

**Academic Senate/Academic Policies & Procedures Committee**  
**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) Attendance (alone) **cannot** be used to determine a student's grade; student evaluations/grades **must** be based upon "measurable and demonstrated objectives."
- 3) CORs for credit courses **must** show clear evidence of teaching and assessing students' critical thinking skills.

**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 for each course the instructor will be teaching. Current CORs 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
- your office number and office hours
- course title and number, including room, meeting days, and times
- course prerequisites, corequisites, 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

**Necessary 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.

- **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.
- **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.

**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
- plagiarism and/or cheating (See College Catalog or Student Handbook)
- tardiness or the number of absences (see the College Catalog on attendance)
- pagers, cell phones, walkmans, or other distracting paraphernalia
- \*reasonable accommodations for disabled students (see note below)
- instructor's practice for \*dropping a student from class (see note below and College Catalog)
- 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.

\*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 to discuss your need.

\*NO SHOWS: It is vital that instructors drop "no shows" during the first week of classes. "No shows" are those students who do not attend on the first day of class and have not contacted instructor to make other arrangements. In addition, if a student misses more days than the number of hours a class meets within one week, the instructor may drop that student.