

Required Elements for a Syllabus

For classes at Nazareth College, you have freedom regarding the composition or formatting of your syllabus. However, in accordance with Middle States Commission on Higher Education and NYS Department of Education, below is a list of the elements that must be in your syllabus. Faculty distribute syllabi a number of ways, including physical paper copies and electronically.

1. Basic course information: Your syllabus should include the name of the course, course number and section number, days and times when the class meets, as well as a basic description of the class.
2. Your contact information: Your name, office location, office phone, e-mail address, and any other information you think students need.
3. Office hours: A clear indication of when and how you will hold office hours.
4. Official statement regarding students with disabilities: The College has an official statement that can be used or modified for your syllabus.

Briefly, the only way students are able to receive official accommodations at Nazareth College is by registering with the Office of Student Accessibility Services and providing official documentation of their disability. Once their document has been processed, students receive a letter of accommodation that they must present to you. In the absence of that process and a letter from the Office of Student Accessibility Services specifying the accommodations, no accommodations may be provided for the student. For legal reasons, you are strongly encouraged to stay within the bounds of this policy and procedure.

The Director of the Office of Student Accessibility Services is Erika Hess (office: GAC61 phone: 389-2498, e-mail: ehess6@naz.edu). The Handbook for Students with Disabilities is available as a PDF file at: <http://www.naz.edu/student-disabilities/>.

Statement from the Office of Student Accessibility Services:

If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your academic course work or participation in this class, please contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services (GAC, Room 61). It is your responsibility as a student requesting an accommodation due to a qualifying disability to self-identify by registering with the Office of Student Accessibility Services and to furnish documentation about the nature of the disability. Informing other faculty or staff personnel does not constitute registering with the Office of Student Accessibility Services. You must provide documentation of your needs to the Office of Student Accessibility Services so that reasonable accommodations can be requested in a timely manner. The Director of the Office of Student Accessibility Services will determine with you what accommodations are necessary, appropriate and reasonable based on the documentation provided. All information and documentation is confidential. If appropriate, the Director of the Office of Student Accessibility Services will write a "letter of academic accommodation" that you can share with me as your course instructor. Note: all students are expected to fulfill essential course requirements with or without reasonable accommodations.

5. Official statement regarding academic integrity: As you are well aware, academic dishonesty (i.e., plagiarism, passing off others' work as your own, copying another's examination, etc.) is a problem on all college and university campuses. To address this problem and to be clear on how academic integrity

is defined and is treated at this institution, Nazareth College developed and printed an Academic Policies & Procedures section of the Undergraduate Catalog. This information is also included in the Graduate Catalog. At a minimum, you should include a reference to this policy in your syllabus accompanied by a brief description of penalties you will enforce. Violations of academic integrity should be reported to your department chair and Lisa Durant-Jones, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (ext. 2775) to ensure that all incidents are tracked across courses and schools.

Statement from the Academic Integrity Committee: Academic Integrity is defined as “honest and responsible scholarship” (University of Oklahoma, 2018), and is further characterized by the five values designated by the International Center for Academic Integrity: “honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility” (International Center for Academic Integrity, 2014, p. 16). Nazareth College shares the Center’s preference for an academic, supportive, and promotive approach to academic integrity rather than one focused mainly on violation detection and disciplinary consequence. However, the College will condone no form of academic dishonesty.

6. Statement regarding your attendance policy: For the sake of clarity and enforcement, include what you expect from the students regarding their attendance in your course, any penalties for lack of attendance, as well as what constitutes an excused versus an unexcused absence. Students tend to assume if they are absent they can submit course work due when they next return to class. If that is not the case, make sure that your syllabus contains a statement to this effect.
7. Student Learning Outcomes: As of Fall 2009, all syllabi should contain a list of 3-5 learning outcomes for the course. All syllabi must include a brief statement of what students will learn as a result of the course. Specifics of how these should be written may vary by department and school. If in doubt, check with your department chair or program director.
8. Grading policies: Include a basic statement about how grades will be determined and how different types of work will count toward that grade.

The syllabus is an excellent place to notify students that grades are earned, not given. Suggestions to consider:

- A list of major assignments with descriptions.
- Grading criteria (or rubrics) for formal and informal assignments.
- A statement about what material examinations/assessments will cover.
- A grade breakdown that outlines precisely how final grades will be determined.
- A list of required course materials with a brief description of each.
- A late assignment policy.
- A daily schedule of each class’s readings, homework assignments, and/or activities.
- A list of deadlines for major assignments or examinations.
- A statement that the syllabus is subject to change with an explanation of how students will be notified of changes.
- Rewrite, resubmission, or remediation policies.

This list is not comprehensive, nor should it be seen as a replacement for advice from colleagues in your specific discipline.

9. Religious Observances Policy: The college catalog includes the following information about religious observances: “A student, who is unable to participate in any class, examination, or assignment due to his or her religious holy day requirements shall not be penalized, provided the instructor has been notified in writing at least one week prior to the absence.”

NOTE: Because graduate classes meet only once per week, the graduate policy requires a notification of absence two weeks in advance. This policy can be found in the Academic Policies and Procedures section of the Undergraduate Catalog, which is posted on the Academic Advisement web site, and is posted in the online Graduate Catalog.

10. Final Exams and End of the Semester Testing: It is expected that a final examination or alternative activity/assignment will be conducted at the end of each semester in every class. Please keep this in mind as you prepare your syllabus. Exam schedules for daytime undergraduate classes are posted on the Registrar's Office web page. Exams for evening classes (graduate and undergraduate) are held during the last regularly scheduled class time during final exam week.

Final Thoughts:

There is considerable disciplinary variation in how much information is expected in a syllabus or course packet. You might think that some of the above sections are excessive, but realize that in many fields a syllabus may be viewed as a quasi-contractual document. Policies or procedures not clearly stated and defined in your syllabus could be unenforceable if a student challenges/appeals his or her grade.