



# Learner-centered Syllabus Template

Click here to access the [Learner-centered Syllabus Checklist](#)

## Course Information

Consider including a relevant quote or image (with an alt tag describing the image) at the beginning of your syllabus. It gives students a sense of what they will be learning and generates interest in the topic

**Course title**

**Course number**

**Term and Year**

**Meeting Time(s) and Location(s)**

**Course credit hours**

**Course Website/Canvas Page Link**

**Prerequisites**

In addition to listing course numbers, describing the prerequisites for your course helps students realistically evaluate the knowledge, skills, and experiences expected prior to taking your course.

## Instructor Information

Consider including preferences for how students should address you (i.e., Prof or first name). You may also want to indicate your preferred method of communication (e.g., email, phone, Piazza, slack, etc) and information regarding your response timeline.

**Name of Instructor(s)**

**Office Location**

**Phone number**

**Email Address**

**Additional contact information (e.g. Remind information, website URL, Piazza, Slack)**

**Office/Student hours, times and location**

Consider referring to office hours as student hours. Try to find times that are mutually convenient for you and your students and explain the purpose of student hours and what to expect in your first class.

Consider doing recurring virtual student hours and adding the link here as well as in Canvas.

## About the Instructor

Feel free to provide a picture and brief biography about yourself and/or your teaching philosophy/methods. This is your opportunity to invite students into the course, set the tone, and share your research and teaching practice while presenting your philosophy as an educator.

## Other Instructors:

Include the name, office, email address, phone number, website URL for all other instructors, GSIs and/or IAs

## Course Description

Include the course description from the official University of Michigan course catalog

Expand this section to include information about the learning goals, or overarching ideas you want students to know or do with as a result of taking this class. This section can also set the tone for the course by explaining: What is the inspiration for your course? What is exciting about your content? How

*does your course fit in with the rest of the field/major's curriculum? How might your course be relevant for students' future goals (e.g., academic, professional)?*

## **Course Goals & Objectives**

*This section should help students understand what they are going to learn and why that will matter to them (e.g., how the course will help them develop as scholars, learners, and future professionals and how it fits into the overall curriculum). What are the most important things a student should know (cognitive), be able to do (skills), or value (affective) after completing your course?*

*List 3-5 broad-based learning outcomes or goals that reflect what students will learn and skills they will develop by completing the learning activities. Course objectives should be measurable and describe the skills-sets students will walk away with upon completion of your course. [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) could be very helpful for writing the learning objectives. Try to keep them simple (one sentence) and clear for students to understand what they are held accountable to learn.*

*Try to also connect the learning objectives to the methods of evaluation. For example, the learning objective "Be able to read, understand, and integrate research in human development." can become more student-centered by revising it to "Be able to read, understand, and integrate research in human development (assessed by journal article assignment and exams).*

By the end of the course, you will be able to...[verb] + [object]:

1. Identify...
  - Methods of Evaluation: Quizzes, Participation in weekly discussions
2. Demonstrate...
  - Methods of Evaluation: Design of XXX
3. Outline...
  - Methods of Evaluation: Concept Map
4. Develop...
  - Methods of Evaluation: Development of XXX
5. Evaluate...
  - Methods of Evaluation: Reflection Journal, Peer Evaluation

## **Course Resources**

*Provide all information about the ways in which you will share content with your students. When possible, explain the connections to the course goals and how the text and readings address them. Add instructions for accessing and using online resources or programs.*

- Text/Readings/Other Material (Required)  
*list title(s) of textbooks, ISBN #, and where students can obtain it/them*
- Technology Requirements  
*list any devices (e.g. iClicker) or software programs here*
- Course Website  
*list course website and information to access online lectures and material*
- Optional Resources  
*List optional resources and the purpose they serve*

## Learning Activities and Teaching Methods

*Describe other components such as course delivery (e.g., in-person, hybrid, online, laboratory, discussion, lecture). Give a brief overview of the learning activities and assignments you will use to help students reach the learning objectives. (For example: readings, forum discussions, problem sets) How are homework, in-class activities, and assessments related? Are there key elements of the class that should be highlighted? For example, are there larger projects that should be described? Or is group work an important component?*

