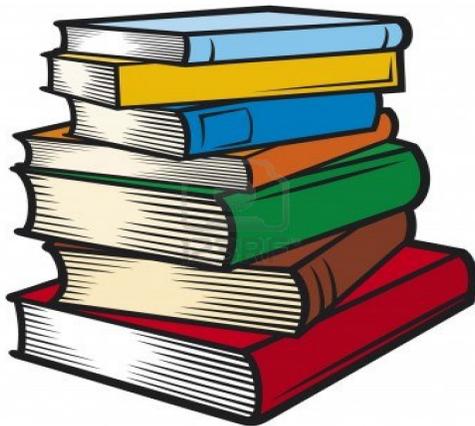




# **Syllabus Requirements 2023-2024**



## Elements of a Syllabus

An effective course syllabus is more than just an information sheet. A syllabus represents an informal “contract” between the instructor and the student — listing objectives, establishing expectations about projects, attendance, and participation. It must identify the method by which the student will be evaluated.

An effective syllabus includes basic introductory information as follows:

- Course name, number, section, and location
- Term or semester (and the year)
- Faculty name, phone numbers (typically both home and office)
- UR email foremost; followed by personal email address (optional)
- Availability of instructor by phone or in-person
- Titles, authors, and editions of all texts – both required and recommended

In addition, the best syllabi also include all or most of the following:

- Course description and objectives
- Outline of assignments and activities (including timelines)
- Specific course requirements
- Grading and evaluation policies
- Attendance policy
- Academic Integrity
- Relevant sources, references or supplies
- Resources for students
- Disability Policy
- Religious Holidays

### Course Description and Objectives

The course description should provide an overview of the course, including its content, value, and underlying assumptions. The relevance of the material and your values and attitudes can also be included.

Course objectives are the intended outcomes of successfully completing the course, and they need to be specified to provide a focus for learning.

### SPCS Academic Credit Policy

One semester hour of credit represents a total of three hours per week of in-class and out-of-class work. In this context, an hour is defined as 50 minutes. A traditional course worth three semester hours would meet for a minimum of 2100 minutes (seat time) for 14 weeks, excluding the final examination period. Emerging delivery methods (hybrid, online, intensive-format) may necessitate assignment of credit based on demonstrated competencies or learning objectives acquired that are equivalent to those acquired in a traditional classroom setting. For more detail, refer to University Policy AA-502 dated February 17, 2017, and to SPCS Faculty Meeting Minutes dated April 18, 2017.

## Preparing a Course Syllabus for Your Class

The School of Professional and Continuing Studies, one of the five academic units that make up the University of Richmond, seeks to provide exemplary educational opportunities for non-traditional students through degree, certificate, and non-credit programs. Our goal is to offer a quality educational experience in a format convenient to adult learners. A clear, concise, and comprehensive course syllabus is an essential ingredient in creating an ideal educational experience, and it is critical in assisting adult learners in balancing their own multiple commitments. The information in this handout is an outline of the key elements that comprise an effective syllabus.\*

Forward your syllabus **as an attachment in Word** (via e-mail) to your Program Chair/Assistant Chair prior to the beginning of the semester. Please copy the Assistant to the Dean, Kay Robertson, [krobert3@richmond.edu](mailto:krobert3@richmond.edu), in your e-mail. She will maintain the documents via electronic files.

Education adjuncts should also send their syllabus to Claudia Mills (ELPS) and Julia Burke (Teacher Education).

### Information for a Graduate Level Course Syllabus

Supplementary content is required to be added to syllabi of graduate level courses. In addition to the already required elements, a course syllabus for a graduate level course should include:

- pre-prep expectations
- post-prep expectations
- graduate level expectations should be spelled out and not implied
- more reading requirements should be added
- more writing requirements should be added

### Contacts

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\* Portions of this handout were adapted from the *Syllabus Construction Handbook* prepared by Barbara Mills, University College, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

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### ***Attendance and Participation***

SPCS policy permits absence from no more than 25% of all scheduled class sessions. Students exceeding this standard receive a grade of "V" (failure due to excessive absences) and no credit for the course. The application of the attendance policy will be governed by the following parameters:

