



Date: October 28, 2019
To: Veena Prabhu, Academic Senate Chair
From: Arash Jamehbozorg, Educational Policy Committee Chair
Copies: R. Roquemoire, M. Hawley, C. Pugh, Kris Bezdecny, Catherine Haras
Subject: Proposed Changes to *The Class Syllabus* Policy in Chapter 5 of the Faculty Handbook (EPC 18-19/AIRS 18-01)

The Class Syllabus Policy was sent to EPC in AY2017-18 from AIRS with a focus on online and hybrid courses and accessibility issues regarding the course syllabus. EPC discussed and approved the policy with some changes and then sent it to the Senate on March 2019. The senate discussed the policy in fall 2019. During the discussions in the Senate, a few questions were raised and the policy was then sent back to EPC to address these issues. One of the main debates was regarding the deadline for instructors to distribute the class syllabus. EPC decided to change the current policy and set a deadline for the “first day of class”. Also, based on the feedback from the senate, EPC decided to create two categories of required items on the syllabus: one for items that cannot be changed during the term, and the other for items that instructors have the flexibility to modify if needed. The main rationale for this change is to make sure the central parts of the course like student learning outcomes remain unchanged. Specifically, the grading policy was an item that EPC wanted to make certain cannot be changed during the term to ensure fairness and enable students to plan ahead.

Here is the summary of changes to the policy:

Lines 3-5: A brief explanation for the purpose of the class syllabus is given.

Lines 6-8: Since the syllabus will be provided on the first day of the class, these lines are no longer necessary.

Lines 8-11: Two changes are made here; first, to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) compliance and to align with the existing Accessible Instructional Materials policy of the Cal State LA Faculty Handbook (Senate: 10/14/14; President: 10/22/14), all syllabi need to be provided in an accessible electronic format rather than waiting for such a request from an OSD student. The second change is the timing of when the syllabus must be presented to students. After much deliberation, the committee decided to change this to “no later than the first day of class”. This change was made considering the importance of fairness to all students especially students with disabilities. The committee considered the difficulty for instructors who are asked to teach a class just a few days before the first meeting, but at the end decided that the policy should not be written based on exceptions. Also, the new language that permits changes to parts of the syllabus during the term should mitigate this issue.

Lines 11-13: This part is already covered in the new language.

Lines 14-15: Required items on the syllabus that cannot be changed are listed after these lines.

Lines 16-17: Since this item will be moved to the second category, it is removed from here.

Lines 19-20: The mode of instruction reinforces for students that the section they registered for will be meeting using a specific mode of instruction. This is especially important for classes with multiple sections that may be using different modes of instruction depending on the section.

Line 24: Since this item will be moved to the second category, it is removed from here.

Lines 25-27: Removed since it is now distributed into several sections that follow.

Lines 28-29: Makes “required course materials” its own section and ensures that students are informed if the course requires any additional technology, software, or related tools. If there are available support resources, such as a helpdesk contact or online documentation, these should also be explicit in the syllabus so that students have timely notification of any additional technology they may need to purchase and to quickly address any access/usability issues early in the term.

Lines 30-36: Removed the previous language and replaced it with a more detailed and explicit statement stating that syllabi should include: the basis for evaluation in the course, the grading scale used for the course, and the relation of the evaluated work to the final course grade.

Lines 37-48: A separate section for Class Attendance Policy is created here to emphasize that it cannot be changed during the term.

Lines 44-45: The required items that can be changed during the term are listed after this.

Lines 46-48: This item is moved here, and the campus phone extension is made optional since not all instructors have a telephone extension.

Lines 49: The topical outline is moved here since the committee feels the instructor must have the flexibility of changing the course outline based on the flow of the course and to have the freedom to innovate in the classroom.

Lines 50-52: Makes “course guidelines and procedures” its own section and recommends that instructors set out their expectations for in-class and online discussions, course communication preferences, etc. Such items are especially important not only for hybrid and online courses but also for face-to-face courses.

