Syllabus Checklist

This syllabus checklist is intended to remind you of the various required and optional items. Syllabi can vary widely in terms of the components, and your college or department may also have specific requirements or even a template you may need to use.

Use of this Document: Please note that we have compiled only the most relevant information for your consideration. Where possible, we have provided links to the original sources, which you should review in relation to your syllabus policies. Some of these policies are quite lengthy, but they clearly outline what is permissible regarding common issues. Please use this checklist at your discretion.

It is also highly recommended that you review the University Committee on Courses and Curricula's *Guide and Format for Curriculum Proposals* information; this is critical if you are adding or modifying a course.

Mississippi State University Syllabus:
New in Fall 2022, the University Syllabus informs students of policies that are relevant to all courses and take precedence over any other course-specific policies. It consolidates many of the previously required statements into one document. Faculty should read and be familiar with the policies outlined in the University Syllabus. The official statement for inclusion is provided below under "Required Items."

General Recommended Items:
Indicate whether or not your syllabus includes the information below.

Basic Course Information:

	Yes	No	N/A
University, College or Department Name or Logo?			
Course Name?			
Course Number?			
Section Number?			
Class Days and Times?			
Catalog Course Description?			
*Method of Delivery? (Asynchronous Online, Face-to-Face, Hyflex, Hybrid, Interactive Video or Synchronous Online)			
**Split-level (undergraduate/graduate) Designation? If so, have you listed requirements for graduate level?			

*Note: Course design can be quite different depending on the Method of Delivery so it is important to list the method accurately.
**Note: A course that is split-level must abide by *Academic Operating Policy 11.04*

Personal and Contact Information:

	Yes	No	N/A
Your Name and Title?			
Office Number?			
Office Hours?			
Phone Number?			
Email Address?			
Preferred method of contact?			
How soon students may expect a response from the instructor?			

Course Schedule and Due Dates:*

	Yes	No	N/A
Schedule of class meetings?			
Exam or assignments dates and deadlines?			

* Some faculty provide concise class schedules with various due dates for homework, exams and assignments. This can assist students in managing their time and can be provided on the syllabus or as a separate item. If you do provide a detailed schedule, it is advisable to state that it is "subject to change" or "tentative."

Course Materials:

	Yes	No	N/A
Course Textbooks?			
Any other required materials or technology?			
Have you indicated whether materials are required or recommended?			
Any specific computer programs or hardware (webcam, microphone)?			

Attendance* and Late Work:

	Yes	No	N/A
How attendance is defined?			
Grade value of attendance?			
How excused or unexcused absences are measured?			
How absences are recorded?			
How late work is accepted or penalized?			

*As stated in *AOP 12.09*, "A policy should include, but is not limited to, how the instructor defines class attendance, particularly as it pertains to in-class responsibilities that go beyond the student's mere presence in the classroom, how attendance relates to student learning outcomes, the extent of credit or penalty, how excused and unexcused absences are measured, and how all absences are recorded."

Also in _AOP 12.09_:
"Excused Absences Defined
These approved excused absences are not subject to instructor discretion in course attendance penalties:

- Participation in an official university activity with authorization from an appropriate administrator sponsoring the activity (e.g., Department Head or higher). If the validity of the activity is questionable, the matter should be referred to the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for final resolution.
- Death in a student's immediate family to include a student's parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, spouse or partner, as well as natural, adopted and/or in-law children.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school that cannot be rescheduled.

An illness or injury of a student's immediate family (to include parent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, spouse or partner, as well as natural, adopted and/or in- law children) is eligible for excused absences, but is subject to the instructor's discretion.

University or other organized events intended to provide personal enrichment or entertainment will not be considered university authorized activities as it pertains to course attendance and will not qualify as an excused absence.

It is the student's responsibility to obtain valid documentation from a physician or clinical psychologist that contains the date and time the student sought medical consultation and/or treatment and present that documentation to the instructor upon returning to class. The instructor may ask the student to obtain verification of their excused absence through the Dean of Students Office.

Required Items per MSU Academic Operating Policy 13.03*
*Also updated per 7/29/22 Email regarding replacement of required statements with University Syllabus

Indicate whether or not your syllabus includes the information below.

	Yes	No
1. Does your syllabus list the learning objectives for the course?		

Note: Learning objectives should state very specifically what the students will know or be able to do to by the end of the course. They should be measurable and aligned with your assessments. Well-written learning objectives assist students in focusing their learning efforts.

	Yes	No
2. Does your syllabus list the assignments and exams?		

