**Syllabus Review Checklist**

This checklist is recommended when reviewing and updating existing syllabi. The purpose of this checklist is to help library faculty to think about improving the student syllabi experience. The syllabus elements outlined are organized in one potential sequence, for you to tailor to your unique course and instructional experience.

Components covered:

1. Important Information
2. Course Summary
3. Course Expectations/Resources
4. MSU Language Boilerplate
5. Course Content
6. Formatting

Beyond homework assignments, syllabi set the tone and expectations for the semester, assign value to work and content, and can also signal responsibility. Therefore, care should be taken to provide the correct information and set a tone that encourages all to learn.

Important Information

This is core information about the course and is often the first thing on a syllabus.

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| --- | --- |
| Instructor name |  |
| Pronouns |  |
| Contact Information |  |
| Required Text(s) | Include links to where to purchase or access |
| Welcoming Office Hours | Encourage contact outside of class with specifications on how (mode/response time from instructor) |
| Technology | Instruction on how to obtain course-required technology and training on technology (Library checkouts, LinkedIn Learning, etc.) |

Course Summary

Including this information helps create the culture of your course. Consider bullet points for any lists, which can benefit readers with vision and attention issues, as well as ESL students.

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| --- | --- |
| Learning Objectives | Include bullet pointed list of learning objectives and why they matter (context) |
| Attendance Policies | Include religious/cultural observances; sick days; mental health days |
| Point of View | * Clearly express that the point of view created by readings/lecture/comments in class are your own.
* What is your teaching philosophy (student-centered learning, teacher-centered information dissemination, cooperative learning, etc.) and how does the syllabus communicate it to students? Do you clearly communicate your teaching philosophy to avoid biases?
* Encourage students to engage and disagree in order to create rich discussion around the complexity of course issues.
* Respectful discourse expectations covered in the next section
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Course Expectations/Resources

Stating your expectations for the course helps create a transparent learning community. Explaining why a policy matters in your own words and then linking to any University resource links allows students to understand the resources in context of your class.

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| --- | --- |
| Engagement | To what extent do students interact with you and each other? * In addition to a welcome statement, include standard of engagement with you, when, how, why, all acceptable formats
* Include suggested engagement between students, i.e., Study groups, tutors, labs, etc.
* Define engagement in the class, i.e., discussions, participation expectations
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| Discussion Etiquette | * Statement of required professional language/terms used in the field if expected to be used by students.
* Statement of behavioral expectations for online and/or classroom discussions.
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| Pronoun Policy | * Frame pronouns as a way to demonstrate respect for each other
* Allow students to self-identify their name and pronouns.
* If the name is different than roster, privately let the student know about resources for Chosen Name: <https://www.montana.edu/chosenname/>
 |
| Course Values and Norms Statement | * Establish the climate you intend for your classroom community
* Set ground rules together
* Make the “culture” of your classroom transparent and explicitly stated
* Refrain from all-caps and/or bold NO statements such as No late work accepted.
 |
| Disability/Accessibility Accommodation | * Express how you will address accommodations briefly and share hyperlinks to resources.
* MSU Resources for Students with Disabilities: <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#disab>
 |
| Academic Honesty Statement  | * Express what this is in your own words, briefly, and share hyperlinks to resources.
* MSU Resources for Academic Misconduct: <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#miscond>
 |
| Course Materials and Copyright | * MSU Statement on Copyright/Course Materials: <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#copy>
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MSU Language Boilerplate

These are MSU policies and associated suggested language. Please use what has been developed by MSU or add your own language/interpretation and link to the official language, as needed.

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| --- | --- |
| Diversity Statement | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#dni>
* <https://www.montana.edu/studentdiversity/faculty_resources.html>
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| Inclusivity Statement | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#dni>
* <https://www.montana.edu/studentdiversity/faculty_resources.html>
 |
| Information for Students with Disabilities | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#disab>
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| You are not alone | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#wellbeing>
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| Student Health and Wellness | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#wellbeing>
* <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/studentabsences.html>
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| Course Materials Copyright | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#copy> - To make it less threatening, put in your own words and link to campus policy
 |
| Academic Conduct  | * <https://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/SyllabusLanguage.html#miscond> Part of the student code of conduct, you can add your own thoughts about what it means to the course and being a participant
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Course Content

Prior to creating a syllabus, please review the Course Content Guide. Here, evaluate students’ ability to identify expectations and locate materials used throughout the course.

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| Materials |  |
| Description | List course materials clearly and identifiably at the beginning of the syllabus. With each material, indicate* If it is required, primary, supplementary, or suggested
* If using multiple required texts, add week that content will need to be obtained by
* Any affordable options i.e., link to library resources, link to open access option
* Steps to getting accessible options if not already provided
 |
| Schedule | Ensure the description in the schedule clearly connects with initial materials descriptionStudents should be able to easily find the materials they need for each class |
| Assessments |  |
| Description | * Reference to assignment descriptions that will be disseminated and include the course learning objective the assignment supports,
* Scaffolded steps to complete the assignment,
* Grading rubric.
 |
| Assessment types | * Provide multiple assessment types to not disadvantage some of the students in ways unrelated to their learning
* Provide and describe formative assessments that offer students multiple low-stakes opportunities to assess and improve their performance
 |
|  |  |
| Learning Activities |  |
| Alignment | * Clearly articulate how each activity connects with the learning outcome and the text.
* Provide obvious alignment for students to navigate between course materials and activity.
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| Flexibility | Does your activity provide options to complete it for different learning abled individuals? * Provide instructions that describe flexible options for activity completion or language clearly articulating the possibility of approaching you for alternative options if desired.
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Formatting

These formatting best practices can help make your syllabus more accessible for more students.

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| --- | --- |
| Text Distribution | Put text in sections for learners with reading or attention conditions, students with English as a foreign language, and more. You can use tools such as:* + Text boxes
	+ Columns
	+ White space
	+ Margins
	+ Bullet points
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| Color Design | Text in your syllabus should be high contrast and easy to read. This Color Contrast Analyzer is a free tool to check contrast: <https://www.tpgi.com/color-contrast-checker/>  |
| Accessible Font | Your font choice should be easy to access for all readers. * Utilize a sans serif font and avoid excessive italics or underlining.
* Use bold text or size difference to denote headings.
* Underline links so that there are two indicators (color and underlining) to show it is a hyperlink.
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| Images  | Include captions with alternative text explaining any images used in the syllabus. |
| Accessibility Check | When finished, it’s best practice to run your document through an Accessibility Checker. Most software have one included, and these can be found with a quick search within the program. |