



MSU requires faculty to distribute a course syllabus (print or electronic) at the beginning of the semester. This, and other requirements with regards to teaching are listed in the Code of Teaching Responsibility:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.asp?Section=514> . This document summarizes essentials about syllabi design and requirements at MSU. For further information refer to the original documents.

MSU Minimum Course Syllabi Content **Required**

- a) instructional objectives; instructor contact information and office hours;
- b) grading criteria and methods used to determine final course grades;
- c) date of the final examination and tentative dates of required assignments, quizzes, and tests, if applicable;
- d) attendance policy, if different from the University attendance policy and especially when that attendance policy affects student grades;
- e) required and recommended course materials to be purchased, including textbooks and supplies; and
- f) any required proctoring arrangements to which students must adhere (effective Spring 2013).

A Well-Designed Course Syllabus has Multiple Uses

- Helps students know when they are to do what, what it is they are to learn, and how they are to demonstrate learning.
- Decreases incidences that distract from learning.
- Provides an opportunity to connect with your students and demonstrate your enthusiasm for the topic, the importance of what will be learned, and your interest in their success.
- Informs students of your expectations, approach, and hints at your personality as an instructor.
- Reflects your teaching philosophy.
- May be a primary piece of evidence of how you teach for teaching portfolios, promotion and tenure applications, annual reviews, etc.

The syllabus checklist that follows can be used to develop or modify your syllabi:

- All **required** items for a syllabus are listed above and are noted in the master checklist.
- Where MSU policy is involved, it is cited. The Code of Teaching Responsibility lists items that must be / are required to be on the syllabus. These are noted as **required**. Other items, that are required by the university, but are not required to be *on the syllabus*, are noted with a footnote. In the footnote **required** will indicate the item is required. For clarification you should refer to MSU's Code of Teaching Responsibility.
- Where suggestions for wording are available on an MSU website it is so indicated.
- Most items listed are those that faculty have found makes course management easier and clearer for both the faculty member and the students. Choose those that will benefit your students and you.
- In addition, there are a few items that can be helpful, depending upon the circumstances, but you may forget about without reviewing the checklist.

How to Use the Following Checklist

- 1) Design your course and write a syllabus to support it
- 2) Check the list of required items for MSU syllabus – ensure all are included
- 3) Check your College / Department for any required elements – ensure all are included
- 4) Review this complete checklist for ideas of other elements that could be included



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MSU SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

Course Information

- Course title
- Course number
- Credit hours
- Course meeting days and time¹
- Course location (other logistics: labs, clinical settings, computer classrooms, etc.)
- Course web site address

Course Description²

- Catalog description
- Elaboration or clarification of the catalog description
- Statement of how the course relates to other courses in the curriculum, overall program competencies, institutional/program mission, student career goals, etc.

Instructor Information & Accessibility³

(Your **contact information** and **office hours** are **required** by: **#2 Course Syllabi**: in Code of Teaching Responsibility)

- Name (**Required.**)
- Title
- Office location (**Required.**)
- Office hours and how appointments can be made outside office hours (**Required.**)
- Phone (office/cell/home – appropriate time to call) (**Required.**)
- Email address; Web site
- Your credentials and/or interests (degrees, fields of expertise, research projects)

Teaching Assistant Information

Note: if teaching assistant is an “instructor” everything required for instructor is required here too.

- Name (**Required.**)
- Office location
- Office hours and how appointments can be made outside office hours (**Required.**)
- Phone (office/cell/home – appropriate time to call)
- Email address; Web site
- Information about TA(s) or other course personnel (degrees, fields of expertise, research projects)

¹ **Required: #6 Class Meetings** in the Code of Teaching Responsibility: “Instructors shall be responsible for meeting their classes regularly and at scheduled times. To allow units to take appropriate action, instructors shall notify their units if they are to be absent and have not made suitable arrangements regarding their classes.”

