

Syllabus Guidelines--Updated August 2017

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Required Syllabus Elements:

1. Course Information

All syllabi must include:

- Course title
- Course number
- Number of credits
- Current year and term
- Meeting days, times, and locations

This information is available on Insite/Webadvisor, in the course catalog, and on your official course offer. You may want to include information on whether the course fulfills a GE requirement or program requirement.

This information is required by [Title 5, section 55002](#), Standards and Criteria for Courses

2. Instructor Information and Introduction

All syllabi must include instructor contact information and should clearly communicate your contact preferences and response times. You may also want to include a little information about yourself as a person and an instructor to help students get to know you, or consider having this information accessible to students through another means such as an introductory video or a welcome letter.

- Instructor name
- Office location
- Office phone number
- Email address and other contact info (Skype, SMS, etc.)
- Office hours and related procedures (for office hour procedures and requirements, see the [UF Part-Time Faculty Handbook, 4th edition, 2017, p. 15](#) and the [UF Contract, Article 7.8](#))
- Recommended: Communication policy (see item 12 in Recommended Course Elements)

This information is required by the United Faculty ([Part-time Faculty Handbook, 4th edition, 2017, p.11](#)).

3. Course Management System

Students must know if you use a course management system, and if so, what you use it for. Students need this information so they can see if the technology demands of a course are right for them. Please include the following information:

- URL or navigation instructions
- Login info
- Tech support info
- What you use the CMS for (e.g., grades only, repository of course materials, assignment submission, etc.)

- Any additional technology or apps used or required by the course, why you use it, and costs or access procedures
- Recommended: link to lab locations and times on campus in case students have limited computer access

4. Prerequisites/Corequisites/Recommended Preparation

All syllabi must include information on classes, skills, and information required or recommended prior to enrolling in the course.

This information is required by [Title 5, section 55002](#), Standards and Criteria for Courses

5. Course Description and Objectives

All syllabi must include information on material to be covered, general themes, and course activities.

This information is required by [Title 5, section 55002](#), Standards and Criteria for Courses

6. Official Course Student Learning Outcomes

All syllabi must include the official course Student Learning Outcomes.

Course SLOs are the Objectives Section from the Course Outline,
<http://www3.dvc.edu/org/info/schedules/course-outline.htm>.

Use the label “Student Learning Outcomes” on the syllabus and begin the list with the heading “Students will be able to:” etc. (AACJC Standard II.A.3 www.accjc.org/wp-content/.../08/Accreditation_Reference_Handbook_July_2016.pdf)

This information is required by [Title 5, section 55002](#), Standards and Criteria for Courses

7. Required Textbooks and any other Required Materials

All syllabi must include information on required textbooks and materials:

- Titles, authors, editions, and ISBN of assigned texts
- Additional course materials such as calculators or art supplies that the student must have to complete course requirements
- Consider addressing any unusual costs students may incur in the course

This information is required by the United Faculty ([Part-time Faculty Handbook, 4th edition, 2017, p.11](#)).

8. Evaluation and Grading

All syllabi must include information on evaluation and grading in the course. Students need to know how they will be evaluated in your class and the major assignments and due dates they can expect:

- Grade Components (e.g. assignments, exams, projects, lab reports, etc.)
- Any assignment or category of assignments that factors into the course grade (Not every individual assignment must be included. For example, if you have a variable number of informal class assignments, you do not need to enumerate them all, but you should be clear about the categories of assignments.)
- Students should be notified if there is a substantial amount of online work in a F2F course.
- If participation is a component of the grade, explain how this category will be evaluated (e.g. speaking in class, number of times or quality of contribution, etc.).
- Consider explaining the goals of the assignments and grade components (Why are students being assigned this work? How do assignments relate to course objectives?)
- Grading Calculation (e.g. weights, points—how the grade will be calculated)
- If you curve scores or plan to offer extra credit, this should also be explained.
- DVC policy does not allow attendance to be factored into a course grade. However, participation and in-class work are valid grading categories (Although instructors may drop students for missing more than the equivalent of two weeks in a full-term course, grades may not be lowered due to absences alone). (Title 5, Section 55002.a.2.A.)

This information is required by [Title 5, section 55002](#), Standards and Criteria for Courses

Recommended Syllabus Elements:

Syllabi should seek to strike a balance between providing critical course and college policy information and length and readability constraints. Where your syllabus falls on a continuum of length and comprehensiveness is up to you as an instructor. You may choose to include all, none, or some of these elements. However, all instructors should consider their audience, readability/usability optimization, and the function of the syllabus as a document and contract when deciding what to include.

