



Syllabus Requirements

2024-2025



When are Syllabi Due?

A syllabus is required for every class in the SPCS, and it should be available to students on or before the first class meeting. In addition, faculty are required to submit a course syllabus for each course being taught. Adjuncts teaching in the Data Analytics, Liberal Arts, Nonprofit Studies, Information Systems, HR Management, and Paralegal Studies programs are to send the syllabus to the respective program chair as well as to Kay Robertson (krobert3@richmond.edu) and Catherine Pelletier (catherine.pelletier@richmond.edu). Faculty teaching in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program are to send the syllabus to Claudia Mills (cmills@richmond.edu). Faculty teaching in the Master of Teaching or Curriculum and Instruction programs are to send the syllabus to Julia Burke (jburke@richmond.edu).

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.*

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

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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 Student Affairs.

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

The University of Richmond's office of Disability Services strives to ensure that students with disabilities and/or temporary conditions (i.e., concussions & injuries) are provided opportunity for full participation and equal access. Students who are experiencing a barrier to access due to a disability and/or temporary condition are encouraged to apply for accommodations by visiting: disability.richmond.edu. Disability Services can be reached at disability@richmond.edu or 804-662-5001.

Once accommodations have been approved, students must 1) Submit their Disability Accommodation Notice (DAN) to each of their professors via the Disability Services Student Portal available at sl.richmond.edu/be; and 2) Request a meeting with each professor to create an accommodation implementation plan. It is important to complete these steps as soon as possible because accommodations are never retroactive, and professors are permitted a reasonable amount of time for implementation. Disability Services is available to assist, as needed.

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://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/pdfs/statutes.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

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. 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.

Additional Student Resources

The information below is an overview of academic resources available to our students. We encourage you to include this information in your syllabus and on Blackboard.

If you'd like to request additional services or support for your class, please connect with us via email at wlc@richmond.edu or reach our executive director at marco.ortiz@richmond.edu.

Weinstein Learning Center

The Weinstein Learning Center is your go-to destination for academic support. Our services are tailored to help you achieve your academic goals throughout your time at University of Richmond. To learn more and view service schedules and appointment times, visit wlc.richmond.edu. Available services include:

Academic Skills Coaching

Meet with a professional staff member who will collaborate with you to assess and develop your academic and life skills (e.g., critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, test preparation, time management, stress management, and more).

Content Tutoring

Peer consultants offer assistance in specific courses and subject areas. They are available for appointments (in-person and virtual) and drop-in sessions. See schedules at wlc.richmond.edu for supported courses and drop-in times.

English Language Learning

Attend one-on-one or group consultations, workshops, and other services focused on English, academic, and/or intercultural skills.

Quantitative and Programming Resources

Peer consultants and professional staff offer workshops or one-on-one appointments to build quantitative and programming skills and provide statistical assistance for research projects.

Speech and Communication

Prepare and practice for academic presentations, speaking engagements, and other occasions of public expression. Peer consultants offer recording, playback, and coaching for both individual and group presentations. Students can expect recommendations regarding clarity, organization, style, and delivery.

Technology Learning

Visit our student lab dedicated to supporting digital media projects. Services include camera checkout, video/audio recording assistance, use of virtual reality equipment, poster printing, 3D printing and modeling, and consultation services on a variety of software.

Writing

Assists student writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Meet with peer consultants who can offer feedback on written work and suggest pre-writing, drafting, and revision strategies.

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Faculty & Staff Resources

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

- 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>