² **Required: #1 Course Content** in the Code of Teaching Responsibility: “Instructors shall be responsible for ensuring that the content of the courses they teach is consistent with the course descriptions approved by the University Committee on Curriculum and the University Council. Instructors shall direct class activities toward the fulfillment of course objectives and shall evaluate student performance in a manner consistent with these objectives.”

³ **Required: #8 Instructor Accessibility to Students** in the Code of Teaching Responsibility: “Instructors shall be responsible for being accessible to students outside of class time and therefore shall schedule and keep office hours for student conferences. Office hours should be scheduled at times convenient to both students and instructors with the additional option of mutually convenient prearranged appointments for students whose schedules conflict with announced office hours. Each teaching unit shall determine the minimum number of office hours for instructors in that unit. Instructors who serve as academic advisors also shall be responsible for maintaining appropriate office hours before and during enrollment periods. In addition to office hours, instructor accessibility through e-mail and other means is encouraged.”

MSU SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

Course Prerequisites/Co-requisites

- Where the course fits into the program goals (Ex. “This is the first course required ...”)

Course Learning or Instructional Objectives⁴

- Course Objectives or Outcomes are listed and they (**Required.**):
 - Align with the course content as approved by the University Curriculum Committee and the MSU Descriptions of Courses: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/Courses/search.asp>
 - Each objective, stated as an intended, single outcome defined in terms of student performance⁵
- Consider identifying:
 - which Liberal Learning Goals are embedded in your course, e.g., Analytical Thinking, Cultural Understanding, Effective Citizenship, Effective Communication, Integrated Reasoning : <http://undergrad.msu.edu/learning>
 - which global competencies are embedded in your course: <http://undergrad.msu.edu/programs/ise>
Sharing this information with the students on your syllabus assists them in linking what they are learning in your course with the learning goals of the University.

Required/Recommended Resources

Clearly identify, and distinguish between, “required” and “recommended”⁶ course materials and supplies. (#2 **Course Syllabi**: in MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility also **requires** listing of *what must be purchased.*) Examples of items to include:

- Texts (ISBN number, title, author, date, edition, where sold, cost and if on reserve in department or library)
- Course packs
- Annotated list of reading materials (and rationale for selection)
- Style guides
- Internet sites
- Subscriptions/newspapers
- Lab equipment
- Notebooks
- Supplies
- Calculators
- Clickers
- Software
- Computer memory required for course

Teaching Philosophy and Expectation for Roles

- Your philosophy of education/teaching
- Your beliefs about the role of the teacher and the role of the learner

⁴ MSU **requires** instructional objectives on the syllabi (#2 **Course syllabi**), that course content is consistent with the course description (#1 **Course content**) and that class activities and graded assessments are aligned with course objectives (#1 **Course content** and #3 **Student Assessment and Final Grades**). Code of Teaching Responsibility.

⁵ An excellent description on writing learning objectives for different cognitive levels of expected achievement is available at: <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/RevisedBlooms1.html> . For more ideas and resources contact F&OD.

⁶ Identifying which textbooks and supplies are “**required**” versus “**recommended**” helps direct students as to which they must buy. It also identifies what items may be purchased via student financial aid.

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Methods of Instruction (e.g., description, rationale, criteria for evaluation)

- e.g., seminar, lecture, simulations, case studies, required group work, service learning, student presentations, problem-based learning, etc.

Tentative Course Schedule

(Include disclaimer that “the schedule is tentative and subject to change.”⁷)

- Date of final exam and tentative dates for readings, assignments, papers, projects, tests, exams, etc. (**Required** by: #2 Course Syllabi in the MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility.)
- Description of what topics will be covered at each course meeting
- Dates of holidays or special events (e.g., field trips, guest lecturers)
 - Note: MSU’s Policy on Religious Observance:
<http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/ReligiousPolicy.asp>
- Description and due dates of major assignments
 - Prior student samples of assignments/papers/projects
- How modifications to the course schedule/syllabus will be handled
 - Ex. “Changes may be made in the schedule, but they will be announced ahead of time.”

