

The Purpose and Content of a Syllabus

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about the purpose of a syllabus in higher education and the components of a syllabus. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. The Purpose of a Syllabus

A **syllabus** is a document that you will receive generally on or before the first day of class. The purpose of this document is to outline the objectives of the course and what you are expected to do as a student in the class. In other words, this document should help you understand how to be successful and get the grade you want. You will get one syllabus for each class you enroll in.

A syllabus can come to you in different forms. It can be printed out on paper and handed out in class. It can be included in an email from your instructor as an attached document. It can be made available on a course website. No matter what format your syllabus arrives in, it is a key to your success in the course. The syllabus is essentially a handbook or instruction manual for your course, and just like if you were building furniture rather than your education, you're going to want to read the directions carefully to make sure everything goes well for you.



TERM TO KNOW

Syllabus

May be the most important document you receive in a class because it contains general directions your instructor thinks you need to know in order to be successful in the class. Syllabi typically contain details about the instructor, information about where and when the class takes place, learning objectives, policies and procedures, the grading breakdown, and a list of assignments and due dates. The syllabus is something you typically get on the first day of your class. When you get it, you must take some time to read it to understand your responsibilities, plan for upcoming assignments, and identify questions you have for your instructor that are not answered in the syllabus.

2. The Elements of a Syllabus

A syllabus is generally written by your instructor and contains all kinds of information pertaining to your course. Your syllabus will usually begin with the basic details of the course, such as the course name and number, your instructor's name and contact information, and the time and location that the course meets (or

the course website, if applicable).

➔ **EXAMPLE** Below is an example of what a syllabus may look like.



MDST 583/583G: ONLINE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYLLABUS

SPRING 2018
Online – D2L

Instructor and Department Contacts	
Instructor	Alison DeRudder Thorpe
Department	Communication, Writing, and the Arts (CWA) 1380 Energy Lane, Suite 205, St. Paul, MN 55108
Department Chair	Dr. Craig Hansen
Email	Alison.DeRudderThorpe@metro-state.edu
Office Hours	By appointment. See Contracting the Instructor .

Course Description

This course is designed to provide information and experience integrating media into training and education with an emphasis on instructional design, online communities, and online collaboration. Students learn concepts and techniques to enable them to analyze various online learners and learning situations and to choose appropriate approaches.

Our readings and discussions will cover many topics in order to provide you a basic understanding of eLearning, and you will create a basic eLearning module as your primary assignment. Graduate students will explore learning theories.

This class will be conducted in an Online environment via our course D2L site. That doesn't mean that you can't meet with other students or myself in person, but you are required to use the website to access course materials, interact with fellow students, and contribute to the course on a weekly basis.

Course Objectives

- ▶ Explore eLearning at an advanced level including the history and basic models of instructional design and their implications for designing eLearning
- ▶ Learn principles of learning theory and their importance in designing eLearning.
- ▶ Learn principles of multimedia production and their relevance for designing eLearning.
- ▶ Understand usability and usability testing and recognize their importance and usefulness in any design process.
- ▶ Apply their learning to software and tools selection.
- ▶ Apply learning by creating a module that demonstrates understanding of instructional design principles, learning theory, multimedia learning, and usability testing.

Technology Requirements

This is an Online course, so it is your responsibility to assure that the device(s) you intend to use to access the course meet the minimum requirements.

Check this link to ensure that the computer you use to access the D2L course site meets the minimum requirements. Your computer must fully pass the System Check found on the D2L login page: [Desire2Learn login page](#). (Bookmark this URL in case the portal is down so you can directly login to D2L and access our course site.)

If your personal computer doesn't meet the minimum requirements, remember that you may use a computer lab at any of the Metropolitan State campuses (Midway; St. Paul; Minneapolis).

If you are having issues with D2L, you can contact support using the information provided below:

Technical support for D2L is provided by Mankato State University:	
Web	http://d2l.custhelp.com
Hours	7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (no holidays)
Phone	1-877-235-2751
You can also email Online.learning@metrostate.edu , which is the Center for Online Learning at Metropolitan State University, but help is usually limited to Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	

Internet Requirements

You are expected to have Internet access in order to log into the D2L system in order to check for updates and complete required course work. Your computer must also fully pass the [System Check](#) found on the Desire2Learn login page.

Prerequisites

Prior to taking this course, you must have successfully completed the following: Writ 372/Writ 572 (Document Design) and be at least a Junior; or be a graduate student. It is recommended that you have completed Writ 373 (Writing and Designing for the Web).

Also, you must have proficiency in using the Internet, a Web browser, Microsoft Word, and Online Library Resources.

In addition to learning new material in this course, you will need to understand how to succeed in an Online environment. You will be expected to read, discuss, and write more than you might in a traditional classroom, you will need to check in to the course site at least twice a week, and you will need to adapt using to the D2L interface.

If you do not have these prerequisites, please contact your advisor and drop the class.

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Next, you would typically find a summary of the course and possibly a section on the goals or objectives of the course. This is an area you will want to pay close attention to. Most syllabuses (or "syllabi" if you really want to get into the collegiate mindset) will include information about specific policies and procedures having to do with attendance, participation, grading, academic honesty, the use of technology, and much more. Often, a syllabus concludes with a schedule or calendar of readings and assignment due dates. You may be

wondering what to do with all of this information. The next tutorial discusses how to use the syllabus.



SUMMARY

The purpose of a syllabus is to be a guide for the course you are taking. A syllabus typically contains the following **elements**: course objectives, grading criteria, information about required texts and supplies, policies, assignment details, and more.



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