- Attendance expectations for classes should be defined by the instructor of record in collaboration with program chairs and in alignment with policies set forth by the University and SPCS.
- Faculty should understand the health and familial needs of the adult learners in their courses, particularly those who are in courses that are meeting face-to-face.
- Faculty teaching courses with face-to-face meetings should be prepared to develop other instructional modalities to ensure all students feel comfortable engaging and completing the course.
- Students experiencing difficulties or in need of accommodations should contact the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

### **Standard Policy**

School policy permits absence from no more than 25% of all scheduled class sessions. Students exceeding this standard receive a grade of "V" (failure due to excessive absences) and no credit for the course. It is up to you to determine if you will count attendance and participation toward your final grade. If counted, you need to specify how. For example:

- Is it the volume or quality of participation that matters?
- Will feedback on participation be provided during the term?
- Will the effect on the final grade be substantial or counted only in borderline cases?
- Does group participation count?

Below is the official Class Attendance Policy for the University of Richmond. It appears in all catalogs at the University.

*Students are expected to attend all meetings of all classes (including lectures, seminars, laboratories, and drills) in which they are enrolled. The specific attendance policy in each course, however, is determined by the instructor of the course, subject to the section*

*on University Holidays below. At the start of each semester, the instructor is responsible for describing the class attendance policy in the syllabus and distributing it to students.*

*Academic events sponsored by the University under supervision of faculty advisors include, but are not limited to: theatre/dance and musical performances, debate, mock trial, model UN, conference attendance, and ROTC field leadership exercise. Because such events and varsity athletic competitions are recognized as integral to the educational experience, the appropriate college dean will provide official notification of student participation in these activities. It is also the student's responsibility to request such notification and to deliver it to the faculty member as early as possible in the semester. Faculty members will honor notification from the college deans that a student is to be excused for participation in a University-sponsored event. All other absences will not be officially announced by a dean, but may be excused at the discretion of faculty. Examples include, but are not limited to, class field trips, illness, funerals, and family functions. The University policy regarding absences related to University or religious policies is stated below. The University encourages students to weigh the consequences of missing class and other sponsored academic or varsity athletic events, and to make their choices accordingly.*

*Misrepresenting the reason for class absences to a professor is a violation of the University's honor code.*

**Note:** *The health center does NOT provide "medical excuse" notes for students.*

*A student will be held responsible for all work of a class or laboratory missed during any absence.*

**Note:** *Students enrolled in School of Professional and Continuing Studies courses must attend at least 75 percent of the class meetings—regardless of the reasons for absence—to be eligible to receive credit for the course.*

## **Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities must apply for accommodations through the Student Development Office as soon as possible. The following link provides information and required forms: <https://disability.richmond.edu/>.

The main purpose of the Disability Services Office is to make sure students with disabilities have the same chance for success (defined as average performance or better) as students who do not have disabilities. The designated disability advisors do this by making sure that students with disabilities are able to access learning material, buildings, services, and programs at the University of Richmond. Once reasonable access is provided, it is up to the student to do the necessary work. The disability advisors and accommodations help make sure that students have the chance to do it.

Dr. Cort Schneider, Director  
Disability Services  
206 Richmond Way  
University of Richmond, 23173  
(804) 662-5001  
[disability@richmond.edu](mailto:disability@richmond.edu)

## University Holidays/Religious Observances

The holidays and schedules for academic calendars are available on the Registrar's web site at <https://registrar.richmond.edu/planning>.

The University is a secular institution that values a diversity of religious expressions. The University is also an active community with a wide range of personal commitments and academic and extracurricular activities.

Planning for academic and extracurricular activities should be done with sensitivity to the diverse religious commitments of the community and an awareness of religious holidays. Scheduling large-scale, one-time academic or extra-curricular events on a religious holiday should be avoided whenever possible.

Any student may be excused from class or other assignments because of religious observance. A student who will miss an academic obligation because of religious observance is responsible for contacting his or her professor within the first two weeks of the semester. Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days; however, they are responsible for completing missed work. Faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. To facilitate this, faculty will announce and distribute all anticipated test and examination dates on the course syllabus, distributed at the beginning of each semester. Students should be aware that faculty may need to adjust these dates as necessary.

