

CHECKLIST: COMPONENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE COURSE SYLLABUS

From *Tools for Teaching* (2009) by Barbara Gross Davis

BASIC INFORMATION

- **Name of university, semester, year**
- **Course title, number, unit value**
- **Course meeting times and location**
- **Instructor, GSI names**
- **How to contact instructor/GSIs:**
 - In-person office hours: times and location (with map if needed); drop-in or by appointment?
 - Online office hours: times and how to access (URL)
 - Email addresses
 - Phone numbers: private office and department lines; mobile, if you wish, for text messages
 - Preferred mode of communication (email, phone, text messages, in person, instant message, through learning management system, through social networking site, etc)
 - Fax number
 - Optional: times other than office hours when instructor can be reached
- **Instructor Web page URL**
- **Course Web page URL**
- **Online chat days, hours, and access address, if available**
- **Group mail-list address, if available**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

- **Prerequisites**
 - Prior courses
 - Knowledge/skills needed to succeed in this course
 - Permission of instructor needed?
- **Technology requirements:**
 - Laptops for class work
 - Software
 - Clickers
 - Learning management system
- **Overview of course:**
 - What is the course about: its purpose, rationale?
 - What are the general topics or focus?
 - How does it fit with other courses in the department or on campus?
 - Who is the course aimed at?
 - Why would students want to take this course and learn this material?
- **Student learning objectives:**
 - What will students be expected to know or do after this course?
 - What competencies/skills/knowledge will student be expected to demonstrate at the end of the course?

(COURSE DESCRIPTION continued)

- **Methods of instruction**
 - Lecture
 - Discussion
 - Group work
 - Field work
 - Other methods
- **Workload**
 - Estimated amount of time to spend on course readings
 - Estimate amount of time to spend on course assignments and projects

MATERIALS

- **Primary or required books/readings for the course:**
 - Author, title, edition ISBN
 - Costs, where available
 - Availability of electronic or alternative formats, for students with disabilities
- **Supplemental or optional books/readings**
- **Websites and links**
- **Other materials:**
 - Lab equipment
 - Art supplies
 - Software
 - Other types of materials

REQUIREMENTS

- **Exams and quizzes:**
 - How many
 - What kind (e.g. open/closed book; essay/multiple choice)
 - Types of knowledge and abilities tested
 - Place, date, and time of finals exam
- **Assignments/problem sets**
- **projects/reports/research papers:**
 - General information on type, length, and when due (detailed information can be distributed during the term)
 - Relationship between the learning objectives and assignments
 - Criteria for assessing student work
 - Format for submitting work (online or in hard copy)
 - For research papers and projects:
 - Steps in conducting research
 - Shorter assignments that build to the research paper (e.g. annotated bibliography of primary sources, thesis statement, fact sheet, etc.)
 - Skills and knowledge students needed to complete the assignment
 - Connection between research assignments and course goals and student learning objectives
- **Other requirements:**
 - Attend an office hour?
 - Post comments to the discussion board?

POLICIES

- **Grading procedures:**
 - Describe how students will be graded: on a curve or absolute scale?
 - Clarify weighting of course components
 - Explain policies regarding incompletes, ass/not pass
 - Describe grade appeals
- **Attendance and tardiness**
- **Class participation**
- **Classroom decorum**
- **Interrupted exams (e.g. fire alarms)**
- **Missed exams/makeup exams**
- **Missed assignments**
- **Late assignments/extensions**
- **Reporting illness and family emergencies**
- **Extra credit opportunities**
- **Permissible and impermissible collaboration**
- **Standards for academic honesty and penalties for infractions**

SCHEDULE

- **Tentative calendar of topics and readings:**
 - By week rather than by session
 - Or leave some sessions empty for flexibility
- **Firm dates for exams and written assignments**
- **Dates of special events:**
 - Field trips
 - Performances
 - Exhibits
 - Other special events
- **Last day to switch to pass/not pass**
- **Last day to withdraw from the course**

RESOURCES

- **Tips for success**
 - How students might approach the material
 - How students can manage their time
 - Tips for studying, taking notes, preparing for exams
 - Common students mistakes or misconceptions
- **Copies of past exams or model student papers**
- **Glossaries of technical terms**
- **Links to appropriate support material on the Web (e.g. style manuals, past students' projects, Web-based resources, etc.)**
- **Academic support services on campus**
- **Information on the availability of podcasts or webcasts**
- **Space for students to identify two or three classmates' names and their contact information**
 - In case they miss class
 - To form a study group

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATION

- **A request that students see the instructor to discuss accommodations for:**
 - Physical disabilities
 - Medical disabilities
 - Learning disabilities
- **A statement on reasonable accommodation for students' religious beliefs, observations, and practices; for students' foreseeable conflicts because of athletic competition, medical/graduate school interviews**

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE AND ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING

- **Student feedback strategies during the semester (other than quizzes and tests)**
- **End-of-course evaluation procedures**

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Students' and instructor's rights to academic freedom (e.g. respect of the rights of others to express their points of view)**
- **Students' and instructor's adherence to campus principles of community (e.g. civility in personal interactions)**
- **Statement on copyright protection for the contents of the course, as appropriate**

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY

PREPAREDNESS

- **What to do in case of an earthquake, fire, hazardous spill, accident or injury, bomb threat, or other emergency**
- **Notification procedures for inclement weather**
- **Evacuation procedures**
- **Lab safety precautions**

DISCLAIMER

- **Syllabus/schedule subject to change**