9. Requirements Satisfied by the Course

It is suggested that syllabi include information on any requirements satisfied by the course: IGETC, CSU GE, DVC GE, program requirements or electives.

10. Course Schedule

It is suggested that syllabi include the scheduled dates for each of the course meetings, and indicate finalized or tentative readings, assignment due dates, quizzes, and exams. Any meetings scheduled

outside of normal class time (such as field trips) should be clearly indicated, and the instructor's policy for making up those meetings if missed, should be stated.

It is also important that the college-specified exam schedule for finals week be followed, and the date, time and location of the finals week meeting/exam be listed. Consider including a link to the DVC website finals schedule for the term.

11. Important College Dates and Enrollment Policies

It is suggested that syllabi include information on important college dates and enrollment policies.

- Important Admissions and Records Dates
 - Last day to add a full-term class
 - Last day to drop a full-term class and be eligible for a refund of fees
 - Last day to request a refund for the student activity fee
 - Last day to drop a full-term class, in-person, without a "W" appearing on transcript
 - Last day to drop a full-term class, online, without a "W" appearing on transcript
 - Last day to request P/NP option for a full-term class
 - Last day to withdraw from a full-term class with a "W" appearing on transcript

- Instructor, department, or college policies on enrollment and attendance. For college policy see: <http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html>

12. Course Policies

It is suggested that syllabi include information on the instructor's policies on:

- Late Work/Make-ups
- Absences and Tardiness. For DVC policy information on attendance visit: <http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html>
- Drop Policy: You should clearly communicate your drop policy to students.
- DVC policy is "The instructor may drop students who miss more than the equivalent of two weeks of a term--length course." You should let students know how you plan to approach and enforce this policy.
- Communication policy (Consider including: response times to emails and messages, availability, times you will not be checking email or messages, your preferred means of contact and any other preferences, such as specifics of email subject lines, encouragement to attend office hours, or similar. You may also want to include a statement on student privacy rights, including the legal rights of students that prevent information from being disclosed to parents/guardians. Please see [Student Privacy Rights](#) on the DVC website for the DVC policy and a link to FERPA, the federal law that mandates these policies.)
- Recording policy: Some recording during class may potentially violate FERPA or California wiretapping law. Consider including policies on the use of recording devices and permissions in your class, and making it clear to students if there is recording occurring in your classroom.

Sample language for inclusion in a syllabus on recording policy is: *“students are not permitted to record a class themselves by any means without prior express authorization of the course director. Violation of this policy may be deemed a violation of the DVC - Student Code of Conduct. For the purposes of this policy, “recording” is defined as audio, still photo, or video, whether by audio, digital, or future recording devices.”*

13. Statement on Appropriate Classroom Behavior

It is suggested that syllabi include information on appropriate classroom behavior. This may include:

- The instructor’s general behavioral expectations (e.g. note-taking, asking questions, discussion participation, active-listening, etc.)
- The instructor’s policy on electronics in the classroom
- DVC’s Disruptive Behavior Policy (See DVC Disruptive Behavior Policies and Procedures: <http://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/disruptive-behavior.html>)

14. Academic Integrity

It is suggested that syllabi include information about what constitutes academic integrity and how violations will be handled should they occur. DVC has an official policy on what constitutes a violation of academic integrity. As an instructor, you have discretion on how to interpret and enforce academic integrity in your classroom, but your policy should be clearly stated and consistently applied (consistency ensures an unbiased and fair application of standards). If you have course-specific guidelines on collaboration, please include them so students know what your definition of acceptable collaboration is. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

Academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, is a violation of the DVC Student Code of Conduct and will not be tolerated. This includes giving or receiving assistance on any assignment, quiz, or exam unless specifically authorized by your instructor. These actions are grounds for academic consequences, such as receiving no credit for the assignment or a reduced grade in the class, and disciplinary consequences from the college. If you have any questions about academic dishonesty or plagiarism, please see the DVC Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/studentrights/academic-integrity.html>

15. Missing Class for Religious Observances or College-Sponsored Activities

California state law and DVC policy require that students must be allowed to make up missed coursework due to absences for religious holidays not observed in our calendar. It is suggested that syllabi provide this information, along with information about how the instructor will handle student absences for college-sponsored activities. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

California state law and DVC policy require that a student be allowed to make up missed classwork due to absences for religious holidays or observances. If you celebrate a religious holiday not observed in the school calendar, you must notify your instructor at least one week in advance of any days you will miss.

