

## How To Write a Syllabus

Experimental College

The course syllabus is the main form of communication between teachers and students about objectives, content, and requirements. Because of ExCo's more liberal definition of education, ExCo syllabi must be even more clear and thorough in their explanation of classes. A good syllabus keeps you and your students on track, and can alleviate problems of hazy goals and lack of direction. It also helps students to make informed and quick decisions about whether to enroll. **Note:** Any changes made to the syllabus after the course is approved must be reported to the Committee before classes begin.

You can find examples of excellent syllabi on the ExCo website: [www.oberlin.edu/exco](http://www.oberlin.edu/exco)

Your syllabus is the most important part of your application. In order to get your class approved, your syllabus (usually) must:

- cover the 12-week semester, listed week by week
- state topics/activities for each class meeting
- state assignments and readings with page numbers and when they are due
- provide at least 1 discussion question for each class meeting (if the course is discussion-based)
- state and describe the Methods of Evaluation and when they are due

The following are suggested sections for your syllabus and what they might include.

### •Basic Information

Course title, course number, and number of credits  
Instructor's full name  
Instructor's e-mail address, telephone number and time to be reached  
Class meeting time and place  
Materials needed and course fee (if applicable)

### •Course Purpose, Goals, and Objectives

Catalogue description  
Course rationale  
General and specific objectives  
Relationship of course to student academic development

### •Class Dynamics

Describe the instructor's planned relationship to and interaction with the students, and explain his or her approach to facilitating the class.

### •General Requirements

Clearly state up front all the requirements for passing the course, so that nothing comes as a surprise. This includes attendance policy, number and type of assignments and Methods of Evaluation, and field trips and outside events. Remember that all ExCo courses are graded Credit/No Entry, not with letter grades.

### •Content Outline

This should include topics being covered, objectives, assignments, and Methods of Evaluation, all with appropriate dates and due dates. These should demonstrate a reasoned progression of topics. If your class is discussion-based (Media Studies and others) you must include your discussion questions.