

Guidelines for Creating an Effective Syllabus

Based Upon the Course Outline of Record

- 1) A course syllabus **must** be based on the college's official Course Outline of Record (COR), and each instructor **must** cover all the content stated in that outline.
- 2) A course syllabus **must** have the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) listed on the COR.
- 3) Attendance (alone) **cannot** be used to determine a student's grade; student evaluations/grades **must** be based upon "measurable and demonstrated objectives."
- 4) CORs for credit courses **must** show clear evidence of teaching and assessing students' critical thinking skills.

NOTE: Board Policy requires that the syllabus be given to students within the first two weeks of class.

There are a number of elements that make a course syllabus a more useful document for the student, as well as a safeguard for faculty should a student claim that he or she didn't know what was required or expected regarding the class or the assigned work. As soon as an instructor is scheduled to teach a course, the dean must provide him or her with a Course Outline of Record and the Student Learning Outcomes for each course the instructor will be teaching. Current CORs and SLOs are also available through the Office of Academic Affairs or on AP&P's web page.

State the Obvious

- your name, phone number, and AVC e-mail address (only)
- your office number and office hours
- course title and number, including room, meeting days, and times
- course prerequisites, co-requisites, advisories, and limitations on enrollment (see COR)
- required textbooks and other materials students must purchase for the class
- optional textbooks and/or supplies that would be helpful
- any online support, such as instructor's web pages or other internet resources

Required Information

While instructors have the academic freedom to develop and structure a syllabus that reflects their own teaching style, the foundation for the syllabus must come from the Course Outline of Record and the Student Learning Outcomes.

- **Sheriff Department Emergency Contact Number**
 - Dial direct: 661-722-6399
 - From campus phone #4444 or #6399
- **Course Description and Objectives**—these must be stated exactly as written on the Course Outline of Record.
- **Course Content**—instructors may choose to list course content on a timetable (daily, weekly, monthly) that suits their particular style or approach; however, all content on the Course Outline of Record must be covered during the semester.
- **Course Approved Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**—instructors must include Course Approved Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) on their syllabus. These must be stated exactly as written on the Student Learning Outcomes form. For specific SLO Committee Approved Guidelines please refer to Communicating Approved Student Learning Outcomes to Students section of the *AP&P Standards & Practices Handbook*.
- **Assignments and Exams**—some instructors choose to provide the exact assignments and due dates with their syllabus; others merely indicate the types and number of assignments students should expect to encounter throughout the semester. In either case, instructors must build their homework assignments based upon those that are suggested on the "typical homework assignments" page in the Course Outline of Record. A syllabus should indicate the number and type of quizzes, tests, exams, projects, performances and/or presentations students should expect and their scheduled dates. Instructors should also state whether or not

late homework will be accepted or if late exams will be given and, if so, what the effect of late work will be a student's grade.

- **Methods of Evaluation**—it is a good idea to let students know how much weight (in percentages or points) will be given to assignments, exams, etc; this allows them to keep track of their own progress throughout the semester so that they are not surprised by an unexpected grade at the end. If instructors have developed grading rubrics or other standardized evaluations, these should be made available to students as well. As required, the Course Outline of Record links the evaluation of assignments, tests, or other graded work to the course objectives. This is also the place to indicate whether or not there are other classroom activities that will affect a student's grade: class participation, field trips, collaborative groups, extra credit work, visits to the Learning Center or Library, etc. Remember, attendance alone cannot be used as a basis for giving a grade, but participation can.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act**—Recommended Language for Reasonable Accommodations: If you have a legally protected disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or California discrimination law, and you believe you need reasonable accommodation to participate fully in this class, please make an appointment to see me during my private office hours or after class to discuss your needs.
- **AVC Academic Honesty Policy—Academic Policy - AVC Board Policies Section 5500**
 - *AVC Board Policies Section 5500 Guidelines for Student Conduct*: Violation of the Academic Honesty Policy: Dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating, or plagiarism. Plagiarism – from the Latin word for “kidnap” – involves using another's work without giving proper credit, whether done accidentally or on purpose. This includes not only words and ideas, but also graphs, artwork, music, maps, statistics, diagrams, scientific data, software, films, videos and the like. Plagiarism is plagiarism whether the material is from published or unpublished sources. It does not matter whether ideas are stolen, bought, downloaded from the Internet, or written for the student by someone else – it is still plagiarism. Even if only bits and pieces of other sources are used, or outside sources reworded, they must still be cited. To avoid problems, students should cite any source(s) and check with the instructor before submitting an assignment or project. Students are always responsible for any plagiarism in their work.
 - An instructor who determines that a student has cheated or plagiarized has the right to give an “F” grade, or numerical equivalent, for the assignment or examination. Antelope Valley College reserves the right to utilize electronic means to investigate possible academic violations. Enrollment in any class implies student agreement and consent that all assignments are subject to submission for textual similarity review to an electronic database.
- **Number of Absences/Drops**—When the number of hours a student is absent in a specific course exceeds the number of hours the course meets per week, the student may be dropped from the course. The instructor may initiate the drop but it is the student's responsibility to drop.

Other Useful Information

It is a good idea to let students know what is expected of them when it comes to classroom behavior and the instructor's expectations. (Refer to the student code of conduct in AVC's College Catalog when developing these.) Both instructors and students will benefit from having the following in writing and presenting it at the start of the semester to avoid any misunderstanding or claims of unfair treatment.

A statement regarding:

- Late assignments and/or exams or extra credit work
- Late arrivals/tardiness and early departures (see the College Catalog on attendance)
- Electronics, pagers, cell phones, walkmans, or other distracting paraphernalia
- College resources that can help students be more successful: the Learning Center, Writing Center, Math Lab, tutors and/or counseling services, availability of computers on campus, etc.