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 ExCo committee before classes begin.**
You can find all application materials, our course guidelines, and committee member office hours on the ExCo website: http://oberlinexco.org/

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 one discussion question for each class meeting (if the course is discussion based)
- ✓ State and describe the methods of evaluation and when they are due
- ✓ Clearly state the attendance policy (ExCo attendance policy is that in order to pass, a student cannot miss 25% or more of classes, which means a student could miss at most 2 classes in a weekly ExCo)

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

- **Basic Information**
  - o Course title, course number, and number of credits
  - o Instructor's full name, preferred gender pronouns
  - o Instructor's e-mail address, telephone number, and time to be reached
  - o Class meeting time and place
  - o Materials needed and course fee (if applicable)
- **Course Purpose, Goals, and Objectives**
  - o Catalogue description

- o Course rationale
- o General and specific objectives
- o Relationship of course to student academic development
- **Class Dynamics**
  - o Describe the instructor's planned relationship to and interaction with the students, and explain their approach to facilitating the class
- **General Requirements**
  - o Clearly state up front all requirements for passing the course, so that nothing comes as a surprise. This includes attendance policy, number and type of assignments, methods of evaluation, field trips, and outside events. Remember that all ExCo courses are graded on a Pass/No Pass basis, not with letter grades
- **Content outline**
  - o This should include a 12-week outline of 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, you must include your discussion questions.

Please contact the ExCo Committee at exco@oberlin.edu with any additional questions.