1 **The Class Syllabus**

2 (Senate: 2/18/97, 7/17/01, 5/26/09; President: 4/22/97; 10/15/01, 6/16/09; Editorial Amendment: 8/01)

3 THE SYLLABUS IS A STATEMENT OF INTENDED COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS
4 THAT SERVES AS A REFERENCE FOR STUDENTS TO SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATE THE
5 COURSE.

6 Each instructor shall provide information at the first class session as to the general requirements and
7 goals of the course, and the general criteria upon which students will be evaluated in that course. Such
8 information A SYLLABUS must be made available in the form of an ACCESSIBLE electronic
9 FORMAT or hardcopy version of the syllabus AND SHARED no later than the second FIRST DAY OF
10 CLASS meeting. A AN ACCESSIBLE ELECTRONIC copy of the syllabus shall be available for review
11 in the department/division/school office. An instructor must provide his or her syllabus in an accessible
12 format in keeping with the CSU Accessible Technology Initiative with proper notification from the Office
13 of Students with Disabilities. The syllabus shall include but not be limited to the following:

14 THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE SYLLABUS AND CANNOT CHANGE
15 ONCE THE SYLLABUS HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTED:

16 Contact information for the instructor: campus office hours and location, campus telephone
17 extension, and campus e-mail address.

- 18 1. General course description including course prerequisites, if any.
- 19 2. THE MODE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE COURSE, AS DEFINED BY THE FACULTY
20 HANDBOOK (E.G., HYBRID, FULLY ONLINE, FACE TO FACE).
- 21 3. Student learning outcomes for the course.
- 22 4. For all general education courses, the area of the general education program that the course
23 fulfills.

24 Topical outline of the course

25 Requirements - policies and procedures (for example, attendance, assignments, readings) and
26 basis for evaluation (written work, examinations or quizzes, term papers, portfolios, projects,
27 laboratory or field work assignments, and other items as appropriate).

28 5. REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS, INCLUDING MINIMUM COURSE TECHNOLOGY
29 REQUIREMENTS AND THEIR SUPPORT RESOURCES.

30 6. Grading system and its relation to achievement of the requirements stated above. BASIS FOR
31 EVALUATION IN THE COURSE (INCLUDING WRITTEN WORK, EXAMINATIONS OR
32 QUIZZES, TERM PAPERS, PORTFOLIOS, PROJECTS, LABORATORY OR FIELDWORK
33 ASSIGNMENTS, ATTENDANCE, AND OTHER ITEMS AS APPROPRIATE), A CLEARLY
34 ARTICULATED COURSE GRADING SCALE (E.G., GREATER THAN 90% EQUALS AN
35 A OR SIMILAR DESCRIPTIVE CRITERIA), AND RELATION OF EVALUATED WORK
36 TO FINAL COURSE GRADE.

- 37 7. COURSE POLICY ON CLASS ATTENDANCE. PLEASE REFER TO THE "MISSED
38 CLASS TIME AND MAKEUP POLICY" IN THE FACULTY HANDBOOK.
- 39 8. Date and time of final examination.
- 40 9. The following ADA statement verbatim: "Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any
41 student who is registered with the Office of Students with Disabilities and requests needed
42 accommodation."
- 43 10. An academic honesty statement that includes A reference to the University policy.
- 44 THE FOLLOWING ITEMS MUST BE INCLUDED IN EVERY SYLLABUS BUT CAN BE REVISED
45 DURING THE TERM AS APPROPRIATE:
- 46 11. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE INSTRUCTOR: CAMPUS OFFICE HOURS AND
47 LOCATION, CAMPUS E-MAIL ADDRESS, AND OPTIONALLY CAMPUS TELEPHONE
48 EXTENSION.
- 49 12. TOPICAL OUTLINE OF THE COURSE.
- 50 13. COURSE GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES WHICH MAY INCLUDE INSTRUCTOR
51 EXPECTATIONS FOR IN-CLASS AND ONLINE DISCUSSIONS, COURSE
52 COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES, AND THE LIKE.