

Using the Student-Centered Syllabus Template

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<--Delete this page before distributing to your students-->

Introduction

The Teaching and Learning Commons has created a syllabus template as a guide to assist you in designing a syllabus that is student-centered and clearly communicates your course goals and expectations. We have created a framework to build out your syllabus, but every course and instructor is unique. Please adjust the template to best suit your needs. This cover sheet provides a brief introduction to the key purposes that a syllabus serves for faculty and students, as well as ideas for engaging students with your syllabus. If you are interested in receiving one-on-one feedback on your syllabus and course materials, please contact the Engaged Teaching at: engagedteaching@ucsd.edu.

How Do I Use This Syllabus Template for my Course?

This detailed student-centered syllabus template includes suggestions of what to include in your syllabus, in addition to stylistic considerations for making your syllabus more accessible for students. Pay particular attention to the **text written in gray**, which includes clarifications or placeholder text that you will want to make sure to edit. Be sure to change the text to black when the document is complete.

What should I include in my syllabus?

- Be sure to check with your department chair to see if there is specific information or policies that should be included in your syllabus.
- Also check with your department chair if there are specific materials that should be used within your course to maintain consistency between course sections or standards already in place.
- The information provided on this syllabus is a general guideline. Edit as you see fit to best suit the goals and format of your course.
- If you have a difficult time seeing the color red and cannot see a difference in shade between it and other areas of the syllabus, please reach out to the Online Teaching Coordinator, who can help make adjustments for your particular situation.

How do I make my syllabus more accessible?

- Chunk information into shorter paragraphs and use bullet points, lists, or columns to display or organize information.
- Use meaningful text in hyperlinks, which are words that describe the link versus “click here” language, such as those seen throughout this template. Adding endnotes with the URLs will allow this document to remain accessible even if it is printed.
- Use tables sparingly and be sure to clearly label column and row headers.
- Use Styles for formatting your text, like Headings and Strong to make text larger or bold.
- Use underlining for hyperlinks only.
- Use a sans serif font such as Calibri, Arial, or Source Sans.

Navigating the Syllabus Template

Use the clickable links below to jump directly to each section of the template. Additionally, the Outline feature in Google Docs (found in the left-hand sidebar or under *View > Expand tabs and outline bar*) allows you to quickly navigate to any section by clicking on its heading.

[Course Introduction and Welcome](#)	[Instructional Team](#)	[Class Preparation, Readings, and Materials](#)
[Assignments, Feedback, and Grading Procedures](#)	[Course Schedule](#)	[Community Agreements](#)
[Statements and Policies](#)	[Resources for Academic Success and Wellbeing](#)	
[References and Supplemental Readings](#)		



Additional Syllabus Template Resources

Please [click here](#) to download the learner-centered syllabus template in your preferred format. You can also [click here](#) to view examples of syllabi from UC San Diego educators. Click here to download the check list. Click here to access current policies, example statements, and resources to consider including in your syllabus. The USC Center for Urban Education's Syllabus Review Tool also provides an excellent resource for workshopping your syllabus from an equity-minded perspective.

What is the Purpose of the Syllabus?

The precise content and format of syllabi varies across institutions, disciplines, and instructors. However, commonly-identified ways that syllabi can support effective instruction include:

- Acting as a **roadmap** for both faculty and students, connecting the learning goals for a course with the assignments and activities that will help students achieve them (Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Making a **first impression** on students and welcoming them to the course. Perceptions of instructor approachability have been found to be influenced by the tone of a syllabus, especially for first- and second-year students (Ishiyama & Hartlaub, 2002; Harnish & Bridges, 2011).
- Clarifying **course expectations** and providing clear information on the dimensions of success in the course. (Slattery & Carlson, 2005). Transparency supports equity by making explicit the often-unwritten norms of success at the university level (such as the importance and purpose of office hours, or how library resources can support students).
- Assisting students and instructors with planning out **how to allocate their time and effort** across the quarter. (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Fink, 2012; Parkes & Harris, 2002).
- Communicating a **commitment to equity and inclusion** and creating a culture of care by featuring an [inclusion statement](#) and using language that affirms students' capacity to learn (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015).
- Identifying **course materials** and how to access them, and communicating clear pathways for **asking questions and seeking help** from the instructional team. (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Parkes & Harris, 2002)
- Connecting students with **campus resources** for academic and personal support (Slattery & Carlson, 2005; Parkes & Harris, 2002).

