



SIU Syllabus Guidelines: Quick-Start Guide

For detailed information, guidelines, and best practices for syllabi, see the SIU Syllabus Guidelines for Best Practice.

Minimum Required Syllabus Elements

See the SIU Syllabus Checklist for additional details and requirements for UCC, online, and 400/500 co-convened courses.

- **Basic course information:** 3-4 letter course prefix, course number, CRN, semester/year, credit hours, course modality, class location, days/times, and dates
- **Instructor contact information:** name(s), SIU email address, office phone number, office location/office hours access, office hours/student engagement policy
Must be present for all instructor(s); if the course is taught by a GA, both the GA and supervising faculty member must have their name and contact information listed. TT faculty must have a policy for responding to student emails in a reasonable and defined time frame.
- **Course description, goals, and/or topics**
- **Course materials and fees**
- **Student learning outcomes (SLOs)**
- **Assignments, readings, and activities,** including any required activities outside of scheduled course times
- **Grading information:** how grades are determined and the grading scale or scheme
- **Provost syllabus attachment:** must be distributed with the syllabus

Policy Information

- **Institutional policies** (must be followed by all): religious holidays/absences, incomplete grades, academic integrity
- **Instructor-specific policies:** attendance, missing/late work, use of artificial intelligence (AI)
Note: some programs or colleges may have specific policies that must be followed

Additional Recommended Elements

- Information about pre-requisites
- Details of assignments, readings, and activities
- Course schedule
- Program learning outcomes (PLOs)
- Office of Access and Accommodations information
- Classroom conduct or respectful dialogue policy
- Resources for students
- Electronic device guidelines
- Diversity or values statement
- Preferred names/pronouns policy
- Outage or closure information



Design Recommendations

- Use second person (“you will...”) instead of third person (“students will...” or “they will...”) to create a more positive, student-friendly tone
- Minimize legalese; instead, focus on positive language regarding expectations and student behavior (e.g., instead of “Students may not plagiarize”, say “You are expected to engage in academically honest work, which means...”)
- Use white space, images, built-in headings and list functions, bold lettering and underlining, borders, and even color to enhance visual appeal
- Provide definitions for technical terms or jargon that will be introduced during the course
- Balance students’ preference for a more comprehensive syllabus (e.g., including details about course requirements and assignment details) with working to minimize length to avoid overwhelming students
- Make sure documents are accessible; read-only Word documents or html pages on D2L are preferred over PDFs

Key Takeaways

- A syllabus should focus on three goals: communication, planning, and motivation and support
 - **Communication:** help students see the value and relevance of the course; clarify the course goals, pathway, and expectations
 - **Planning:** instructors can benefit from using backward design to make course design decisions to best connect to the course-level learning outcomes; students can understand what is required of them, and when, to succeed in the course
 - **Motivation and support:** demonstrate to students your focus on learning and belief in their ability to succeed; provide students information about the resources they need to succeed
- A detailed, student-friendly syllabus can improve student motivation, engagement, and positive perceptions of their instructors
- Engage students actively with the syllabus during the first week of class – see the SIU Syllabus Guidelines for Best Practice for examples