It is your responsibility to contact your instructor and complete any missed work within one week of the absence.

If you must miss class due to a college-sponsored activity (including school-sanctioned field trips, school team activities, academic conferences, etc.), reasonable accommodations will be made to allow you to complete missed assignments. You must notify your instructor at least one week in advance and be prepared to provide appropriate documentation. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor and complete any missed work within one week of the absence.

[This is DVC official academic policy](https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html)

[\(https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html\)](https://www.dvc.edu/communication/policies/academic/attendance.html)

16. Missing Class for Medical or Family Emergencies

It is suggested that syllabi include information regarding the instructor's policies on student absences due to medical or family emergencies. This information should include, at minimum, the instructor's policies and requirements for making up missed work due to these emergency situations and expected time-frames and procedures for contacting instructors in case of such an emergency.

17. Disability Statement

It is suggested that syllabi include information about how students with specific disabilities can access support and how instructors will provide reasonable accommodations. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

Students who require alternative formats for course materials, adaptive equipment, or other support or accommodations due to a specific disability may request these services through the Disability Support Services (DSS) office. Instructors are only authorized to provide accommodations authorized by the DSS office. If you have questions, please see your instructor. For more information related to Disability Support Services, you may visit the DSS office in the Student Services Center (SSC-248), contact them via telephone at (925) 969-2182, or view their webpage: <http://www.dvc.edu/student-services/disability-support-services/index.html>.

18. Wellness & Mental Health Resources

It is suggested that syllabi include information about how students can access mental health and other wellness services available on campus. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

Several resources are available to help meet the wellness and mental health needs of DVC students. These include access to a mental health counselor and short-term personal counseling. These also include access to Contra Costa County Supported Education Services, which can help actively-enrolled DVC students find and access appropriate community resources. For more information, or to make an appointment, you may self-refer in person to the Counseling office in the Student Services Center (SSC-201) or via e-mail at WellnessDVC@email.4cd.edu.

19. General Student Service Resources

Instructors may want to include a general statement about the availability of student service resources in their syllabi. Please consider using the following language in your syllabus:

Many student service resources are available to students enrolled in classes at Diablo Valley College. These include the DVC Financial Aid and Scholarship offices, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services, Disability Support Services, the DVC Career and Transfer Center, and support services for DREAMers, veterans, and foster youth, among others. If you have questions, your instructor may be able to help guide you to these resources. You can also find more information at <http://www.dvc.edu/student-services>.

20. Syllabus Tone

Your syllabus is a contract between you and the students you teach. However, it does not need to read like a legal agreement! Often you will create more connection between yourself and your students through considering the tone of your communication and trying to make it as warm and welcoming as possible. Look at the chart below for some examples of warmer versus colder language (taken from “Effect of syllabus tone: students' perceptions of instructor and course.” Harnish, Richard J. Bridges, K. Robert Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal; Dordrecht 14.3 (Sep 2011): 319-330.)

“Colder”	“Warmer”
Some of the specific skills you should obtain in this course are listed below. Because you are not yet a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior, all of these activities will help you become one, and if you are motivated enough, use the skills in your daily life	Some of the specific skills I hope you will obtain in this course are listed below. Being a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior is important; all of these activities will help you become one, and it is my hope that you will use the skills in your daily life
Come prepared to actively participate in this course. This is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more interesting ...	I hope you actively participate in this course. I say this because I found it is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more fun) ...

<p>Unfortunately, illnesses, death in the family or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are no excuse for not contacting me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation. If you contact me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation, a make-up exam will be given</p>	<p>Unfortunately, illnesses, death in the family or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are unwelcomed and because I understand how difficult these times are, if you contact me within 24 h of the event and provide documentation, I will be happy to give you a make-up exam</p>
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21. Accessibility and Universal Design considerations

Your syllabus should be as easy to read as possible. Sometimes, large blocks of text can be difficult to read, and difficult to re-find specific information (policies, dates, grades, and the other stuff you HOPE students are checking the syllabus for frequently!) There are design principles that can be used to make your syllabus easier for all students to read and to find things in. Consider reviewing and using Universal Design (UDL) principles and considerations as you construct your syllabus. Link: [The UDL Syllabus](#)

22. Online Syllabus and Course Considerations

There are many unique considerations for teaching in an online environment. The Professional Development and Distance Education committees and Instructional Technology departments provide resources for instructors seeking to create syllabi and course materials for use online.