

Syllabus Information--Annotated

Please make certain that your syllabi contain all of the following information. For each item, feel free to cut and paste any relevant information from this document onto your syllabus.

If you are concerned that so much information will make your syllabus too long, remember that you can always email students the syllabus prior to the beginning of class by using E-community (<http://ecomunity.ucf.edu/>). This way, you can also ask students to read the syllabus and to buy the required books before class begins. You could also contact Course Development and Web Services (CDWS) about creating a course site for syllabi and handouts.

Remember, the best defense against any future grade complaint is an airtight syllabus. Think of your syllabus as a contract, and try to prepare for any contingency that could arise. Also, our syllabi provide the department a ready means of demonstrating our high standards and our commitment to pedagogical excellence.

For additional helpful information about course syllabi, see the website of the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning at <http://www.ftl.ucf.edu/syllabus/>.

I. COURSE INFORMATION

- Course name, prefix and number, section, and ID number
- Course credit hours
- Semester
- Meeting day(s), time, and location
- Course Prerequisites.

Note: If you have any questions about the necessary prerequisites for a course you are assigned to teach, consult the “UCF Courses and Descriptions” in the UCF Undergraduate Catalog.

Sample Phrasing: To enroll in this course, you must have previously taken XXX. Failure to meet the prerequisites for a course can result in failing the course.

- Course Description and Objectives

Note: The course description should include the catalog description, departmental description, and your personal description of the course. The course objectives should explain your teaching goals and should be related to your planned

assessments. List these with as much detail as possible. It is often good practice to tie your learning objectives to the university mission statement (http://graduate.ucf.edu/currentGradCatalog/content/About_UCF/AboutTheUniversity.cfm) and to the departmental mission statement (http://www.english.ucf.edu/mission_statement.php).

Note: The course description offers an excellent opportunity to discuss the concept of academic rigor. The purpose of a college education is not to promote mediocrity but to awaken the drive, determination, and talent locked within students. A college education is not meant to be easy, but it is meant to be meaningful.

- Texts (Required and Recommended)

Suggestion: Since many students order their books online, it is a good idea to include the ISBNs of your books so that they will select the correct edition.

Suggestion for Lit Track Courses: List the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* as a recommended text for all of your classes.

- Materials (Required and Recommended)

II. CONTACT INFORMATION

- Instructor's Name
- Office Location
- Office Hours
- Phone Number
- Email Address

III. POLICIES

- Assignments and Grading

Detail with as much specificity as possible the various assignments of the course and their value in defining the students' grades.

Note: In some ways, point systems offer greater flexibility than percentage systems. Since a percentage system must lock into 100%, it can be difficult to modify your syllabus with additional assignments. A point system, on the other hand, can be modified more easily, especially with a disclaimer stating "If additional work is assigned, I will let you know the point value of these assignments."

- Attendance

Sample Phrasing: Regular attendance is expected. Three absences are allowed; after three absences, each subsequent absence penalizes your final grade by three percentage points. As a rule, there are no "excused absences" in college. Students who need accommodation for a religious holiday occurring at any time during the semester should notify me during the first week of class; otherwise, they will be held fully accountable for the class period missed. Quizzes, in-class writings, etc. cannot be made up, but each student is given ten bonus points at the beginning of the semester to offset the penalties for missing one class. If a student fails to show up for an examination, she/he fails the test. If you anticipate a scheduling conflict with an examination, you must consult with me at least two weeks prior to the exam. Also, be advised that we will often cover materials in class that are not included on the syllabus; you are responsible for all material covered during your absence.

- Make-up Work/Extra Credit

Sample Phrasing: As a rule, I do not give make-up assignments or extra credit. Plan to do the necessary work to succeed on your assignments, rather than relying on special assignments to improve your grade.

- Late Assignments

Sample Phrasing: Hand your work in on time, please. The final grade of an assignment is lowered five points for each day (including week-ends) that it is not turned in on time.

Sample Phrasing: I do not accept late assignments except in cases of documented medical emergencies.

- Grading Scale and Incompletes

Sample Scale and Incompletes Policy:

A	94-100	B-	80-83	D+	67-69
A-	90-93	C+	77-79	D	64-66
B+	87-89	C	74-76	D-	60-63
B	84-86	C-	70-73	F	59 and below

No Incompletes will be given in this course.

Note: This scale is only a sample, but please remember that UCF does not offer an A+ grade.

- Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty

Sample Phrasing: All work that you submit for this class must be your own, and it must be written exclusively for this course. Also, any sources consulted for your writing must be properly documented. “Rewriting,” in which a student consults a source, changes a few words, and presents the ideas as his/her own, is plagiarism. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an “F” for that assignment and may also lead to an “F” for the entire course. Plagiarism and cheating subjects a student to referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>). I will assume for this course that you will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. In other words, do not cheat by giving answers to others or by taking them from anyone else. I will also adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity, so please do not expect me to change your grade illegitimately or to bend or break rules for one person that will not apply to everyone.

- Disability Accommodation

Sample Phrasing: The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

- Syllabus Amendment

Sample Phrasing: This syllabus may be amended or modified in any way upon notice; most such changes will affect the Course Itinerary, so be sure that you know if any due dates change.

- Classroom Behavior

Sample Phrasing: Proper classroom behavior is expected at all times. Students must follow UCF standards for personal and academic conduct as outlined in The Golden Rule. As a matter of common courtesy, please arrive on time prepared to stay for the entire class, and do not engage in conversation other than the classroom critical discussions we will be having about the texts on hand. Proper classroom conduct also entails creating a positive learning experience for all students, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, or any other feature of personal identification; therefore, sexist, racist, prejudicial, homophobic, or other derogatory remarks will not be tolerated.

IV. CALENDAR

- Course Itinerary

Suggested Practice: List in as much as detail. What can students expect to occur on each day of class?

Note: Besides listing due dates for reading and assignments, it is often a good idea to include the withdrawal deadline for the course. This information is available on UCF's academic calendar (<http://www.registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/calendar/academic>).

- Assignment Due Dates

Suggested Practice: Indicate assignment due dates in boldface on your syllabus.

- Date of Final Exam

Note: Examination days at UCF count toward the number of days that students are required by the state of Florida to attend class. It is important, therefore, that classes be held on the scheduled day of final exams even if the class does not have a final examination. It is for this reason that faculty members who do not plan to have a final exam during the final exam week are asked to obtain approval from their chairs.

The UCF Faculty Senate Resolution declares that "It is normally expected that a final examination be given in each course that is taught. Recognizing that there are courses where a final exam per se may be less appropriate, an alternative final

assessment may be used. Faculty should provide an explanation of their assessment in course syllabi. Regardless of the type of mechanism employed, it is the expectation that each faculty member will meet with his or her class for the scheduled number of sessions as published in the university calendar and semester schedule, including the final examination period.” To see the “Final Exams” policy in the UCF Policies and Procedures Manual, go to <http://policies.ucf.edu/pdf/4-400.2%20Final%20Exams.pdf>.

Faculty members are to observe the exam time indicated in the university schedule for their class. This information can be found at <http://www.registrar.sdes.ucf.edu/calendar/exam/>.

Also, it continues to be the policy of the University of Central Florida to reasonably accommodate the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of individuals in regard to admissions, class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments. If a test or mid-term exam is scheduled on a religious holiday, the university catalog states that students may request an alternate day for the exam and observe the holiday without penalty. *(This information is taken and adapted from Provost Hickey’s email of Thursday, September 21, 2006.)*

V. MISCELLANEOUS (Highly recommended, but not required)

- Turnitin.com

Sample Phrasing: In this course we will utilize turnitin.com, an automated system that instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Steps for Using Turnitin.com

Sample Phrasing: Go to <http://www.turnitin.com/>

First, follow the instructions for new users to set up your username and password.

After you are assigned a username and password, log in as a student.

Join this class:

- the class ID number is XXXXXXXX
- the password is XXXXXXXX

Follow the instructions for submitting your essay. The essay you submit to turnitin.com, of course, must be the same paper you turn in to me. To do otherwise would be cheating.

- Electronics, Computers, and Cell Phones

Sample Phrasing: Please turn off cell phones and pagers before coming to class. Laptop computers are unnecessary for this class and, therefore, need not be brought to class.

- Food and Drink Policy

Sample Phrasing: Food and drink are discouraged, but not forbidden, in the classroom. However, if it is necessary for you to eat or drink during class, please remember the "X 30" rule: if everyone in the class does what you are doing, how great of a disruption would it be? That is to say, a doughnut is much quieter to eat than potato chips; a drink with ice and a straw is much louder than a drink in a can. It is inappropriate to eat a meal during class.