Engaging Students With Your Syllabus

Research suggests that the majority of students do refer to syllabi regularly throughout a course, with a large majority checking it at least weekly (Smith & Razzouk, 1993). Some suggestions for further engaging students with your syllabus include:

- Consider writing in the second person ("You will learn to apply principles and ethics of modern sociological research to pressing social challenges...") and placing frequently-referenced material earlier in the document.
- Designing a graphical syllabus using a design template tool such as [Canva](#) can be a way to quickly add visual engagement and organization to your document.
- [Recording a short, informal welcome video](#) can provide a particularly warm welcome to your course and can also be used to highlight key parts of your syllabus.



Course Title

[Quarter, Year]

[Department, Course Number, Section]

[Meeting Days, Times, Location]

Welcome to the course

🔑 Key Tip: Briefly describe the course in a welcoming way, clearly explaining why you find the course important and engaging. What is this course about? What questions does it attempt to answer? How does the course fit into the overall curriculum? Note specific prerequisite courses, in addition to any specific knowledge, skills or background needed to successfully complete this course. Use student-friendly language, avoiding jargon where possible.

What is the course format?

🔑 Key Tip: Detail the course format, meeting times, frequency of meeting times, and where students will access course materials. Will lectures and discussions be synchronous or asynchronous? Will they take place in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid setting?

What will I learn in this course?

🔑 Key Tip: List the learning objectives for the course (the broad course goals should be in the "What is this course about?" section above). Instead of just listing outcomes, include the why. What real-world questions or challenges does this course help to address? The objectives should be specific and measurable and should clearly state what students will be able to do after successfully completing the course. Utilizing action verbs from [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) could be helpful in developing learning objectives. **For example:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Learning Outcome
2. Learning Outcome
3. Learning Outcome
4. Learning Outcome
5. Learning Outcome

Who are my instructors?

Instructor

 Insert a picture	[Name that you would like the students to utilize] [Formal Name] [Title] [Preferred Pronouns] [Email] [Bio / URL of Homepage] [Preferred method of contact] [Office hours (in-person or virtual), days, times, location]
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Teaching Assistants

 Insert a picture	[Name] [Preferred Pronouns] [Email] [Office hours (in-person or virtual), days, times, location]	 Insert a picture	[Name] [Preferred Pronouns] [Email] [Office hours (in-person or virtual), days, times, location]
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Teaching Philosophy

 **Key Tip:** Consider how this section reflects your own teaching values. Share a few sentences about why you teach and what values guide your approach to student learning. How do your beliefs about teaching shape the way students will experience your course? Aim for a tone that invites connection and builds trust. **For example:** This course is grounded in the belief that learning happens best when students feel seen, safe, and challenged. My goal is to...

How will we learn and practice together?

 **Key Tip:** Briefly describe the types of activities and assignments students will engage in to reach the course learning objectives and how you will assess (formatively and summatively) evidence of students meeting learning objectives (for example, in-class discussion, debate, writing (specific type of paper), laboratory investigations, library research, deliberate with classmates about ethical dilemmas, etc.) Focus on how students will benefit from participating. What will they practice, explore, or create? No need to list grading details here, those come later in the syllabus template.

How can I prepare for the class sessions to be successful?

 **Key Tip:** How should students prepare for class? How should students plan to engage in the class? Will the students need to review videos or written materials before class or lab sessions? What is the workflow of the course? For example, do students watch videos or read materials or write discussion posts before online meetings?

What required texts, materials, and technologies will I need?

 **Key Tip:** This section is primarily to give students explicit information about materials they need and any anticipated costs. List the required texts or resources that students will need to acquire, including textbooks, software, lab manuals. List the sources where the materials should be obtained, and costs (if any). For texts, provide the full bibliographic entry for each text and URLs if applicable. Full reading or viewing lists, along with assigned dates will be in the schedule below. What technologies are students required to learn or purchase? Where can students find out more about these technologies? Who will students contact if they have difficulties? *Note that we encourage faculty whenever possible to consider Open Educational Resources (OER), working with the library to purchase or license electronic copies or access, and/or selecting materials that can be purchased or accessed electronically.*

What optional texts or resources might be helpful?

 **Key Tip:** List the optional texts, reference material or resources that will be used in the course. You may instead refer students to links or references on your course website. If none, delete this section.]



How will my grade be determined?

[List the graded assessments and how they will add up to the total course grade. Any graded assignment should be clearly listed in the section “What will I do in this course?” Include your overall grading scale (for example, A = 90% and higher, etc.)]

Assignments, Projects, and Grading

[Use this section to clearly describe the major assignments, projects, and assessments students will complete in the course. Explain how each task connects to the learning goals and what kinds of knowledge or skills students will develop through the work. What types of assignments will students complete, and why are they meaningful in the context of your course? How does each assignment help students practice or demonstrate progress toward your learning outcomes?]

