

Syllabus Checklist

The purpose of a course syllabus is to communicate information about the course to the students. To do this effectively, a syllabus should contain the information students need in order to understand what the course is all about, where you are trying to go with the course, and how the course is going to operate.

While different people have different ideas about what should and should not be included in a syllabus, the following information should be included in all John Brown University course syllabi as applicable. Additional information may be included as the instructor desires. The format and organization of syllabi is not specified; however, syllabi should be designed to make the information easy to find and understand. A good resource for more information about creating syllabi is *Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors* by Linda B. Nilson.

Course Information

Course Title

Course and Section Number

Semester and Year

Meeting Location and Times

Name of Instructor

- Full name and title

Instructor's Contact Information

- Email address
- Office phone number and location
- Office hours—The syllabus should either list office hours or refer students to your office where office hours will be posted

Required and Recommended Textbooks

- Author/editor, title, edition, publisher, ISBN, and date of publication
- Syllabi should not refer students to any particular place to purchase textbooks or other materials. Any exceptions to this general rule should be run by the bookstore manager and not determined just by the instructor.

Location of Online Course Material

- Where can students go to find course handouts, the current schedule, announcements, details on assignments, etc.?

Required and Recommended Supplies

- All required and recommended supplies must be listed on the syllabus and reported to the bookstore.

Method for Communication with Students Outside the Classroom

- How will you inform students of important announcements? Email, Blackboard announcements, some other way?

Course Description, Outcomes, Expectations

Course Description

- Quote the course description used in the current university catalog

Supplemental Course Description

- You may want to elaborate on course content and methods of instruction beyond the catalog description

Course Prerequisites

- List any required and recommended prerequisites
- These could be courses, knowledge, skills, etc.

Role of the Course in the Broader Curriculum

- Include a statement about how this course fits into and contributes to the broader curriculum at JBU—for example (as appropriate):
 - How does the course fit into the Core Curriculum?
 - Why is the course included in the major program of study?
 - How does the course contribute to a deeper understanding of the university's mission as reflected in the mottos *Head, Heart, and Hand* and *Christ Over All*?
- Refer to university, program, and/or core curriculum goals and outcomes when applicable
 - For example, Core Curriculum courses should refer to the applicable Core Curriculum goals and major specific courses should refer to the applicable program outcomes

Course Outcomes

- Outcomes are student-centered and identify what students will know and be able to do by the end of the course
- Outcome statements have the student as the subject and a measurable action verb that calls for skills, behavior, competencies, and knowledge to be demonstrated by students who complete the course successfully
- Each outcome should be measured during or upon completion of the course and should be visibly linked to course assignments or other assessments in the syllabus

Course Objectives

- You may decide to include course objectives
- Objectives are more instructor-focused and describe the instructor's broader intentions that inform the process and means by which the outcomes are achieved.

Course Schedule

- Proposed schedule of topics and corresponding text chapters
- Dates of exams and finals
- Due dates for writing assignments, research papers, projects, presentations, etc.
- Required special events, e.g., evening exams, field trips

Grading Procedures

- Details on how assignments, exams, and other aspects of the course are weighted and how the final course letter grade will be determined
- Policies on late assignments, revisions, and extra credit

Assignments

- Provide an overview of assignments and how they support the course outcomes
- If you don't include details of each assignment in the syllabus, you should include information on when and where that information will be made available to the students

Academic Expectations

- Provide an explanation of your academic expectations of the student
- Provide clear guidance on what level of collaboration is acceptable on each type of assignment
- Give some indication of the expected amount of work per week

Course Procedures and Policies

Disclaimer

- Include a disclaimer regarding changes to the syllabus—something similar to “The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.”

Course Attendance Policy

- Include a course policy that is consistent with that stated in the “Attendance Regulations” section of the course catalog
- Specify the nature of the expected in-class participation and the effects of absences on the student’s grade
- Include an explanation of how excused and unexcused absences will be handled

Academic Integrity Expectations

- Include the following:
As a Christian institution of higher education, John Brown University seeks to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. Violations of these standards will result in substantial penalties. At a minimum, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment and a report submitted to the associate vice president for academic administration. Further infractions will result in failure of the course and possible suspension. For additional information and examples, see the Academic Integrity section in the Student Handbook.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement

- Include the following:
Students with documented disabilities who need academic accommodations should make an appointment with Mr. Jarrod Heathcote, Coordinator of Disability and Testing Services, to begin the accommodation process. Students without documented disabilities who feel they may have difficulty with their courses are also encouraged to make an appointment with their instructor to discuss what steps need to be taken to be successful. Contact information for the Coordinator of Disability and Testing Services: Mr. Jarrod Heathcote, 2000 W. University St., Siloam Springs, AR 72761. Office location: Learning Resource Center 150. Phone: 479.524.7464. Email JHeathcote@jbu.edu.

Final Exam Policy

- Include the following:
Students must sit for the final exam at the specified time. The only exceptions are death

or serious illness of a member of the student's immediate family, or illness of the student as documented by a medical professional. Any exception to the final exam policy must be approved by Dr. Rebecca Weimer, Dean of Academic Services and Registrar.

Statement on Academic Expectations

- Include something similar to the following
John Brown University is a selective academic institution that consistently ranks among the top southern baccalaureate universities in the U.S. News and World Reports college rankings. As a student here, you are expected to devote significant time and effort to your academic courses. This course has been designed with the expectation that students will spend, on average, approximately [XX] minutes preparing for each class session. Furthermore, an “A” grade in this course signifies exceptional achievement, not merely completion of assignments.
- Be sure to fill in the appropriate value for the [XX]
- Modify the statement as necessary for graduate, online, or other types of courses

Copyright Notice

- You may want to include a copyright statement indicating that course materials are copyrighted and stating how the course materials may be used (e.g., that they may not be reproduced for anything other than personal use without written permission from the instructor)