

Office of Records and Registration – MacMurray College

INFORMATION FOR FACULTY: COURSE SYLLABI AND FINAL EXAMS

June 2010

SYLLABI

As soon as you have completed it, preferably earlier but at the latest no later than the first week of classes, please e-mail a copy of each course syllabus as a Microsoft Word attachment to syllabus@mac.edu. Please send a separate attachment for each course, naming it with department and number and semester, like this: RHET 101.1 F 10 (for Rhetoric 101, Section 1, Fall 2010), so that we will be sure to know which course it is.

Alice Dodson will then forward the syllabus for posting on the MacMurray website, for the convenience of your students and for reference by others.

SYLLABUS CONTENT

The syllabus is the official guide to your course. Remember that the audience for the syllabus is the students in your course, so please address them with a positive attitude and put your emphasis on what they should emphasize. The content of the course rather than classroom behavior should be the focus.

Section 301 of the Academic Affairs Administrative Handbook specifies eight items that a syllabus must include. In brief, the syllabus must have:

- Basic course information
- Instructor information
- Objectives
- Textbooks
- Grading policy
- Attendance policy
- Academic honesty policy
- Tentative schedule

As Section 301 says, the syllabus is your contract with your students. You may adjust assignments in a course as it goes along, but adding major work later is unfair, especially to conscientious students who plan ahead.

Here is the full statement:

REQUIREMENTS FOR COURSE SYLLABI (from Academic Affairs Administrative Handbook)

301. Course Syllabi: During the first week of classes each instructor must present to the students in each class a written syllabus specifying the course requirements, schedule, and attendance policy. A copy of the syllabus must also be sent to the Registrar for current and future reference.

The syllabus is a contract between instructor and students. The instructor's record of attendance on the day or days that the syllabus is handed out will verify that the student has received and accepted the contract. The instructor may modify the syllabus during the course of the course, but all major modifications must likewise be presented in writing to the students. After the end of the course a copy of all modifications must be sent to the Registrar.

The syllabus may include or refer to course and classroom policies stated in the student handbook (The Maggie) and the course catalog. The syllabus must include:

1. Basic information: course title, course number, credit hours, catalog description, prerequisites if any, and times and location of class meetings.

2. Instructor information: name, title, office hours, office location, office phone, and e-mail address. The instructor may also choose to give a home phone number and appropriate hours to call.
3. Objectives or goals: what students are expected to learn or be able to do as a result of taking the course.
4. Textbooks and other media to be purchased. For textbooks, give full bibliographic information: Author or editor, title, edition (if any beyond the first), publisher, year of publication. Indicate whether texts are required or supplemental.
5. Grading policy: system of grading used and percentages or points allocated for each aspect of the course.
6. Attendance policy: requirements for attendance and for excused absences, and how absences affect the course grade. Include reference to the statement in The Maggie or the course catalog.
7. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty policy. Include reference to the statements in The Maggie, along with any additional policies for the course.
8. Tentative schedule of class activities, readings, exams, and other assignments. Minor adjustments in the schedule may be made during the course of the course by spoken announcement to the students, but major changes should be announced well in advance and in writing.

SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

For your convenience, a syllabus template in Microsoft Word format is available on the MacMurray website, with a link from the Academics page under the heading Forms at the left.

Information on attendance policy, academic dishonesty policy, and disability services is provided on the template. However, please note that must add your own attendance policy.

FINAL EXAMS

One of the items to include in your syllabus is the date and time of the final exam. That information is given in the Final Exam Schedule, available via a link at the left on the Academics web page.

It is college policy, established by the faculty, that each course will normally have a comprehensive final exam. Section 313 of the Academic Affairs Administrative Handbook explains the policy:

313. Final examinations shall be given at the conclusion of each course. The examinations normally shall be a comprehensive survey of the work of the entire course. Faculty members shall hold all examinations at the time and place designated on the examination schedule, and students take examinations with their regular classes.

If the final examination will not be a comprehensive survey of the course, the faculty member must inform in writing the Vice President for Academic Affairs 30 days before the beginning of final examinations.

Final exams should *not* be given on the last class day, but rather at the time indicated on the Final Exam Schedule. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please ask us in Records & Registration – in advance.