

## Syllabus Components: Summary of Selected Literature<sup>1</sup>

<b>Concept Area</b>	<b>Specific Components</b>
<b>General Principles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The learning syllabus places students at the center of the questions: "What do students need to know in order to derive the maximum benefit from this educational experience?" (Diamond, 1998)</li> <li>Include more than less material – a detailed syllabus is a valuable tool for students and lessens their initial anxieties about the course.</li> <li>A study of Carnegie Professors found that what all of the Professors' syllabi had in common was "detailed precision." Each contained clear objectives, a day-to-day schedule identifying specific reading assignments and due dates, and clear statements regarding make-up dates, attendance, and grading standards, and information about faculty availability.</li> </ul>
<b>Logistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide basic information (instructor name and contact information, date/time/location of course, office hours and rules therefore, T.A. names, etc.)</li> <li>Specify textbooks and readings by authors and editions</li> <li>Identify additional material or equipment needed for the course</li> <li>Provide a course calendar or schedule, list important drop dates</li> </ul>
<b>Course Purpose and Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give an overview of the course's purpose, how it fits into the curriculum, and why students would want to take it; When appropriate, discuss relevance of course to General Education</li> <li>Clarify the conceptual structure used to organize the course (<i>why do the parts of the course come in the order they do?</i>)</li> <li>Describe the format or activities of the course</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State the general learning goals or objectives (what will students know or be able to do better after taking this course?)</li> <li>Where do these objectives lead intellectually and practically (<i>why should students want to pursue these objectives?</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline how students will practice the skills described in course objectives</li> <li>Describe and explain the methods of instruction (<i>will the course be mainly lecture, discussion, group work?</i>)</li> <li>Why has the instructor selected the pedagogical techniques used in the course (<i>e.g., why is active learning used/important?</i>)</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations for Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe prerequisites for the course – help students realistically assess their readiness for the course. (<i>What does the instructor assume students already know how to do?</i>)</li> <li>Will there be opportunities to address missing skills during the course?</li> <li>List other course requirements</li> <li>Discuss course policies</li> <li>Estimate student workload</li> <li>Articulate expectations for student behavior (academic integrity, attendance, involvement in active learning, etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations for Instructor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe instructor's role (how do you see your role as a teacher?)</li> <li>What are your responsibilities – what can students expect from you?</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments and Grading Methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List assignments, term papers, exams (with details about nature of each, length, etc)</li> <li>What are the purposes of the assignments, how do they link to course learning goals?</li> <li>Why have the specified readings been selected? What is their relative importance to the discipline?</li> <li>What will tests, etc. measure (memory? Understanding? Ability to synthesize?)</li> <li>State how students will be evaluated and how grades will be assigned</li> </ul>
<b>Fostering Faculty-Student Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite students with special needs to contact you during office hours</li> <li>Schedule time for fast feedback from your students</li> <li>Use conversational/approachable tone—express your interest in talking with/helping students</li> </ul>
<b>Fostering Student-Student Interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide space for names and telephone numbers of two or three classmates</li> <li>Discuss importance of active learning, learning from each other as well as instructor</li> </ul>
<b>Helping Students Learn</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include supplementary material to help students succeed in the course</li> <li>Provide information to help students know how to study/prepare for the course</li> </ul>

### <sup>1</sup> Literature reviewed for this summary:

Bers, T., Davis, D. & Taylor, W. (November-December 1996). Syllabus Analysis: What are we teaching and telling our students? *Assessment Update*, 8 (6). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publications.; Diamond, R. M. (1998). *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula: A practical guide* (Revised Edition). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.; Davis, D. G. (1993). *Tools for Teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.; Grunert, J. (1997). *The Course Syllabus: A learning-centered approach*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.; Imasuen, E. (May-June, 1999). Using Course Syllabi as Tools to Support Student Outcomes Assessment. *Assessment Update*, 11 (3). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publications.; McKeachie, W. J. (1994). *Teaching Tips* (Ninth Edition). Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath and Co.; Institutional Documents from: Northern Illinois University, Virginia Tech, University of Rhode Island.

**Hewlett General Education Fellows Syllabus Component: Scoring Rubric**

Criteria	Syllabus A**	Syllabus B**	Comments
<b>Goals and Objectives:</b> Clearly articulated learning goals and objectives for the course			
<b>Relationship to General Education:</b> Articulates the relationship between Course and General Education.			
<b>Relevance to Students:</b> Effort made to explain relevance of course to students' interests/needs			
<b>Tone of Support /Approachability:</b> Communicates instructor's teaching philosophy, commitment to helping students, meeting availability.			
<b>Student Role:</b> Articulates clear expectations for students (behavior, effort, academic honesty, etc.)			
<b>Grading System:</b> Clear outline of expectations; Takes into account varied learning strategies.			
<b>Varied Pedagogy:</b> Evidence of varied teaching strategies in assignments and class activities.			
<b>Course Content &amp; Activities:</b> Does it appear to cover a range of General Education learning objectives – i.e., factual knowledge, thinking skills, appreciation			
<b>Course-Based Assessment:</b> Evidence of gathering information on student performance to understand their needs and their performance on specific objectives, to build communication, etc.			

**\*\*Rating Scale:**  
**0=Not Present**  
**1=Present**  
**2=Exceptional**

**Additional Comments/Observations:**