Faculty are expected to be mindful of potential conflicts with religious observances and should make reasonable accommodations when students' religious practices conflict with their academic responsibilities.

The religious observance calendar is meant to serve as a scheduling guide. It lists significant holidays from the five largest global faith traditions. However, it is not comprehensive and students may choose to observe a holiday not included on the calendar.

University's web site for information on religious observances at <https://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/calendar/religious-observance.html>.

## Academic Integrity

Your syllabus should mention the University's Honor Code Statute and reiterate that cheating and plagiarism are unacceptable and could result in dismissal from the class and/or University.

The School of Professional and Continuing Studies of the University of Richmond embraces the purpose and intent of the Honor Code. The Honor Code policy of the University is spelled out online:

[https://spcs.richmond.edu/\\_common/document/facstaff/handbook/faculty\\_handbook\\_spcs.pdf](https://spcs.richmond.edu/_common/document/facstaff/handbook/faculty_handbook_spcs.pdf).

The issue of plagiarism should be covered in your first class session. In addition, your course syllabus should include information about our policy and the Honor Code creed. The UR Honor Code can be found at <https://spcs.richmond.edu/students/academics/honorcode.html>.

In addition, some faculty members elect to have their students place and sign the following pledge to all of their work submissions:

*On my honor I hereby affirm that this work was created by me, the writings and conclusions are entirely my own, I actually completed the surveys and interviews (where*

*appropriate), made all the observations noted, and all ideas from others are properly cited and referenced. In addition, this work is original for this class and none of it had already been written for another class nor have I received credit for this in any other class.*

It is important that we do not assume that all students know the depth of plagiarism. Even though plagiarism is an ethically complex problem, your definition of plagiarism to students should be as simple and direct as possible. You should spend some class time at the beginning of the semester to define plagiarism and the proper processes of citing work. In addition you may choose to include a brief summary on acceptable “citing” practices within your course syllabus.

Review the University Library’s “Citing Sources Research Guide” for examples and resources to share with your students: <https://libguides.richmond.edu/citingsources>.

### **Grading Scale (from the SPCS Catalog)**

Grade Points: Given for each semester hour’s grade according to the following scale:

A+ 4.0	B+ 3.3	C+ 2.3	D+ 1.3
A 4.0	B 3.0	C 2.0	D 1.0
A- 3.7	B- 2.7	C- 1.7	D- 0.7
F 0.0	I 0.0	M 0.0	V 0.0

### **Policy on Class Conduct During Emergency Closures**

All teaching faculty in the SPCS will provide for the conduct of class(es) during times when the University is closed in excess of one day per term. Such procedures will be stated in the course syllabus and may consist of pre-determined assignments, classes held via electronic means, “make-up” sessions of equivalent face-to-face length, or other instructional methodologies. It shall be the responsibility of the instructor to monitor University announcements of closings and implement this alternative means of class conduct.

### **OWL – Online Writing Lab**

Encourage your students to take advantage of “OWL.” It is an email administered tutoring service exclusively for students in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies. Students can submit a paper via email and receive feedback by return mail within 48 hours. This is the site: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/students/academics/owl.html>

### **SPCS Librarian**

Boatwright Library resources and support are available to you. For the SPCS, Carol Wittig is our contact.

**Carol Wittig**  
**804-289-8459**  
[cwittig@richmond.edu](mailto:cwittig@richmond.edu)

For a complete list of contact persons in our library, this is the link:  
<https://library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html>

## Final Comments

A syllabus is required for every class in the SPCS, and it should be available to students on or before the first class meeting. A copy of the syllabus must be sent electronically (only in WORD) to your program chair as well as Kay Robertson at [krobert3@richmond.edu](mailto:krobert3@richmond.edu). The document will be maintained electronically.

Your syllabus should be as specific as possible. During the first class, you should review the syllabus with your students, using the time to share your philosophy about teaching and your commitment to learning.