Attendance and Participation

[How will students be expected to participate in this course, and in what ways can they engage meaningfully (e.g., discussion, written reflections, group work, online forums)? Consider outlining flexible options for engagement and noting how students can communicate if they need to miss class or participate differently. See our

[Attendance Policy & Building Student Motivation to Attend Class](#) Guide for more considerations]

Summary of Grade Criteria [\[SAMPLE\]](#)

Assignment	Points	Weight	Due Date
		%	
		%	
		%	
		%	
		%	
		%	
		100%	

Grading Scale

A = %-100%	B = %-%	C = %-%	D = %-%	F =%-below
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Grading Procedure and Feedback

[Explain how grades will be determined and what students can expect from your grading process (e.g., rubrics, weighting, key deadlines). Clarify how and when students will receive feedback, and outline any opportunities for revisions, re-grading requests, or resubmissions. Consider how your approach to grading supports transparency, learning, and student growth.]

What is the expected course schedule?



[Create a course schedule, using a format like the one below. For accessibility purposes, do not use tables for formatting purposes. Add more weeks as needed. This schedule is intended to offer guidance in what may be covered during the quarter. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify or supplement the course schedule as needed.]

Week 1: Date

Class topic/unit name:

- Pre-class work for students:
 - List what students need to do to prepare for class; add more lines if needed.
- Planned in-class activities:
 - List in-class activities; add more lines if needed.
- Assignments due:
 - List assignments and their due dates; add more lines if needed.

Week 2: Date

Class topic/unit name:

- Pre-class work for students:
 - List what students need to do to prepare for class; add more lines if needed.
- Planned in-class activities:
 - List in-class activities; add more lines if needed.
- Assignments due:
 - List assignments and their due dates; add more lines if needed.

Week 3: Date

Class topic/unit name:

- Pre-class work for students:
 - List what students need to do to prepare for class; add more lines if needed.
- Planned in-class activities:
 - List in-class activities; add more lines if needed.
- Assignments due:
 - List assignments and their due dates; add more lines if needed.

Week 4: Date

Class topic/unit name:

- Pre-class work for students:
 - List what students need to do to prepare for class; add more lines if needed.
- Planned in-class activities:
 - List in-class activities; add more lines if needed.
- Assignments due:
 - List assignments and their due dates; add more lines if needed.



What community agreements guide this course?

[This section outlines the shared responsibilities between you and your students to foster a respectful, inclusive, and engaging learning environment. Use this space to name key behaviors that support student success, and clarify how you'll uphold fairness, communicate effectively, and respond with care. Consider what mutual values—like integrity, collaboration, or flexibility—you want to center, and how students and instructors alike can contribute to a positive classroom experience.]

What you can do to support your success in the course:	What I will do to support your success in the course:
Read the syllabus and stay current with course information	Be prepared and bring my enthusiasm for teaching to each session
Keep up with readings and lab assignments, as each one builds on the previous one.	Respond to emails within one working day, and provide timely feedback on assignments / submissions.
Contribute to the learning environment with fairness, cooperation, and professionalism	Establish a learning environment with fairness, cooperation and professionalism, and will take action if these principles are violated.
Treat your classmates, instructional assistants and myself honestly and ethically	Treat you honestly and ethically, and will address any concerns you might have
Commit to excel with integrity ¹ . Have the courage to act in ways that are honest, fair, responsible, respectful & trustworthy.	Uphold integrity standards and create an atmosphere that fosters active learning, creativity, critical thinking, and honest collaboration.
Manage your time, so you can stay on track with the course and complete tasks on time	Only assign work that is vital to the course, and will work to meet the standard credit hour allotment for the course.
Communicate with me if you determine that a deadline cannot be met due to extenuating circumstances	Consider requests for adjustments and will make reasonable exceptions available to all students when approved

1. Please read UC San Diego's [Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#) and take the [integrity pledge](#)!

What policies guide this course?

[Use this section to outline key course policies that reflect your values, clarify expectations, and support a safe, inclusive, and equitable learning environment. What values (e.g., inclusion, access, honesty) do you want your course policies to reflect? Are there university-required policies you should link to or restate in student-friendly language? Policies may include statements on inclusion, accommodations, academic integrity, the use of [generative AI](#), community agreements, and student well-being. Aim to communicate policies in clear, compassionate language, and highlight available resources or pathways for support.]

★ See our [Course Policies and Statements](#) Guide for additional examples and considerations.



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Inclusion Statement

The TAs and I are fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. We urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in our class for any reason, please let me or one of your TAs know, or please consult the Department's "[Report an Issue](#)" page for additional campus resources to support you, and diversity, equity, and inclusion in our classroom, and beyond.