Note: You may also want to include some information about your policy on makeup work. You may wish to consult *AOP 12.09* on this issue as it addresses "excused absences and grades."

	Yes	No
3. Does your syllabus list the "standards of achievement and methods of evaluation (including the relative importance to be assigned to various factors)"?		

Note: You will want to include the relative importance to be assigned to various factors by providing the specific number of points or the percentage for which assignments or exams are counted. Provide the points or percentage required for each letter grade. MSU uses letter grades of A, B, C, D, and F.

	Yes	No
4. Does your syllabus list the date of the final examination?		

Note: You may consider linking to the location of the Registrar's Exam Schedule
Also see AOP 12.04 which states "Asynchronous online classes will have their examination during the regular (normal five-day, may span a weekend) examination period. Examinations must be available to online students for at least 72 hours between the end of Reading Day and prior to the end of the exam period. Synchronous online classes will follow the normal exam schedule."

	Yes	No
5. Does your syllabus describe your attendance and class participation policy?		

Note: This was also mentioned above and obviously an important item to think through and clarify in the syllabus.

	Yes	No
6. Does your syllabus contain the University Syllabus statement below? "The Mississippi State University Syllabus contains all policies and procedures that are applicable to every course on campus and online. The policies in the University Syllabus describe the official policies of the University and will take precedence over those found elsewhere. It is the student's responsibility to read and be familiar with every policy. The University Syllabus may be accessed at any time on the Provost website under Faculty and Student Resources and at https://www.provost.msstate.edu/faculty-student-resources/university-syllabus"		

College or Department Requirements:

Indicate whether or not your syllabus includes the information below.

	Yes	No
Have you included any items required by your college or department?		

Hybrid or Online Classes:

Indicate whether or not your syllabus includes the information below.

	Yes	No	N/A
Time zone information for online students?			
How attendance or participation is defined in an online course?*			
Explanation of a Hybrid or HyFlex Course?			

*As stated in _AOP 12.09_ "A student will be considered to be in attendance in an online class when the student; a) participates in a course activity (e.g., discussion board); and b) is in communication with the course instructor regarding a course topic within a specified time frame. Logging into an online course without active participation does not constitute attendance. When students who are enrolled in an online course are aware of necessary absences, they should inform the instructor as soon as is possible so that other arrangements can be made."

Additional Optional Items:

Indicate whether or not your syllabus includes the information below.

	Yes	No	N/A
Technology statement regarding laptops, scanning etc.?			

Cell phone or laptop policy?			
Student email policy?			
Tips on how best to succeed in the course?			
Contact hours table?			
Diversity statement?			
Extra credit opportunities?			
Guidelines for classroom behavior?			
Where to get tutoring or assistance?			
Technical support contact information (www.its.msstate.edu)?			
Statement regarding how the syllabus may be amended?			

Optional Artificial Intelligence Statement:

For sample syllabus statements and other resources for instructors regarding Generative Artificial Intelligence, see the [Center for Teaching and Learning's webpage](#).

	Yes	No	N/A
Have you included a syllabus policy statement regarding use of Artificial Intelligence in your course?			

Creating a Welcoming Syllabus

In addition to including course policies and procedures, the syllabus is an opportunity to help students feel welcomed in the class, excited about the subject matter, engaged with their professor and classmates, and supported as learners. To achieve this, it is important to review the document to ensure that the language is welcoming and not unnecessarily negative. Consider including or accompanying the syllabus with the following elements:

1. **Personalized Welcome Statement:** Start with a personalized message expressing enthusiasm for the course and students' contributions.
2. **Explanation of Course Relevance:** Connect the course material to students' lives, future careers, and real-world applications.
3. **Class Environment Statement:** Encourage active participation and collaboration among students by including details about such opportunities such as team assignments, class discussions, and online forums.
4. **Identify Areas of Student Choice:** Highlight opportunities for student input, such as selecting topics for assignments, as this motivates students and increases investment in the course.
5. **Communicate Availability:** Clearly communicate your availability for questions and provide information and how and when students can reach you.
6. **Present a Visually-Appealing Syllabus:** Use a clear and logical structure, headings, and bullet points to enhance readability. Consider using visual elements to make the syllabus more appealing.

	Yes	No	N/A
Have you included any of the following elements in your course syllabus to make it more welcoming and engaging: a personalized welcome statement, an explanation of course relevance, a class environment statement, areas of student choice, information on your availability, or visually appealing design features?			

Final Check:

	Yes	No
Have you had someone (preferably a colleague or peer) review your syllabus?		