Course Requirements beyond Assignments/Assessments

- Ex. “Visit to Instructor Office Hours at least once during the semester”
- Ex. “Assigned readings are due on the date listed in the course calendar. You are expected to come to class prepared. Read, and review the material, take notes on it and be ready to discuss it.”
- Ex. “You are required to respond to two out of the three discussion questions posted on ANGEL each week.”

Attendance Policy

- Attendance policy (**Required** by MSU #2(e) **Course Syllabi** if it varies from the MSU Attendance Policy and, especially when, it could effect their course grade: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/classroom-policies/index.html>)
- Date and location of final examination. Reminder of penalty if exam is missed⁸ .

Expectations for Class Participation

- Explain expectations (if related to grade elements, be specific about desired behavior(s) and develop a grading rubric to avoid subjectivity)
- Consider cultural aspects related to participation for international students

Expected Hours of Preparation / Work Outside Class per Week⁹

- Estimate the total based on the following: reading/studying, assigned papers/projects, group work, study groups, attendance at events, seeing movies/tapes, service, ANGEL discussions, labs, field trips.

⁷ Any changes would need to be accompanied with appropriate notification.

⁸ “A student absent from a final examination without a satisfactory explanation will receive a grade of 0.0 on the numerical system, NC on the CR-NC system, or N in the case of a course authorized for grading on the P-N system. Students unable to take a final examination because of illness or other reason over which they have no control should notify the associate deans of their colleges immediately.” From Academic Programs – General Information, Policies, Procedures and Regulations found at: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=112#s499>

⁹ **Note:** the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association defines credit hour as including a **minimum** effort for each hour of instruction as two hours out-of-class work. The full definition can be found at: <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/federal-compliance-program.html> - click on Protocol for Peer Reviewers Reviewing Credit Hours...”

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Course Policies

- Expectations for success
- Academic integrity (see separate section on it on the next page)
- Absences (definitions of excused/unexcused absences and the procedure for students to contact you in case of an emergency)¹⁰
- Tardiness (What should the student do when walking into the class late?)
- Requirements for submitting assignments (e.g., cover letter with name, course, date, etc.)
- Late/missing assignments/make-ups
- Your requirements for correspondence (e.g., email with course name in subject line, etc.)
- Lab safety/use
- Return of student work and/or posting of grades (How soon can students expect feedback?) Instructors are to return assessment documents/projects “with such promptness to enhance the learning experience.” (#4 **Testing Documents** and #5 **Term Papers and Comparable Projects**, Code of Teaching Responsibility)
- Policies for exam administration
- Guidelines for class behavior/civility (e.g., respectful consideration of one another’s perspectives, open-mindedness, creative risk-taking, “Please be courteous and respectful to others.”)
- Guidelines for large-class etiquette
- Expectations for informal or formal cooperative/collaborative learning activities/assignments¹¹
- Guidelines for the use of electronic devices (Cell phone policy, IPODs, MP3 players, etc.)
- Guidelines for food/beverages in the classroom
- Policy if a student has to leave the class early
- Citation/Style Requirements
- Use of MSU email – advise Ss to use it
- Other: Student Rights and Responsibility (Click on links on menu at: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/index.html>)

Use of ANGEL/Desire to Learn/other Course Management System (CMS)

- Student expectations or requirements for use of ANGEL/other CMS
- Etiquette and communication expectations (http://vudat.msu.edu/communicate_guide/)
- Instructions on how to access ANGEL/other CMS, as appropriate for your course
- How to access announcements, grades, access quizzes, or post assignments, if applicable
- Instructions for technical assistance, as appropriate for your course
 - o for ANGEL at <http://www2.lib.msu.edu/about/dls/angel.jsp> or 355.2345 or 1-800-500-1554
 - o for LON CAPA at: <https://loncapa.msu.edu/students.html>

Student Assessment/Evaluation/Grading Plan

(**Required.** The assessment and evaluation of student performance should be done in a manner consistent with course objectives. **Required** by: #3 **Student Assessment and Final Grades**: in MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility¹² .