- University Writing Center

Sample Phrasing: The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduate and graduate students. The UWC's most popular service is the individualized writing consultation: a trained writing consultant will spend thirty minutes with you reviewing your work and making recommendations for revision. The consultant will work with you for an hour if your paper is longer than seven pages or if you are writing a paper with a group. (Under these circumstances, all group members should attend the session.) You can bring your work to the UWC at any point in the process--even if you have not yet started writing. Your consultation will be most helpful if you take the time to:

- **prepare:** identify specific issues on which you want feedback
- **participate:** actively discuss your paper with the consultant
- **reflect:** decide which of the possibilities raised during the consultation are helpful to you
- **act:** revise your paper

The UWC will help with writing in any subject, including out-of-class writing such as job application letters. The UWC will also help you organize oral presentations. After each consultation, you will receive a Record of Consultation (RoC) form that summarizes what was discussed. It is best to make an appointment; however, the UWC does accept walk-ins. You may use the UWC computers to work on your writing without an appointment; available software includes Microsoft Office 2000, and specialized software (Editor, Writer's Helper, Minklink, Inspiration) for brainstorming, organizing, problem-solving, proofreading, and editing. The UWC does not write, proofread, or grade papers. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu>, stop by MOD 608, or call 407-823-2197.

- Standards for Written Work

Samples:

For a graduate class:

An "A" text is exceptional. It presents sophisticated and significant critique and is guided by a meaningful argument. It contains the required elements of the assignment, is written in an engaging style, is arranged in a logical manner, is memorable, and is visually appealing. It is free of mechanical errors.

A "B" text is strong. It contains all required elements of the assignment. It is generally above average in terms of the criteria mentioned above, but falls short of excellence in one or more category. It is free of mechanical errors.

A “C” text is competent. It contains all required elements of the assignment. It is generally average in terms of the major criteria listed above. It has few mechanical errors.

Low “C” work is weak. It does not include the required elements of the assignment and it falls below average in terms of one or more of the major criteria.

“F” work fails in terms of one or more of these criteria.

For an undergraduate technical writing class:

An “A” text is exceptional. This is the kind of document that might lead to a promotion in the workplace. It is professional and reflects the writer's /s' careful consideration of audience and purpose. It contains all necessary information (invention), is written in an appropriate and engaging style, is arranged in a logical manner, is memorable, and its delivery is visually appealing. It is free of mechanical errors.

A “B” text is strong. It would be considered acceptable in the workplace. It too is professional and reflects consideration of the rhetorical situation. It is generally above average in terms of the criteria mentioned above, but falls short of excellence in one or more category. It is free of mechanical errors.

A “C” text is competent. It would probably be returned for revision in the workplace. It is generally average in terms of the major criteria listed above. It has few mechanical errors.

Low “C” or “D” work is weak. It would probably get the writer into a bad situation in the workplace. It falls below average in terms of one or more of the major criteria.

“F” work fails in terms of one or more of these criteria. One or more of these texts would probably get a writer fired in the workplace.

VI. Gordon Rule and Departmental Academic Standards

All courses with AML, ENC, ENG, ENL, and LIT prefixes adhere to the Gordon Rule. Historically, the Gordon Rule mandated that these courses include 6000 words of graded written work; the revised Gordon Rule necessitates that they include four written and graded assignments. At the same time, the English Department tries to maintain smaller class sizes than many of our peer departments in CAH (e.g., History, Philosophy) because our courses are writing-intensive. So, it is departmental policy that we adhere to the 6000-word requirement of evaluated writing, 4000 words of which must be analytical, interpretative, and/or researched prose.

You need at least four assignments which conform to the Gordon Rule's five characteristics. Place an asterisk by all Gordon Rule assignments. In order to make sure we comply, place the following in your course syllabus:

This course is a Gordon Rule course. It contains 6000 words of evaluated writing. Assignments which fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk. Each has the following characteristics:

1. The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
2. It will provide adequate support for that idea
3. It will be organized clearly and logically
4. It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
5. It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

For more information about the Gordon Rule, please see the attached Appendices:

Appendix 1: Policies for the Implementation of the Gordon Rule Revisions
Approved by the Florida Board of Education and the Florida Board of
Governors on November 17, 2005

Appendix 2: Gordon Rule Writing Class Application Procedures