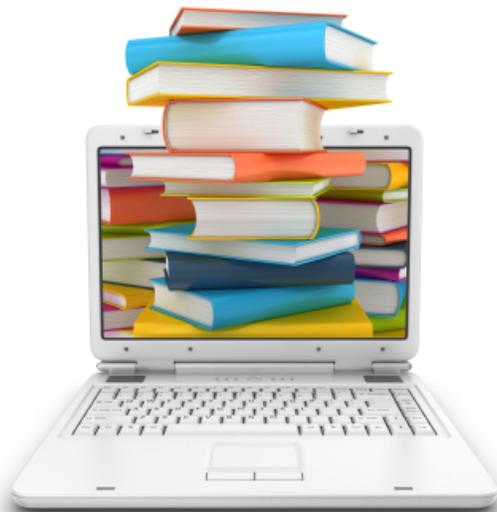


Required Elements of Course Syllabus



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/personal e-mail address(es)
- 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 time lines)
- 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.

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.*

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

Your course syllabus should be forwarded 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, kr robert3@richmond.edu, in your e-mail. She will copy the document for inclusion in our Course Syllabi File Cabinets as well as the electronic net files.

Contacts

- Scott Bray, sbray@richmond.edu, Education, Assistant Chair for Teacher Licensure Program
- Kate Cassada, kcassada@richmond.edu, Education, Assistant Chair for Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, M.Ed.
- Frank Eakin, feakin@richmond.edu, Chair of the Masters of Liberal Arts Program, full-time professor in the Religion Department of A&S
- Wallace “Bo” Harris, wharris3@richmond.edu, Chair of the Emergency Management Program and Interim Chair of the Graduate and Undergraduate HRM Program
- Laura Kuti, lkuti@richmond.edu, Education, Assistant Chair for Curriculum and Instruction
- Lionel Mew, lmew@richmond.edu, Chair of ISYS/IT Management
- Erik Nielson, enielson@richmond.edu, Assistant Chair, Liberal Arts, Communication Core (under Dan Roberts)
- Dan Roberts, droboterts@richmond.edu, Chair, Liberal Arts
- Andrew Schoeneman, aschoene@richmond.edu, Chair of Nonprofit Studies Program
- Tom Shields, tshields@richmond.edu, Education, Chair of Graduate Education
- Porcher Taylor, ptaylor@richmond.edu, Chair of the Paralegal Program
- Vacant, Assistant Chair, Liberal Arts and Weekend College (under Dan Roberts)

Attendance and Participation

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.

Each student is expected to attend all meetings of all classes, including lectures, seminars, laboratories and drills, in which he or she is 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. The specific attendance policy for each course will be announced to the students and distributed on the course syllabus at the beginning of the course.

Faculty members will honor an official notification from the appropriate dean that a student is to be excused for participation in a University-sponsored event, such as choral

performances off campus, intercollegiate athletic events, or judicial hearings at which the student must be present.

A student generally will be held responsible for all work of a class or laboratory missed during an absence. Acceptance of any excuse for an absence, other than those excused by the appropriate dean in the previous paragraph, and any provision for make-up, will be at the discretion of the instructor provided it is consistent with the announced policy for the course and with the University Holiday Schedule below. Missed classes, work, tests and/or excessive absences with or without good cause may result in a poorer grade, or failure, in the course. (NOTE: Students enrolled in Business School or School of Professional and Continuing Studies courses must attend at least 75% of the class meetings regardless of the reasons for absence to be eligible to receive credit for the course.)

Generally, absences that may be excused by faculty members include accident or illness, death or serious illness of a family member, bona fide religious holiday observance, or participation in other University activities such as field trips. Students should make arrangements with their instructors as far in advance as possible for the making up of any missed work. Students experiencing difficulty in making reasonable arrangements for make-up work may see their dean.

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: disability.richmond.edu.

The main purpose of the University Disability Coordinator's 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.

University Disability Coordinator:
Office of Associate Vice President for Student Development
Tina Cade, Associate Vice President
28 Westhampton Way
University of Richmond, 23173
(804) 289-8032
tcade@richmond.edu

University Holidays/Religious Observances

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

The University is a secular institution that values a diversity of religious expression. 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 registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/religiousobsrv.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 at spcs.richmond.edu/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 <http://spcs.richmond.edu/degrees/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: 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.

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. The document will be maintained electronically as well as in hard copy.

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.
- Office hours

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

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.

