



## **Learner-Centered Syllabus**

For many students, the course syllabus serves as the first point of contact they have with their instructor. The language and tone of the document create a first impression of the course. A learner-centered syllabus conveys a sense that both instructor and students are responsible for making the semester successful.

Remember that a syllabus serves as a contract between you and your students. It is in this document that students first learn your expectations of them, as well as what they can expect from you. It is wise to include your course objectives, along with a tentative calendar that contains topics covered in class, required readings, assignments, and important dates. Ideally, the content of your syllabus provides a road map which guides your instructional decisions throughout the duration of the semester, as well as ushers students toward successful completion of your course.

**The following ideas are important to consider regarding the course syllabus:**

- 1. Be realistic as you plan for readings and assignments.** As the expert, the content of the course is very clear to you, but it may feel completely foreign to students who have not previously encountered your field. Consider how novices to the content might approach learning these ideas for the first time.
- 2. Include your expectations for communication.** Let students know how you prefer to be contacted, as well as the time expected that they should wait for a response.
- 3. Course policies should be explicitly stated.** Include any information related to academic integrity, grades, make-up exams, extra credit, and attendance.
- 4. Include information related to accommodating differences.** Information related to accessibility, accommodating disabilities, and religious observations should be provided to students.