

**Putting It All Together: Constructing Your Course
Constructing An Effective Syllabus**

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I. Pedagogical Choices and Syllabus Construction

The course syllabus, seen perhaps as a routine administrative requirement, offers rich opportunity as a teaching tool. It serves as a map for the “organized and meaningful journey” upon which professor and students embark with each course.

This presentation will address the purposes of a syllabus, the parts of a syllabus, and the choices made in the drafting of a syllabus, as well as some creative ideas and tips. Throughout the presentation, I will offer examples of syllabi and encourage your sharing your ideas and reactions.

A. Purposes of a Syllabus

A syllabus serves

- * As a set of instructions to execute teaching AND learning.
- * As an accountability agreement.
- * As evidence in cases of challenge, review, and promotion.
- * As notice of system-mandated rights or responsibilities.
- * As notice of expectations and consequences.

B. Parts of a Syllabus

For each part of your syllabus, consider both the substantive content and the underlying messages sent to students by the content itself and the way that it is presented. This part of the presentation will address the substantive content that you might choose to include in your syllabus. The next part will address the underlying messages and the ways that those messages are conveyed.

1. Contact information
2. Course description
3. Goals and objectives
4. Texts and materials
5. Methods/means of meeting those goals
6. Methods of grading and assessment
7. Schedule of meetings and assignments
8. Policies

C. Syllabus Drafting: Choices Made and Messages Sent

A syllabus is much more than the words on the page; each aspect of it sends a message, intentional or not, to students in the course or students considering the course about what their experience in the course will be and what their relationship with the professor will be.

1. Amount and clarity of information
2. Tone
3. Personality
4. Word choice
5. Modeling of professional behavior
6. Audience/reader engagement
7. Confidence
8. Visual appeal

D. Additional Ideas and Tips

1. Students tend not to remember or use the syllabus, so make it relevant.
2. Let students help to create the syllabus.
3. Never let the syllabus become the beast.
4. Consider the merits of an on-line syllabus with links.
5. Personalize a department syllabus.
6. Write the syllabus in the style of primary authority.
7. Others?

E. A Final Note

If you'd like a copy of the presentation and/or a bibliography, please e-mail me at nancy.soonpaa@ttu.edu.