr. Daniel Meeroff, Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Dr. Kim Dunn, 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.). If you have a policy about unexcused class absences resulting in failure in the course, 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 (optional)

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.

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. University policy on the use of electronic devices states: “In order to enhance and maintain a productive atmosphere for education, personal communication devices, such as cellular telephones and pagers, are to be disabled in class sessions.” Many faculty elaborate on or refine this policy to meet particular needs.

13. Disability policy statement

Suggested statement: *In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441) – and follow all OSD procedures.*

14. Code of Academic Integrity policy statement

Suggested 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.*

15. Required texts/readings

16. Supplementary/recommended readings (if applicable)
17. 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.

Approved by University Faculty Senate on January 22, 2010.