If you are unsure about your syllabus, consult with your program chair. Please remember that if you are teaching a cross-listed course that has both an undergraduate and a graduate level designation, there must be two separate course syllabi on file.

## Syllabus Checklist

Below is a handy checklist of important elements of an effective syllabus. They should be included in all School of Professional and Continuing Studies course syllabi. On occasion, some academic units require additional components. Please check with your program chair.

### Information About the Instructor

- Name
- University of Richmond e-mail address; personal e-mail is optional
- Contact phone number(s)
- Times when students may contact you

### Course Information Required

- Heading (University of Richmond, School of Professional and Continuing Studies)
- Course name/title
- Course number including section number (*SPCS courses are always followed by a "U."*)
- CRN of the course (can be found on BannerWeb or in the class schedule)
- Class meeting time(s)
- Location of class
- Required textbooks including title, author, edition
- Course description/prerequisite
- Course objectives
- Office hours

### Schedule Information

- For the date of each class meeting, specify the subject matter/topics to be covered (e.g., lecture, field trip, guest lecturer, etc.) and the pre-class readings and other non-graded assignments due.
- Non-class meeting dates (holidays, breaks, etc.).
- Graded assignment due dates, preferably highlighted in bold or capitalized (e.g., homework, quizzes, papers, projects).
- Exam dates, preferably highlighted.

### Grading Information

- Course requirements (exams, quizzes, projects, papers) AND the proportion each counts towards the final grade. Discuss the content and other instructions. If class participation is factored in, please explain how you will evaluate it.
- Grading and scale standards.
- Additional Components
- Policies regarding late work and make-up exams
- A statement regarding academic integrity/plagiarism

### Attendance policies

- Disability Policy and students with disabilities information
- Holidays and religious observances
- Innovative class procedures, such as cooperative learning exercises, panel presentations, case study methods, class journals, etc.

## **Syllabus Insert Regarding Academic & Personal Support Services**

Hope N. Walton, Director, Academic Skills Center

If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** (<https://asc.richmond.edu/>): Academic coaches assist students in assessing and developing their academic and life-skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, etc.). Peer tutors offer assistance in specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.) and will be available for appointments in-person and virtually. Peer tutors are listed on the ASC website. Email Roger Mancastropa ([rmancast@richmond.edu](mailto:rmancast@richmond.edu)) and Hope Walton ([hwalton@richmond.edu](mailto:hwalton@richmond.edu)) for coaching appointments in academic and life skills.

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians:** (<https://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/> or 289-8876): Research librarians help students with all steps of their research, from identifying or narrowing a topic, to locating, accessing, evaluating, and citing information resources. Librarians support students in their classes across the curriculum and provide individual appointments, class library instruction, tutorials, and research guides (<https://libguides.richmond.edu>). Students can contact an individual librarian (<https://library.richmond.edu/help/liaison-librarians.html>) or ASK a librarian for help via email ([library@richmond.edu](mailto:library@richmond.edu)), text (804-277-9ASK), or chat (<https://library.richmond.edu/chat.html>).

**Career Services:** (<https://careerservices.richmond.edu/> or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

**Counseling and Psychological Services:** (<https://caps.richmond.edu/> or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling, skills-building classes, therapy groups, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Disability Services:** (<https://disability.richmond.edu/>): The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable students to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

**Speech Center:** (<https://speech.richmond.edu/> or 287-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions are offered by teams of trained student consultants. During scheduled appointments, consultants assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations. We look forward to meeting your public speaking needs.

**Writing Center** (<https://writing.richmond.edu/> or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

## Faculty & Staff Resources

Information for faculty is available on the SPCS website: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/faculty>

### Additional Resources

- Guiding Principles for Teaching & Learning: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/about/guiding-principles.html>
- Online Teaching & Learning Resources: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/faculty/online-learning-resources.html>
- Innovations in Teaching: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/faculty/innovations-teaching.html>
- Faculty Online Teaching Community: <https://blackboard.richmond.edu/> (select *TR176 SPCS Faculty Hybrid & Online Teaching Community of Practice*)
- Comprehensive Resources for Adjunct Faculty: <https://spcs.richmond.edu/adjunct>