¹⁰ “A degree of reasonableness should pervade this.” Doug Estrly, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, July 5, 2012.

¹¹ “Some additional information might be appropriate at this point. This is one area that students often stumble on because it has not been made clear to them what the expectation is and how it could impact their performance/evaluation.” Doug Estrly, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, July 5, 2012.

¹² #3 **Student Assessment and Final Grades**, Code of Teaching Responsibility: “Instructors shall be responsible for informing students, in a timely manner so as to enhance learning, of the grading criteria and methods used to determine grades on individual assignments. Instructors shall be responsible for assessing a student’s performance based on announced criteria and on standards of academic achievement. Instructors shall submit final course grades in accordance with University deadlines. Assessment methods (effective Spring 2013) should be appropriate to the learning objectives of the course. “

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MSU requires grading criteria and method for determining final grades and date of final examination as well as tentative dates of other assignments, quizzes, and tests in the syllabus: **#2 Course Syllabi**: in MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility)

- Explain how students will be evaluated (**Required.**)
- Describe how final grades will be calculated, e.g., percentage or weighting of grades (**Required.**)
- Provide grading criteria for major assignments, projects, final activities
- Explain how team-based projects will be evaluated and what to do if members of the team are not contributing.
- Include policies/practices (e.g., drop lowest quiz grade, revisions/resubmissions, extra credit/bonus points, estimated timeline for returning assessments.)
- Expected turnaround time for assignment grades, test grades, etc. ¹³

Testing Guidelines

- Ex. “Students may bring in a 4” x 6” card with notes.”
- Ex. “Students should take every other seat.”
- “Explain any required proctoring arrangements to which students must adhere.” (**#2 Course Syllabi**: in MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility. **Required.**)

Academic Integrity ¹⁴

See <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/faculty-faq.html#question3> for suggested text; see <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html> for relevant policies, regulations and ordinances.

- Statement affirming belief in Academic Integrity
- Statement outlining penalties for cheating and plagiarism in course
- Statement describing university penalty for academic dishonestly
- If used, there is a **required** statement about turnitin.com that must be included in your syllabus. For exact language see: <http://learndat.tech.msu.edu/teach/student-writing>

Reminders of Relevant University Policies

- Requirements for and dates for drop or withdrawal from course
- Guidelines on the commercialization of course notes and materials. MSU prohibits students from commercializing their notes of lectures and University-provided class materials without the written consent of the instructor. Instructors may allow commercialization by including permission in the course syllabus. (**#9: Commercialization of Course Notes and Materials**, MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility)

¹³ Including expectations in the syllabus is not required. However, it can help hold you accountable and manage student expectations. What is **required** is timely return of feedback and grades. **#4: Testing Documents**: “Instructors shall be responsible for returning to students student answers to quizzes, tests, and examinations with such promptness to enhance the learning experience. Instructors shall retain final examination answers for at least one semester to allow students to review or to retrieve them. All testing questions (whether on quizzes, tests, or mid-semester or final examinations) are an integral part of course materials, and the decision whether to allow students to retain them is left to the discretion of the instructor.” **#5 Term Papers and Comparable Projects**: “Instructors shall be responsible for returning to students student term papers and other comparable projects with sufficient promptness to enhance the learning experience. Term papers and other comparable projects are the property of students who prepare them. Instructors shall retain such unclaimed course work for at least one semester to allow students to retrieve such work. Instructors have a right to retain a copy of student course work for their own files.”

¹⁴ **Required** by: **#3 Student Assessment** and Final Grades: in MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility: instructors are expected to take reasonable steps to create an assessment environment that promotes academic integrity. When proctoring or other security measures are necessary to ensure integrity of assessments, then such measures should be administered in a manner consistent with the design and delivery of the course.

