



Developing a Syllabus

Learning Objectives

Determine the [learning objectives](#) of a course before deciding on aspects such as course content, course materials and the instructional approach. This will ensure that the end learning outcome stays central to the process. Begin developing learning objectives by analyzing if the course will create preliminary awareness about a topic or impart advanced knowledge or will enable learners to apply their knowledge. Also consider if the course is designed to impart declarative knowledge where learners can name, explain and recall ideas or if the course will focus on imparting procedural knowledge, where learners will act and do things as a result of the knowledge they have gained.

Start each learning objective with “At the end of the course the learner will be able to...” to ensure that each objective is presented from the learner’s point of view. Follow this up with the behavioral aspect of the objective, which can be measured and evaluated.

Example: At the end of the course the learner will be able to recognize the role of social media in the way that information is created, organized and accessed

Course Description

This is a brief statement about the course. It is usually presented to the learners so that they can decide if they should take a course.

A course description should give a learner a reason to take the course. Ensure that the course description is carefully worded to accurately describe as to what learners can expect from the course. This will attract the right set of learners. A course description should ideally contain the rationale of the course and describe as to how it fits into the larger framework of the learner’s work or study. It must also mention specific pre requisites required to take the course, in terms of prior skills, knowledge or qualification.



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Course Content and Sequencing

Chunk the course content on the basis of the learning objectives to be achieved. Each chunk must contain one or more learning objectives.

It helps to envision a course as a book with chapters. Just as in a book, the course must have an introduction, a body and a conclusion, the body containing the significant portion of learning content. It can be very useful to give a brief, three line summary for each topic. One way to arrive at a sequence is to make the course progressively tougher, dealing with easier topics in the earlier part of the course. The other option is to arrive at a conceptual map, where a logical flow is established from one topic to another.

Course Texts & Materials

Provide a list of reading material required for each chunk or topic of the course. Also give learners information about where the material can be accessed.

If the course has specific requirements such as extensive access to the internet ensure that it is mentioned in under this sub head in the syllabus.

Assessment and Evaluation

- **Frequency:** [Learning objectives](#) must directly influence assessment design. The most important function of an assessment is to evaluate if the learning objectives of a course have been met. Assessments should be timed and designed such that specific learning objectives are tested. For instance if the first module of a course covers two learning objectives and is completed by the second week of the course, it would be ideal to administer an assessment that tests those specific objectives a few days into the third week.
- **Types of Activities:** It is ideal to have a variety in the methods of assessment to ensure that different aspects of cognition are tested. Also, if the learner group presents a mix of learning styles, variety in assessment methods will ensure that the assessment is fair to all. Activities could include written assignments, quizzes, group projects, reports, presentations and group discussions.
- **Weighting:** While there may be a variety of activities included for assessment, the weighting allocated to each will depend on the course objectives. For instance, if the course involves learning a skill, activities that are application oriented could carry more weight. It is important that learners be informed upfront about the weight assigned to



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activity as they may want to accordingly plan their efforts.

- **Grading Policies:** Ensure that the grading procedure is clearly explained in the syllabus. It is also vital to clarify as to how the grades are to be interpreted and as to what would be the minimum requirement to complete a course.
- **Grading Class Participation:** Grading participation can be a little tricky as it can often be a reflection of an individual's personality, rather than his/her grasp of the subject. While grades can be an incentive towards making a class livelier, it can also result in lowering the quality of class discussions. It is therefore necessary to consider as to what aspect of class participation to grade. If the frequency of comments is to be graded then there needs to be a method to track the frequency. Quality of comments must also be accounted for. It must also be kept in mind that certain learners may participate better in smaller groups or on online forums. Ensure that these other modes of participation are accounted for and the standards for each are clearly discussed in the syllabus.

Course Calendar

A course schedule will enable learners to organize their time better and will prevent misunderstandings over important dates. Learners are also informed in advance about what they will miss during planned absences.

Create a week wise course schedule that highlights the following:

- Week wise course agenda
- Assignment dues dates
- Course material to be brought
- Test dates
- Special activities field trips and guest lectures
- Reminders

Course Policies

This part of the syllabus will ensure that it is a document that functions like a contract. Ensure that the ground rules are clearly established at the beginning of the course and encourage learners to clarify doubts they may have about policies.



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Deadlines: With the course calendar in place, everyone in the class is clear about due dates for assignments and test dates. Make clear the repercussions of missing a test or submitting an assignment late. Aspects such as make up exams and penalties for late submission must also be discussed in detail.

Submission procedures: Mention details about where to drop off assignments or how to submit assignments online. If assignments are to be uploaded on a [Virtual Learning Environment](#), give explicit instructions about how it's done.

Completion: Clearly indicate the minimum completion requirement to be given a certificate of completion.

Administrative Details

Course Information: Following is the basic course information to be included in a syllabus.

- Course title
- Course code (if applicable)
- Number of credits (if applicable)
- Duration of the course
- Location
- Timeframe

Tutor Information: The primary need for instructor information is to let learners know as to how the instructor of the course can be contacted and where. Therefore, the following information must be included:

- Tutor name
- Office location
- Office hours
- Office telephone number
- E-mail address
- Preferred mode of communication (telephone, e-mail)

The following information can also be added if there is the necessity.

- Short biography
- Secondary office location
- Department information
- Teaching assistant information



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