

Preparing Your Course Syllabus at UT Austin: Templates for Required and Recommended Items

Prepared by the
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Approved by the Office of the Provost

All faculty are required to provide students with a course syllabus by the first meeting day of all classes.

Required University Notices and Policies

The following required university notices and policies can be cut and pasted into your syllabi.

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

The following required information will be unique to your course.

Instructor (and TA) Information

Course title, course number, unique number (available in the *Course Schedule*), course time, and semester
Class location

Your name, office location, phone number, e-mail address, and office hours

Teaching assistants' names, office locations, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and office hours

Course Description

Overview of course (where it fits in the curriculum, how it will enrich their knowledge, broad range of topics to be covered, etc.)
Learning outcomes, goals, and objectives – detailed handout may be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/students/plan/objectives>
Prerequisites or co-requisites
URL for Course Web site

Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation

Description in detail of grading policy and criteria (how many quizzes, tests, papers; weighting of each; amount of homework, etc.)
Attendance and tardiness and whether class attendance is used in determining the grade
Outline of topics, exam dates, due dates for homework, projects, etc. that count 20% or more of the course grade
Date and time of Final Exam (available at <http://registrar.utexas.edu/schedules/082/finals/index/html>)

Materials

Titles, authors, and editions of textbooks and other materials, required and recommended

The link below will take you to the legislation from the Faculty Council concerning required information that must be included in your syllabus (go to page 5 –upper right hand corner of the page - for the specific information above).

http://209.85.173.132/u/universityoftexas?q=cache:tWSPgIV6gWoj:www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2007-2008/legislation/3835-3837_final_apprvl_ltr.pdf+Documents+of+the+General+Faculty+3835-3837&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&ie=UTF-8

Recommended Notices and Policies

Best Practices: Based on research findings concerning best practices in course design, we recommend that you include in the syllabus statements addressing these critical topics.

Course Description

Formal (catalog) description
Clearly spell out what will be used to interface with the students in your class (e.g., Blackboard, CLIPs, instructor's personal web site, e-Gradebook, etc.). Faculty members don't all use the same resources so these should be delineated for each class. (See the sample **Use of Blackboard** in Class statement below.)
Cost and location of instructor's course packet
Supplies needed (calculators, disks, CDs, lab supplies, art supplies, clickers, etc.)
Information on how to access e-reserves

Classroom Policies

Civility statement and code of conduct
List of critical dates for class administration (last day to drop without penalty, exam dates, etc.)
Subject-to-change notice
Ground rules for participation in discussions or activities
A statement about plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing.

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html>

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

Assignments, Assessment, and Evaluation

Policy concerning homework (grading, posting, late policy, etc.)
Policy concerning make-up exams
Policy concerning late assignments
Preliminary information on term papers or projects, with due dates

Important Dates

Last day of the official add/drop period (Fall 2009 = Aug. 31)

Last day to drop a class without possible academic penalty. (Fall 2009 = Sept. 23)

Academic Advising (Oct. 22-23, 26-28)

Spring 2010 registration (Oct. 26 – Nov. 6)

Final Exams (Fall 2009 = Dec. 9-12, 14-18) – (Final exam date for your specific class.)

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>

Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

***The more thorough your syllabus is,
the less likely students will question various issues.***

Other Useful Statements:

Use of Blackboard in Class

(Sample) In this class I use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online quizzes and surveys. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

Feedback Statement (to encourage students to respond to your requests for their feedback)

(Sample) During this course I will be asking you to give me feedback on your learning in informal as well as formal ways, including through anonymous surveys about how my teaching strategies are helping or hindering your learning. It's very important for me to know your reaction to what we're doing in class, so I encourage you to respond to these surveys, ensuring that together we can create an environment effective for teaching and learning.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.

If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”

You can find advice, models, templates, and other resources for designing your course syllabus on the DIIA website at <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/>