Course Syllabus Policy
(Updated November 2015)

Faculty in the unit “develop high quality course syllabi which will result in students being better served” (College Academic Matters Committee, March 22, 2006).

The following are the elements a syllabus should contain:

1. Course title and number
2. Number of credits
3. Date (i.e., identify semester/year), time and location (if known) of the course
4. Instructor(s) and contact information (address, telephone, office hours & email)
5. Course description
6. Course objectives clearly stated as expected learning outcomes for students
7. Indicate the course format: face-to-face/hybrid, blended, or online

- A F2F/hybrid course meets in person, but may also include some online activities such as discussion forums. The online component is primarily to enhance class time rather than replace it.
- A blended course includes both face-to-face (F2F) meetings and online activities that take the place of some class time. (If you need to be out of town for a single class session because you are attending a conference and include some online activities during your absence, the course would still be considered face-to-face.)
- An online course is conducted entirely online, with no in-person component.

Here is an example of how to describe a blended class in your syllabus
“This course is designed as a blended experience, which includes both face-to-face (F2F) meetings and online activities that take the place of some class time. Online sessions will be a blend of self-paced and group activities using Moodle/Blackboard and other Web sites. There will be assigned readings and online lectures plus activities including chat, blogs, discussion forums, journaling, and wikis. [instructors list the activities related to their course] Face-to-face sessions will be held on the dates listed in the syllabus. Both the online and face-to-face sessions are equally important. Your class participation grade includes your work in both environments.”

- See below for some best practices for blended learning.
8. Required textbooks, reading and materials associated with each of the topics. All textbooks and readings should use full APA citations (make sure these have been updated to reflect inclusion of recent works)

9. Outline of topics (class-by-class or modules) covered in the course with a brief description of each of these topics and assignments for the week

10. Description of required course assignments and their assessments. General Education courses should align their objectives to the General Education Learning Objectives (http://www.umass.edu/gened/). Educator licensure courses should align their objectives the Conceptual Framework

11. Grading policies and specific grading criteria. The following grades may be given: Graduate - A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F, SAT. Graduate students enrolled in undergraduate courses may also receive C- and D, but these may not be applied toward a graduate degree; Undergraduate -- A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, F, MPF. A rubric for grade assignment (with % points converted to letter grades) should be included on the course syllabus.

12. Attendance/Participation Policy: Describe the specific requirements for attendance, these should be stated in the syllabus (e.g., if attendance is weighed for the final grade, the syllabus should state what the weight or points will be).

13. Accommodation statement
The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

14. Academic honesty statement
The Academic Honesty Policy was established to ensure that the learning environment at the university is honest and fair. The policy is designed to provide faculty and students with options for handling incidents. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating - intentional use or attempted use of trickery or deception in one's academic work
- Fabrication - intentional falsification and/or invention of any information or citation
- Plagiarism - knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work
- Facilitating dishonesty - knowingly helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty

The Academic Honesty Board handles all cases of academic dishonesty on campus. Formal definitions of academic dishonesty, examples of various forms of dishonesty, and the procedures which faculty must follow to penalize dishonesty are contained in the Academic Honesty Policy. There are two main pathways for resolving cases where dishonesty is suspected: the informal resolution and the formal charge. Both these paths require that the faculty member first inform the student of the concern and offer a meeting. For more information http://www.umass.edu/honesty/.

15. Educator Licensure Courses should embed the College’s Conceptual Framework and dispositions (expected by NCATE) throughout the course assignments. If you are not directly involved or affiliated with an educator licensure concentration, you are not required to address the Conceptual Framework component of this policy.
Please make explicit the relationship of the course objectives to the five elements of our Conceptual Framework (either globally in a brief narrative or specifically by indicating element in boldface/parentheses when it is reflected in an objective). The five concepts are:

- **Collaboration** – Educators recognize the imperative of collaboration – that we cannot achieve our vision for student learning as independent actors working in isolation. Educators exhibit attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors consistent with a collaborative approach to professional practice, as opposed to an individualistic or competitive approach to professional practice.

- **Reflective Practice** – Educators recognize the imperative of reflective practice – that to transform the status quo we must be willing to consistently examine and transform assumptions about professional practice. Educators exhibit attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors consistent with a reflective approach to professional practice that allows them to adapt practices based on considered reflection.

- **Multiple Ways of Knowing** – Educators recognize the imperative of multiple ways of knowing – that to create communities of practice, we must respect the perspectives of different stakeholders. In a spirit of inquiry, educators reflect on and challenge their own perspectives and beliefs and maintain a professional awareness of the influences that their perspectives may have in educational settings.

- **Social Justice** – Educators recognize the imperative of social justice – that we cannot achieve our vision of excellence and equity in education for all students without knowledge of and attention to the student’s social, cultural, developmental, and personal context. Educators exhibit attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors consistent with promoting social justice that allow them to adopt practices that create and advance equitable conditions in which all students can learn.

- **Evidence-Based Practice** – Educators recognize the imperative of evidence-based practices that promote student engagement, achievement and performance. In so doing the candidate will be able to: 1) gather and/or examine multiple sources of evidence, 2) determine the credibility, reliability and validity of the evidence, 3) synthesize and draw conclusions from evidence, and 4) use the evidence to modify professional practices that result in increased PK12 student learning outcomes.

**Blended Course Design – Best Practices to Consider**

- Be clear as to why you are choosing to teach in a blended environment. What are your goals in terms of student learning?

- Consider your learning objectives and decide which are most appropriate as part of the online component and which will fit best during face-to-face sessions.

- Don’t try to do too much. It’s common to underestimate the time online activities will take (for both the students and the instructors) resulting in an overwhelming amount of work. Be especially careful to plan your time – often the online portions of a class can take significantly more time for the instructor than the face-to-face sessions they replace.

- Explain to your students why you have designed the course as a blended experience, and what you expect them to get out of the online portions of the class.

- Be explicit about the activities for each week, including readings, assignments, and online activities. Be consistent from week to week in terms of the structure of the course.

- Be explicit about the requirements for online interactions (e.g., students will post at least two responses to each discussion prompt, including one original post and one comment.
responding to another student’s post.) Include specific characteristics of a discussion board post (e.g., the number of words)

- Provide regular feedback to the students regarding their participation in the online activities
- Be clear how you will assess the contributions of the students in both the online and F2F environments.
- Support is available from the Instructional Media Lab. Email instruct@umass.edu with questions or to set up an appointment.