Accommodations Policy

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter (paper or electronic) issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (<https://osd.ucsd.edu>). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department IN ADVANCE of any exams or assignments.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity: Each student is expected to abide by UCSD's policy on Integrity of Scholarship (<https://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>) and to excel with integrity in our course. Students are expected to do their own work, as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity and published in the UCSD General Catalog: <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/index.html>. Although you are encouraged to form study groups to support each other's learning, each student is expected to do their own work on all written assignments and exams. In addition, all students must individually participate in clicker questions. (That is, it's a violation of academic integrity to "click in" for any of your classmates.) Violations will be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined by the University. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please consult me or one of your TAs.

Finally, please also abide by **UCSD's Principles of Community** <https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html> and the Student Code of Conduct:

https://students.ucsd.edu/files/student-conduct/ucsandiego-student-conduct-code_interim-revisions1-16-18.pdf to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in our classroom, and beyond.

Campus Policies

- [UC San Diego Principles of Community](#)
- [Religious Observation](#)
- [Nondiscrimination and Harassment](#)
- [UC San Diego Student Conduct Code](#)
- [University of California Statement of Principles in Support of Undocumented Members of the UC Community](#)

What university resources can I utilize to support me during this course?

[Use this section to connect students with key resources that can support their academic success, engagement, and overall well-being. What campus or community resources do you want students to know about early on? You might include campus services (e.g., tutoring, counseling, disability support), tech support, library tools, writing centers, and any discipline or course-specific supports (e.g., peer mentors, writing labs, student organizations, resource guides). How can you normalize help-seeking as part of the learning process? For more resources to consider including, go here [\[link\]](#)]



Learning and Academic Support

[Ask a Librarian: Library Support](#)

Chat or make an appointment with a librarian to focus on your research needs

[Course Reserves, Connecting from Off-Campus and Research Support](#)

Find supplemental course materials

[First Gen Student Success Coaching Program](#)

Peer mentor program that provides students with information, resources, and support in meeting their goals

[Office of Academic Support & Instructional Services \(OASIS\)](#)

Holistic student support through community-based, and culturally responsive mentoring, academic support, and professional development.

[Writing Hub Services in the Teaching + Learning Commons](#)

One-on-one online writing tutoring and workshops on key writing topics

[Supplemental Instruction](#)

Peer-assisted study sessions through the Academic Achievement Hub to improve success in historically challenging courses

[Tutoring – Content](#)

Drop-in and online tutoring through the Academic Achievement Hub

[Canvas Course – Learning Strategies](#)

Canvas course supports students with honing general academic skills development such as overcoming challenges, goal setting, time management, note-taking, and exam preparation

Support for Well-being and Inclusion

[Basic Needs at UCSD](#)

Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live is encouraged to contact: foodpantry@ucsd.edu | basicneeds@ucsd.edu | (858) 246-2632

[Student Health and Wellbeing](#)

One-stop destination dedicated to supporting students' physical and mental health throughout their academic journey

[Triton Concern and Student Support Referral](#)

All community members who are concerned about a student's well being are encouraged to submit information regarding the concern to ensure that all students have access to support resources available to them

[Office for Students with Disabilities \(OSD\)](#)

Supports students with disabilities and accessibility across campus

[Community and Resource Centers](#)

As part of the [Office of the Vice Chancellor for Organizational Transformation](#) the campus community centers provide programs and resources for students and contribute toward the evolution of a socially just campus

[Get Involved](#)

Student organizations, clubs, service opportunities, and many other ways to connect with others on campus

[Undocumented Student Services](#)

Programs and services are designed to help students overcome obstacles that arise from their immigration status and support them through personal and academic excellence



References and Supplemental Readings

Dowd, A. C., & Bensimon, E. M. (2014). Engaging the “Race Question”: Accountability and Equity in U.S. Higher Education. Teachers College Press.

Fink, S. B. (2012). The Many Purposes Of Course Syllabi: Which Are Essential And Useful? Syllabus 1(1).

Parkes, J., & Harris, M. B. (2002). The Purposes of a Syllabus. College Teaching, 50(2), 55–61.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/87567550209595875>

Slattery, J. & Carlson, J. (2005) Preparing An Effective Syllabus: Current Best Practices, College Teaching, 53:4, 159-164, DOI: 10.3200/CTCH.53.4.159-164.

Smith, M. F., & Razzouk, N. Y. (1993). Improving Classroom Communication: The Case of the Course Syllabus. Journal of Education for Business, 68(4), 215–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08832323.1993.10117616>

The development of the UC San Diego Student Centered Syllabus template draws from the [Duke Flexible Teaching Syllabus Template](#), customized for use by [Northern Illinois University](#).

