

SYLLABUS BEST PRACTICES

I. Preamble

The University of Notre Dame empowers students to pursue, discover, and share knowledge, truth, and faith as a powerful means for good. The class syllabus is not merely a list of rules, but a shared roadmap for faculty and students for the semester. Faculty and students should strive for these principles to build a positive, engaged academic environment. For a complete guide to Notre Dame syllabus resources and examples, please [visit ND Learning](#).

II. Minimum Requirements

Every syllabus should be available by the first class day and include:

1. **Learning Goals:** What will students be able to accomplish by the end of this course?
2. **Required Materials:** All textbooks, software, and resources.
3. **Attendance Policy:** Specify instructor's standards and unexcused absence consequences.
4. **AI Policy:** Specify instructor's and University's standards.
5. **Prohibited Materials:** If applicable, specify which electronic devices are permitted during classroom sessions and examinations.
6. **Grading:** Describe the criteria and methods of assessment (e.g., exams, assignments, etc.) and explain how final course grades will be determined. Grading may be based on fixed thresholds, a curve, relative performance, or another stated method; when final thresholds cannot be specified in advance, explain how they will be established.

III. Sample Syllabus Template

[Notre Dame Learning provides a syllabus template for faculty](#) with key elements already populated within the document. Faculty only need to fill in specifics for their class-specific data.

IV. Faculty Best Practices

- **Publish Syllabus:** By the first day of class, the syllabus should be provided to students. This can be done either under the Canvas syllabus tab, by email, or hard copy.
- **Clarity of Assessment:** Major assignments, exam dates, and assessment standards should be provided in the syllabus at the start of the term.
- **Grading:** Provide a clear grading scale (including if the class is utilizing a curve), methodology, and criteria in the syllabus.
NOTE: Instructors are welcome to apply their own scale standards as long as they accord with the grading system outlined in the [Undergraduate Academic Code](#), but [must make the proper percentage adjustment in Canvas](#). Alternatively, faculty should explicitly mention if they are opting out of the automated grading calculations provided by Canvas. If instructors require assistance with Canvas grading scale adjustment, please contact the [Teaching and Learning Technologies staff](#). Grade boundaries can be provided as a

percent of total points or, for classes where grades are curved, as a fraction of total students in the class.

- **Accessibility:** A statement on accommodations and resources for student success (e.g., Writing Center, Care Consultants). Examples can be found [here from Teaching and Learning](#).
- **Timely Feedback:** Commitment to returning graded work within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., not more than 2-3 weeks) to allow for student growth and advising assistance.
- **Availability:** Clearly list office hours/location and preferred communication methods (email).

V. Student Expectations

Faculty can expect, at a minimum, the following from their students. [See the syllabus template](#) for more detailed language for each expectation.

- **Preparation:** Appear for class meetings timely, prepared with required materials and having completed assigned readings.
- **Integrity:** Adhere to the [Undergraduate Academic Code and Honor Code](#).
- **Attendance:** Per the [Undergraduate Academic Code](#), "Students are required to attend class regularly and punctually" (3.1.1) and "At the instructor's discretion, a failing or reduced grade may be given for excessive unexcused absences." (3.1.2)
- **Engagement:** Minimize distractions (digital or otherwise) and contribute meaningfully to the classroom discourse.

VI. Shared Expectations on Modern Challenges

- **Artificial Intelligence:** The instructor should clearly define the "AI Policy" for the course in the [syllabus](#) by referencing the [AI Recommendations for Instructors](#) and the [Generative AI Policy for Students](#). Students will respect and abide by the instructor's [AI policies](#) set out in the syllabus.
- **Classroom Climate:** The classroom environment should reflect our mission to enrich the Notre Dame community and celebrate the dignity of all members.

These are Undergraduate Education minimum standards for a course syllabus. Each college and school may set their own standards for faculty with additional criteria or requirements.

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