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# Syllabus Template for Higher Education

Your course syllabus is one of the first points of interaction you’ll have with students. We’ve created this template to help get your class started on the right foot. This document is completely editable, so feel free to add, delete or move things around to suit your needs.

When done right, a course syllabus serves a number of important purposes: it acts as a source of truth for everything in your course and it gives students a single place to refer to when they have questions. Pack your syllabus with human touches. Keep empathy top of mind. Make it as engaging as possible (can you include images, GIFs or links to fun websites?). Foster confidence and excitement by outlining how your students can succeed.



Begin by reviewing the template below. Customize your message under each section to speak to your students
—we’ve provided some tips to guide you.

Before sending this syllabus to your students,
make sure to delete this section.
Good luck!

## 1. The Basics

| College Logo  | [Add your college’s logo; we recommend top left corner] |
| --- | --- |
| Department/Academic Unit:  | [Add your department or academic unit] |
| Term/Year: | [Add the relevant term/year for this course] |
| Total Units of Course Credit: | [Add the total units of credit for this course] |

### Welcome to [Insert Course Code + Name]

| Hi, my name is Professor XXXXX. [Insert your introduction. Let your students know how you’d like to be addressed and tell them your pronouns. Make sure your name reflects your preference (ie, Prof. Smith (she/her)). Your message should be personable and inviting. This is a great place to set the tone for the term, adding in human touches and engaging your students from the get-go.]  |
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### My email:

| [Insert your email] |
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### Co-instructor/TA contact details

| [Insert any relevant emails. You may also want to include a table of tutorials and/or labs, their corresponding teaching assistants and when the sessions are held (either in person or remotely)].  |
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### Course Location:

| [Insert room location/Zoom/Hangouts/Teams link] |
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### Office hours

| [Insert your office hours. Make sure to clarify if these sessions are in person or remote. And consider including your office number or relevant Zoom URL. Tell students what the purpose of your office hours are so they come prepared. Consider using an online scheduler system to meet student needs in a more flexible way]. |
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### Land Acknowledgement

| [Insert yours or your campus’ land acknowledgement statement. Land acknowledgement statements are a testament to your commitment to Indigenous reconciliation. Your institution may already have a statement that you can include here. Alternatively, you may draft your own. The Native Governance Center has provided helpful strategies for crafting your statement [here](https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/).] |
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## 2. Table of Contents

| [Replace with your own Table of Contents.Laying your syllabus out in a clear and logical way will make it easy for your students to follow. Give them a leg up by hyperlinking entries to the relevant sections in the syllabus, which will make it easier to navigate]. |
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## 3. About the Course

### Course description

| [Insert your own course description. Provide an overview of your course: what content will you be covering? Is there a central thread or theme you want your learners to keep in mind while they’re engaging with the material? This is a great opportunity for you to lay out your philosophy on the content you’ll be teaching and explain any nuances or intricacies your students might not expect.] |
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### Course objectives

| [Insert your own course objectives. Consider the following: What do you want students to get out of the course? What should they understand by the time it’s over? How can the learnings from your course help them in their academic and professional careers?] |
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### Prerequisite and post-requisite courses

| [Insert your own description.What courses should students have taken before this? How will those classes help them be successful in this course? What courses can students take after to build their knowledge? How does this class provide a foundation for them in a particular subject area?] |
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### Required resources

| [Insert your own description.Add in a list of required textbooks, software, hardware and other tools needed for your course. Make sure you provide clear instructions on how to access these resources and any associated fees. If possible, suggest cost-effective or free alternatives to course materials.] |
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### Assignment and assessment list

| [Insert your own course assignments.Give an overview of the assignments and assessments that your students will be completing throughout the term. Let students know what’s expected of them, the grade weight for each assessment and the due date. If larger assessments, such as final exams, are cumulative, let students know here. Also, consider the importance of flexibility. Is there wiggle room on due dates? Will you be offering study sessions for extra credit?] |
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### Collaboration

| [Insert your own description. Students often learn best from each other—and that’s as true online as it is in person. If collaboration is an important component of your class, let students know up front. Highlight which tools and activities you’ll be using and what your expectations are for students while collaborating.] |
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### How to be successful in this course

| [Insert your own description. It’s something all students want to know: how can they thrive in your class? This is a great place to set expectations. What does success look like and what is required of students to succeed? What do you expect from them? What will you give them to help them get there? How can they go above and beyond?] |
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## 4. Course Policies and Expectations

