

## Statement on the Contents of a Course Syllabus

The section, “Suggested Classroom Procedures,” in the *Undergraduate Bulletin* (<http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/procedures1.html>) contains the following statement: “In general, instructors are strongly encouraged to follow the guidelines for course design and classroom procedures recommended by the Center for Faculty Excellence. When students enter into a learning relationship, they have certain needs and expectations. They are entitled to information about course procedures, content, and goals. Instructors should provide a syllabus that describes the course and methods of evaluation. Particular attention should be paid to several areas of special concern to students, including provision of reserve readings and grading policy” (p. 403).

The Administrative Board of the College of Arts and Sciences concurs. Best practice indicates that a syllabus should be provided, electronically or in print, to students no later than the first day of class and retained by the department or unit of the University for four years (the normal life-cycle of an undergraduate student).

The syllabus should contain information about the course, instructor, and teaching assistants if appropriate; contact information; office hours; prerequisites; and level at which the course is taught. It should contain course goals and key learning objectives, and policies about conduct in the class, including the consequences for missing class.

The syllabus should include information about course requirements and policies, relevant dates (a course calendar listing assignments and due dates), and information about how the instructor will determine final grades. The syllabus should provide a complete list of text books and other course resources (for example, Sakai) and means for accessing them.

The syllabus should explain the impact of the Honor Code on the course, such as whether students are permitted to work together on problem sets, what assistance they are permitted to obtain in preparing various assignments, and whether exams are closed or open book.

Change is inevitable, making it appropriate to include a clause that informs students of possible modifications due to unforeseen events, such as “The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates (excluding the officially scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.”

The above statement should be provided to all College of Arts and Sciences units in advance of the spring 2013 semester so that instructors are aware of these best practices.

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