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Americans with Disabilities Act Accommodations

- Model Statements Inviting Disability Accommodation Requests" for syllabi, see <http://www.rcpd.msu.edu/Awareness/Home>

Emergency Procedures

- Weather related or other cancellations
- Instructions for Handling Emergency Situations
- Plans for conducting class if Flu outbreak

Other Handouts or Information Relevant to Your Course

- MSU resources for students, e.g., tutoring services, career advising, computer lab hours, library hours, library resources

Related Student Organizations or Clubs, if Applicable	http://studentlife.msu.edu/about.htm
Learning Resources Center:	355.2363 or http://lrc.msu.edu/
Office of Supportive Services:	353.5210 or http://www.oss.msu.edu
The Writing Center:	http://writing.msu.edu
Libraries:	432.6123 or www.lib.msu.edu/
Academic Technology Services:	Help Desk: 432.6200 or http://ats.msu.edu/organization/user-services/help_desk_call_center/
Office of the Ombudsperson:	353.8830 or www.msu.edu/unit/ombud
Olin Student Health Center:	http://olin.msu.edu/
MSU Counseling Center:	www.counseling.msu.edu
MSU Psychological Clinic:	355.9564
Community Groups (Adult Students, International Students, Persons with Disabilities, LGBT, Family Resource Center, Veterans, The Women's Resource Center) see <i>Student Handbook and Resource Guide</i> : http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/information-and-services/services-for-community-groups	

- Tips or suggestions how to study for this course
- Unique course procedures that require more detail (e.g., cooperative learning, case study method, journals)
- FAQs section
- A personal statement from you and/or your expectations for students in order to be successful.

Other

- Review the tone of your syllabi. Is it inviting? Friendly? Firm? Harsh? How do you want to personalize your syllabus to represent you as an instructor?
 - If posting your syllabi online, consider breaking the syllabus into sections, and adding graphics, video, or audio content.
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MSU SYLLABUS CHECKLIST

Resources

- Chapman, S. (n.d.). *Teaching tip: Getting students to read the course syllabus*. Retrieved July 3, 2012, from <http://teaching.colostate.edu/tips/pdf/tip50.pdf> .
- Chickering, A. W. & Gamson, Z. F. (1987, March). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. 3(7), *AAHE Bulletin*, 3-7.
- Davis, B.G. (2009). *Tools for teaching* (2nd Ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- DeZure, D. (1998, April). Constructing syllabi that integrate new approaches to instruction: A balancing act. *Whys and Ways of Teaching*. 8(2), 1 – 9. Ann Arbor, MI: Eastern Michigan University
- Doig, K. (2009, November 12). *Your course syllabus: It's more than a schedule*. Presented for the Center for Research on College Science Teaching and Learning, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI.
- Nilson, L. B. (2003). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors* (2nd ed.). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.
- Nilson, L. B. (2007). *The graphic syllabus and the outcomes map: Communicating your course*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Resource Links

- MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Print.asp?Section=514> Office of the Ombudsman: <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/>
- MSU Office of the Registrar: Academic Programs – General Information, Policies, Procedures and Regulations: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=112#s494>
- MSU F&OD Online Instructional Resources – Syllabus Design: <http://fod.msu.edu/OIR/Curriculum/syllabus-design.asp>
- MSU Liberal Learning: <http://undergrad.msu.edu/learning>
- MSU IT Services – Teaching & Learning: Improving Student Writing: Feedback, Peer Review & Proper Citation <http://learndat.tech.msu.edu/teach/student-writing>
- MSU IT Services – Teaching & Learning: Syllabus: <http://learndat.tech.msu.edu/teach/syllabus>
- MSU Instructions for Creating Accessible Syllabi: <http://vudat.msu.edu/teach/creating-accessible-syllabus>