



The University of Alabama

Syllabus Policy

Purpose

Course syllabi aid faculty to organize class information and communicate the instructor's plan for conducting the course. A course syllabus helps clarify course goals and objectives, assessment and evaluation standards, grading policies, and student responsibilities associated with the course. Course syllabi aid students as guides to student learning and course expectations.

Policy Statement

A written syllabus (paper or electronic) for each course section, regardless of delivery method, must be distributed to students on the first day of class. Items that must appear in the syllabus include:

- Course Title*
- Course and Section Number*
- Term*
- Instructor's Name*
- Office Hours
- Contact Information (Location, Phone, Email, etc.)*
- Prerequisites*
- Course Description and Credit Hours*
- Required Texts*
- Course Objectives (Optional)
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Other Course Materials
- Outline of Topics
- Exams and Assignments
- Grading Policy
- Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework
- Attendance Policy
- Elasticity Statement
- Required University and College policies (or the URL for relevant policies)

* Items are prepopulated in the Online Syllabus Management System (OSM).

Students must be given timely notice of any changes in the syllabus (elasticity statement). Any special considerations (e.g., opportunities to earn extra credit) offered to a student shall be available to all students in the class.

Instructors must enter the required syllabus items for each course assigned in the University's OSM System. A catalog syllabus must be created during the course approval process in the University's OSM System and will be available to students during the student registration period for the term in which the

course is being offered. The department chairperson is responsible for monitoring the syllabi with regard to the above requirements. OSM administrators are responsible for maintaining the required fields in university and specialized templates (e.g. Core, college, graduate, interim, online). The OSM must be ADA compliant.

Authority: Provost

Effective Date: August 2016

Definitions

OSM: Online Syllabus Management system managed by Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The OSM contains templates with fields for all required elements. Additional templates contain UA's required syllabus elements and other elements that may be required by college or type of course (e.g., Core, interim, graduate, online, etc.). The OSM serves as the portal for all syllabi, including catalog syllabi required for approval as new, revised, or Core courses. The OSM does not manage course packets that may contain proprietary information.

Catalog Syllabi: A basic syllabus created for a new course approval. The catalog syllabus does not contain specific dates, such as assignment due dates, that vary by section and semester offered. However, it must contain the following items required for approval of the course (undergraduate and graduate):

Required Items that are entered in CourseLeaf CIM

- Course Title
- Course Number
- Prerequisites
- Course Description and Credit Hours

Required Items that must be entered in OSM Catalog Syllabus during Course Approval Process

- Examples of Required Texts
- Course Objectives (Optional)
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Other Course Materials that may be required for courses of this nature
- General Outline of Topics
- Examples of Exams and Assignments
- Grading Policy (germane to University, College, Graduate School, etc.)
- Policy on Missed Exams and Coursework (Generic)
- Attendance Policy (Generic)
- Elasticity Statement (Generic)
- Required University and College policies (these are prepopulated in OSM)

Course Title or Name: Approved course title, e.g. English Composition. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Course & Section Number: Approved course prefix, number, and section, e.g. EN 101 – 001. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Term: Semester and Year, e.g. Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Interim. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Instruction (Schedule Type): Type of instruction, e.g. lecture, lab, seminar, online, thesis or dissertation. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Instructor(s) Name(s): Name of person teaching the course. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Office Hours: Hours during which the instructor is available for meeting with students during the regular semester. For online courses, provide virtual office hours when students can expect more immediate feedback via email, text, phone call or other electronic means. These must be posted in the syllabus on the first day of class, online or face-to-face.

Contact Information: Provide office number and building with office hours, phone, and email. Inform students if you are willing to be contacted in other ways (e.g. video conferencing, online chat) and by appointment. Provide a usual time frame for responding to student emails. Basic contact information is pre-populated from Central Directory. Additional information should be provided by first day of class.

Prerequisites: Courses or experiences required before taking this course. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Course Description and Credit Hours: The description of the course as it appears in the most recent catalog. This is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Elasticity Statement: Explanation of how the professor will provide proper notification to students of changes to the course syllabus after the initial syllabus distribution. As an example, “The instructor will make every effort to follow the guidelines of this syllabus as listed; however, the instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, the instructor will notify students in class and/or via email and will endeavor to provide reasonable time for students to adjust to any changes.

Objectives/Course Objectives: These identify what the instructor intends to do to achieve student learning, e.g. the material the instructor plans to cover or the disciplinary questions the class will address. Examples of course objectives are:

- The professor (or course) will provide foundational tenets of the discipline;
- The professor will discuss the seminal works in 20th Century American literature;

- The professor will review nutritional recommendations and components.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs): SLOs identify the observable, measurable behaviors students are expected to demonstrate by the end of an assignment, activity, class or course. SLOs explicitly and directly address expectations for student learning.

Examples of student learning outcomes are:

- Students analyze the role of art and of the artist in Italy during the Renaissance.
- Students evaluate and defend their response to a range of art historical issues.
- Students identify examples of chamber music and the form, texture, and make-up of the ensemble.
- Students write a treatment plan for a case of schizophrenia.
- Students create graphs to demonstrate how changes in expectations affect the loanable funds market.
- Students produce original creative work in various poetic forms.
- Students critically interpret numerical and graphical data to solve problems.
- Students analyze a documented nutritional problem, develop strategy to correct the problem, and draft a policy addressing the broader scope of the problem.

Required Texts: This information is automatically populated in the OSM Template.

Other Course Materials: Identify texts, readings and/or other resources that are recommended, but not required.

Outline of Topics: Identify the topics to be covered in each class or each week.

Exams and Assignments: A list of exams and assignments for the course. Due dates are expected to be listed in the syllabus provided to students on the first day of class.

Grading Policy: Identify how student performance in the course is to be evaluated, the scale, the procedures, posting, etc.

Policy on Missed Exams & Coursework: Identify how you handle late submissions or missed assignments, tests, exams, and papers.

Attendance Policy: Identify how student absences are to be handled.

Other Policies: The University mandates the inclusion of certain institutional policies, which may be automatically populated on the OSM Template or linked to a page on the UA Website. Currently, the following policies (or link) must be included on each course syllabus.

- **Statement on Academic Misconduct**
- **Statement on Disability Accommodations**
- **Severe Weather Protocol**
- **UAct Statement**

Procedures, Practices and Process

Changes to Syllabus Policy or Requirements: Requests may be initiated by University academic department or division. Requests must contain the following information:

- At least one contact person;
- Whether request is a revision of a currently required syllabus component or is a request to add a new component;
- Whether the item to be added or changed is a required or optional syllabus component;
- Whether the request is for a specific category of courses (e.g. Core, service learning, undergraduate, graduate, fully-online, interim); and
- Reason for this syllabus policy change.

Submission: Requests must be submitted to Office of Academic Affairs.

Process: Requests for changes to syllabus policy, including required components and student policies, must be submitted to the at least one year prior to planned implementation of changes, if approved.

- If approved, the request for policy change goes through the University's policy approval process before implementation. Notifications of the request are sent to the Office of the University Registrar and OIRA as well.
- Timeline for implementation of an approved policy change will depend on deadline for academic catalog and changes to OSM Template.

Review Criteria: OAA will consider the following in its review of policy change requests:

- Is this policy change directly related to academic and/or instructional activities?
- Does this request duplicate existing syllabus policy requirements?
- Does this request for a syllabus policy change conflict with other UA policies?
- Is this request required for legal or accreditation reasons?
- If a new component, can this be delivered through a link to another source?
- If a new component, is it more easily available to students through a different means than through course syllabi?