

SYLLABI SUGGESTIONS

Every class must have an overview.

- What is required in every syllabus?
- Refer to Glendale Community College District Administrative Regulation 4261 (last updated 12/15)
- In the following slides, each section of the above regulation is in *italics* and is followed by helpful suggestions. Again, these are suggestions that focus on helping the instructor to avoid problems by having a clear and complete syllabus.

Class Overview

- *The class overview will include all of the information identified by the headings, although that information need not be presented in the format shown. The description following each heading is to be taken only as an example of the information to be given under that heading.*
- The important thing is that you include all the information required. The order or method of organization is up to the instructor.

a. Rationale

- *The reason for offering the course should be stated. If in doubt, check the official course outline.*
- If you look at the official course outline, the Catalog Statement portion of the outline can be used as the course rationale.
- Where are the official course outlines?

Official Course Outlines

- These can be found on Sharepoint by following these steps:
- Click on Departments, Instructional Services, Curriculum Management, Course Outlines Archives, Credit Course Outlines of Record, ESL.
- Be sure to look at the most current course outline. Sharepoint has the most current official outlines.
- These outlines are regularly updated, so be sure to check for updates before you do your syllabi every semester.

b. Prerequisite(s)

- *The prerequisite(s) can be copied from the catalog and official course outline.*
- To find the most recent college catalog, search for “college catalog” on the GCC homepage.
- This can also be found in section I. of the course outline.
- This is also where you can put recommended preparation of concurrent enrollment in courses of other skill areas of ESL.

c. Course Objectives

Students should understand what the course aims to teach them.

This information can be found in Section III of the official course outline under the heading Course Exit Standards.

d. Student Learning Outcomes

- *Students should understand what learning outcomes are expected.*

These can be found in Section IX of the official course outline. You can copy these from the outline onto your syllabus.

Attendance/absence/tardines s policy

- *Emergency should be clearly defined (serious illness or death of close family member, student's illness corroborated by a physician, jury duty, earthquake, flood, fire, etc.). Students should be informed precisely of the results of too many unexcused absences or tardies.*
- Be careful to keep good attendance records and make sure your policy is clear on your syllabus. Refer to page 39 in the 2017-2018 College Catalog. Here are some key points from the catalog:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. There are no authorized absences from class and irregular attendance may result in exclusion from classes.

Students also have the responsibility of officially withdrawing from college or dropping from class when they stop attending, and of observing established deadlines. Other- wise, "F" grades may be assigned.

Students shall be dropped from class for failure to attend the first class meeting during the first week of instruction if they have not made prior arrangements with the instructor. Students also may be dropped for continuous or cumulative absences for the number of hours a sixteen-week class is scheduled to meet in a two-week period.

f. Grading Method

- *Student should be informed of the teacher's method for arriving at grades.*

Refer to the Methods of Evaluation section in the course outline for grading guidance. The course outlines for grammar/writing have a clear break down of percentages for grading. The reading/vocabulary and listening/speaking outlines do not, but they are in the process of being rewritten to include clearer guidance.

g. Exam makeup policy

- *Students should be told how many exams, if any, can be made up, how they are to be made up and where.*

Clearly state your policy and the conditions for doing makeups.

- **FINAL EXAMINATIONS are required.**

Remind students not to make plans before the final exams. Here is what the 2017-2018 College Catalog states about final exams:

At the end of each semester a final examination schedule is followed. Students must attend all classes in accordance with the schedule for that period. This arrangement permits the giving of final examinations in those classes which require them and the completion of the instructional program in the other classes. No student shall be excused from taking a final examination where such is required as part of a course. (p. 47)

h. Students with Disabilities

- *All students with disabilities requiring accommodations are responsible for making arrangements in a timely manner through the Center for Students with Disabilities.*
- This statement must be on your syllabus exactly as it is written. You may include the contact information:
- San Rafael Building

Second floor, room 208-1

x5905

Don't include any other comments here. Just use the above statement.

i. Academic Honesty Policy

- *Students should be advised that Glendale College has an Academic Honesty Policy and told where it can be found. Incidents of academic dishonesty should be referred to the Vice-President of Instruction's office.*

The full policy on academic honesty can be found on page 17 of the 2017-2018 GCC College Catalog. Search for College Catalog on the homepage to access the online catalog. You can use the following statement from above on your syllabus: *Incidents of academic dishonesty should be referred to the Vice-President of Instruction's office.*

j. Course materials

- *Students should be informed about the textbooks and other materials for the class and told whether each is required or recommended.*

Include Bluebooks, paper size preference, pens, dictionaries, etc.

k. Class requirements and instructor expectations

- *This section states the instructor's expectations for the class. It also explains special requirements specific to the class, such as lab requirements, excursions, outside projects, etc.*

Make sure that your requirements match the official course outline and the College Catalog.