Additional Information Concerning Student Resources

The following resources are available to our students. Contact **Hope N. Walton**, Director Academic Skills Center, with questions. Staff members from the resources below are available for consultations about concerns related to students as well as issues related to services.

We encourage you to include this information in your syllabus, on Blackboard, or perhaps as a separate handout.

Academic Skills Center (asc.richmond.edu, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Helps students assess their academic strengths and weaknesses; hone their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information processing, concentration, and related techniques; work on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encourage campus and community involvement.

Boatwright Library Research Librarians (library.richmond.edu/help or 289- 8876): Assist students with identifying and locating the best resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also assist students with questions about citing sources correctly. Students can schedule a personal research appointment, meet with librarians in the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area, or ask questions by email, text or IM. SPCS Contact in the Library: Carrie Ludovico, cludovic@richmond.edu, office phone 287-6647.

Career Services (careerservices.richmond.edu or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major, connecting with internships and learning experiences, investigating graduate and professional school options, and landing your first job. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor during your first year. In addition, faculty are encouraged to utilize the services of Tonya Osmond, Career Services for Alumni and SPCS Students, 289-8547, tosmond@richmond.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.richmond.edu or 289-8119): Assists students in meeting academic, personal, or emotional challenges. Services include assessment, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Libraries (library.richmond.edu, 298-8876): The University of Richmond Libraries provide services that suit the needs of all learners, whether on campus or hundreds of miles away. Visit the Library Services page for more information about services: library.richmond.edu/services.

SPCS Student Government Association (spcs.richmond.edu/sga): We encourage you to inform your students about the SPCS Student Government Association.

Speech Center (speech.richmond.edu or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center and OWL (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. The Richmond OWL is available at owl@richmond.edu. Visit spcs.richmond.edu/degrees/students/academics/owl.html for more information.

Faculty & Staff Resources

Email & BannerWeb

Please contact the Information Services [Help Desk](#) at (804) 287-6400 to set up your email and your BannerWeb access. BannerWeb provides you with access to your HR information, such as payroll, benefits, and leave reporting.

Parking

To apply for a permanent parking pass, complete the online form at parking.richmond.edu. If you have additional questions about parking, please contact Parking Services at parking@richmond.edu or (804) 289-8703.

Additional Resources

Please go to this web site for all of the links listed below: spcs.richmond.edu/degrees/faculty-staff.

Forms

- Personal & Professional
 - Share Your Story. Tell us what teaching at SPCS and UR means to you
 - Tuition Remission. Submit with registration to apply for Think Again tuition remission
 - Fund Request. Use for professional development activities, class instructional support/social funds, or Weinstein Center fees
- Classroom
 - Contract for Guest Speaker. Use this form for guest speaker approval and honorarium funds.
 - Contract for Instructional Services. Use this form for instructional services contracts (e.g., Cooperating Teacher).
 - Textbook request. Request an instructor's desk copy or text for possible adoption.

Accomplishments & Promotions

- Accomplishments
 - Complete our Accomplishments form to notify SPCS staff, including our marketing and communications team, of accomplishments, congratulations and excellence. Form can be completed by SPCS full-time or adjunct faculty and SPCS staff.
- Promotions
 - Achievement & Promotion Portfolio. Document professional contributions to the School and outside the classroom for promotion.
 - Peer Review Process for Adjunct Faculty. Instructions and forms for completing the adjunct peer review process.

Innovations in Teaching

- Guidelines: Innovations in Teaching. Defining innovations in teaching for SPCS faculty, following 14 dimensions.

- Award: Innovations in Teaching Award. Nominate fellow faculty members for innovations you've recognized in their classes.

Handbooks & Guidelines

- Handbooks
 - Faculty Governance. SPCS faculty membership, responsibilities, and governance structure.
 - Faculty Handbook. For adjunct faculty in the School of Professional and Continuing Studies.
 - Learning Portfolio preparation handbook. A way students may earn credit for prior learning through the creation, submission, and assessment of a portfolio.
- Guidelines
 - Ethical Guidelines for Research. Website of the University's Instructional Review Board
 - Independent Study Guidelines. Includes resources for faculty and students, and a sample learning contract

Summer Studies Resources

- Proposals
 - Online or in-class Summer School proposal. Use for proposing online or classroom-based Summer School courses.
 - Summer Study Abroad proposal. Use to propose a summer study abroad program and course(s).
- Study Abroad Handbooks & Guidelines
 - Guidelines for Orientation and Safety Audit
 - Student Study Abroad Handbook
 - Faculty/Resident Director Handbook
 - Standards for Good Practice for Short-Term Education Abroad Programs