### Permissible AI use policy

| [Insert your stance on permissible AI use. The arrival of artificial intelligence (AI) has caused educators to rethink how they teach and assess their students. In this section, outline how students should use AI in ethical and responsible ways in your course. Ask yourself the following when drafting your statement: When does this policy apply and to what tools? What rationale guides this policy? How should students cite or credit AI in their own work?]Here’s an example of a flexible AI policy from the [University of Toronto](https://www.viceprovostundergrad.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/412/2024/04/Syllabus-language-for-Gen-AI-April-2024.pdf). *“Students must submit, as an appendix with their assignments, any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool, and the prompt used to generate the content. Any content produced by an artificial intelligence tool must be* [*cited appropriately*](https://bcit.libapps.com/libguides/admin_c.php?g=737967&p=5318569)*.”***For more AI policy syllabus inserts,** [**download our free ebook**](https://tophat.com/teaching-resources/toolkits-and-how-to-guides/integrating-ai-into-higher-ed-classroom/)**.** |
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### Attendance policy

| [Insert your own attendance policy. Your institution may have an official attendance policy you have to follow. But if it’s up to your discretion, consider how to be flexible. Provide alternatives for students should they miss a synchronous lecture. If your class is asynchronous, indicate how long students have to view lecture recordings and complete accompanying homework. Remind students that they should contact you for accommodations as needed.] |
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### Participation and camera policy

| **[**Insert your own participation and camera policy. It’s important your students understand your expectations when it comes to participating in class. Will it impact their grade? Is participation a nice-to-have? You might also lay out your policy for webcams if you’re teaching remotely. This can be a sensitive topic to navigate as there are many reasons students may not want to have their cameras on—as we’ve written about [here](https://tophat.com/blog/webcam-use-class/)—so proceed with understanding and empathy.] |
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### Accommodations

| **[**Insert your own accommodation policy.Students with disabilities continue to face academic and non-academic challenges. Keep this in mind and be empathetic. Will you offer open-book, untimed exams? What about additional office hours close to midterms and finals? And don’t overlook personal accommodations such as religious or spiritual observations and mental health hardships. If there are campus-wide documents for students to submit to be granted time off, include those links here.] |
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### Basic needs statement

| [Insert your own basic needs statement. For many students, achieving a desirable grade is just the tip of the iceberg. Many encounter food and housing insecurity and it’s important to acknowledge this in your syllabus—to point them in the right direction for help and to normalize the topic for students who may not be aware of these issues. If you need help on wording, the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice has put together [this great resource](https://hope.temple.edu/sites/hope/files/media/document/BFP%20Syllabus%20Statement%20and%20Welcome%20Survey_The%20Hope%20Center%202022.pdf).] |
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### Computer and Internet Access

| [Insert your own computer and Internet access statement.Building on your basic needs statement, it’s important to recognize that many students are unable to afford the digital devices and Internet connections necessary for modern learning. Ask students to contact you if digital access is an issue they face and provide them with resources available through your institution—like free Internet access, software, online storage and support—so they’re aware of the help at their disposal.]  |
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### Plagiarism

| [Insert your own plagiarism statement. Make your policy crystal clear, spell out the nuances of citations and explain what behavior you will absolutely not tolerate and what the consequences are for abusing that policy.] |
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## 5. Personal Support

| **[**Insert your own personal support statement.Access to food and housing and the ability to buy course materials and devices necessary for learning are just some of the challenges you’ll want to address. Another consideration is students’ mental health. Close out your syllabus with information on free and confidential counselling services your institution provides. This can help if students are struggling with anxiety, grief, stress or personal relationship issues. Make sure you have specific resources at the ready in case students reach out to you directly.]  |
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## 6. Course schedule / calendar

| [Insert your own calendar or schedule. A holistic look at the term—in calendar or schedule form—can really set students up for success. If you have the time, build out a calendar that highlights which days you’ll be discussing certain topics, when assignments are due and when you’re administering your assessments.] |
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