- There are no lab requirements for any of our courses. This changed a few years ago. Lab work may be recommended, but not required. Make sure any graded assignments that you require of the students follow the official course outline.

I. Electronic device policy

- *Each faculty member is encouraged to include his/her electronic device policy on the course syllabus.*

State this clearly on your syllabus. For example:

When you enter the classroom, your cell phones should be on silent or off. You may not use your cell phone during class to check your messages or take phone calls except in an emergency.

A test policy could read “No device with Internet access can be used during a test. Cell phones must be off or on silent during a test. If I see a cell phone during a test, you will receive a “0”.

STANDARDS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

- These are listed on page 51 of the 2017-2018 College Catalog. You could refer students to these pages, but you don't need to list any on your syllabus. Here is an example of one that you might find useful:

Prohibited conduct that may subject a student to disciplinary sanctions includes, but is not limited to the following:

* The use of any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom without the prior consent of the instructor, except as necessary to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

m. Office hours and telephone number

- *Full-time faculty members should list their office location, office hours, and office telephone number. Adjunct faculty members should inform students how to reach them.*
- Include your email address and inform students that they must use their GCC student email account to contact you. Let them know that you won't respond to email from other sources because of legal privacy concerns.

n. Schedule of assignments

- *The schedule of assignments should cover the contents of the formal course outline and should reflect a tentative schedule of topics and assignments so students know what is expected of them.*

This schedule should give the students an idea of what will be covered and the tentative timeline of when it will be covered. Refer to the course outline under “Course Content” to find what needs to be covered. You may also refer to the “ESL Grammar Levels” for the grammar/writing courses.

Timing

- *By the end of the second class meeting, the instructor will provide to all students a written copy of the class overview. For online or hybrid courses in which a significant portion of the instructional materials are only available online, it is allowable for the class overview to be provided in electronic form only. For all other classes, while distribution of the class overview in electronic form is allowed, the instructor of each such class must inform students that a paper copy is available upon request.*
- A statement is included in the catalog stating that the student can expect to receive a copy of the Class Overview by the end of the second class meeting.

Follow the Course Outline

- *Each instructor will address the objectives specified in the course outline on file in the Office of Instruction.*
- *Each instructor will provide the evidence of compliance (examples: class overview, sample examinations, student work) requested by the division chair or appropriate administrator or designee. **Failure either to teach in accordance with the current course outline or to provide the requested evidence will be incorporated into the instructor's evaluation.** (emphasis mine)*

Guild Contract Article III, Section 3

- Responsibilities of Faculty Members per the contract:
- 1. The faculty member shall treat the students with respect.
- 2. The faculty member shall fulfill his/her professional obligation and be able to defend the relevance of instructional activities as they relate to course materials, development of critical thinking, debate or research.

What does this mean?

- Whatever you put into your syllabus must demonstrate respect for your students and be relevant to the course.
- Therefore, be careful with course expectations. Could some of your rules be construed as “not treating students with respect”?
- Can you "defend the relevance of instructional activities"? These "activities" might be interpreted as anything that the teacher requires of the student.

Academic Freedom?

- With academic freedom, the teacher has a lot of power. However, when push comes to shove, the District refers to the aforementioned clauses in the contract.
- Keep in mind that any information on your syllabus is like a contract between you and the student. You could be called on to defend items on your syllabus should you have to appear before Judicial Board in a dispute.

Possible Questions

- Students can be unhappy for any number of reasons. Clarity on your syllabus can help you if you become involved in a dispute.
- You could be asked:

Was this information on your syllabus?

Did you make this clear to the student?

Is this requirement on your syllabus per the official course outline?

- Verbal agreements usually don't hold up. Document everything.

Suggested Don'ts

Here are a few things found on syllabi that probably should not be there. It is suggested you **NOT** put these on your syllabi:

- Soliciting commendations
- No bilingual dictionaries allowed
- Lab requirement as part of the grade
- Marked absent for the day after 15 minutes tardy
- Marked absent if students forget their books
- Requiring classmates to exchange contact information (Use Canvas to post homework instead)

More Don'ts

- Requiring students to sign attendance posted on the door if you are absent
- Any additions to the disability statement
- Asking students to disclose any serious medical or physical problems
- Asking students to use the bathroom before class
- Requiring students to buy new not used textbooks
- Asking students to leave the classroom if they don't have their books with them

Keep in Mind...

- The “don’ts” are suggestions. Anything you put on your syllabus should be defensible if necessary. Be sure your expectations comply with college policies and division requirements.
- Also, your syllabi are all posted on Sharepoint for everyone one to see. To view them, follow these steps: Sharepoint, Departments, Instructional Services, Credit ESL (under Divisions and Programs), Syllabi.
- Be sure you think about what you put in your syllabus.

The End

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