Example 1: (for a flipped, or blended course):

This course is a flipped course, meaning that instead of lecturing every class period, there will be pre-class material posted on Canvas (e.g. short videos, reading assignments, quizzes, discussion questions, etc.) that must be completed by the due date, prior to coming to class. This serves to “free up” classroom time and allow for more instructor-student and student-student interaction. In this manner more classroom time can be spent helping students to apply the material they learned online. I will utilize Canvas analytics to track each student’s online presence and activity. This will then be incorporated into the assessment of your class participation grade.

Example 2 (for an online course):

- *iClicker Cloud - iClicker Cloud will be used during synchronous meetings and student hours. Please refer to the directions in the Canvas course for how to download the iClicker Reef app to your iPad to be prepared for these sessions.*
- *Discussion Board - There are two main areas of the discussion board. One is a Q&A board that will be pinned to the top of the discussions page. The other area is for weekly discussions. For each weekly discussion, you will be expected to follow the given prompt in terms of directions and due dates.*
- *This course runs Monday-Saturday. Any weekly activities are expected to be completed by 11:59 PM ET on Saturday night. The materials for the next week will be posted by the end of the day on Friday so that you can schedule and be prepared for the week ahead.*
- *All assignments are due by noon, EST on the due date listed in the course schedule. To encourage you to stay on schedule, due dates have been established for each assignment; 20% of the total points will be deducted for assignments received 1-6 days late; assignments received more than 1 week late will receive 0 points.*
- *You should receive feedback on any assignments, discussions, or exams no more than a week after the due date.*

Example 3 (for an in-person course):

*Throughout the course, you will have multiple opportunities to explore a variety of historical events, engage in historical thinking, form and develop arguments, and share what you learn through discussion and writing. We will, for example, have frequent in-class discussions, debates, small group activities, and other similar exercises. In addition, the following activities will help guide you through the learning process and help you measure your progress as you move toward deeper understanding ...*

## Assignments

*It's important to not only write out each of the assignments, but also provide a due date and a breakdown of points via the table below. Also, consider providing information about each assignment after that.*

Example:

Assignments	Due	Points/Percentage
Participation	Throughout the semester	20
Individual Reflection Paper	November 15	10
Midterm	September 30	20
Final	October 31	20
Quizzes	Throughout the semester	30
		Total: 100

### Assignment Descriptions

- Participation (20 points; ongoing). Participation points will be earned each week through a variety of small assignments as well as my assessment of your engagement during class sessions. Please read the feedback that I provide for ways to enhance this grade going forward, and see me if you find yourself struggling to participate so we can develop appropriate strategies together.
- Individual Reflection Paper (10 points; due XX). This assignment relates to learning objective 2. After completing project 2, you will...
- Project 1 (20 points; due XX). Details about this project will be shared by XX.
- Project 2 (20 points; due XX).
- Final exam 3 (30 points; On XX). Will consist of a mix of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. More detail will be shared by XX.

### Grading Procedure and Feedback

*Describe how students will be graded and evaluated: Define when students should expect to receive feedback. Clarify the form of evaluation and feedback (digital feedback, handwritten feedback, rubric/grading forms, peer reviews, etc).*

Example:

A variety of class assessments reflect the diverse approaches to learning you will develop during this course. Grades are only one indicator of progress in a course, and I will try to provide you with additional forms of feedback along the way. If you think I made a legitimate error in grading your work, please convey your explanation and request for reevaluation to me in writing prior to the next class meeting (email is fine). Scores will typically be posted on Canvas within one week of turning in an assignment or exam so that you can monitor and receive feedback on your progress online.

### Missed or Late Work

Include your policy on late or missed assignments (e.g., homework, labs, exams). Define clear expectations and consequences. Also include your policy on making-up missed assignments (e.g., homework, tests, labs).

### Evaluation/Grading Policies

How will grades be calculated, and if percentages used, how will numbers be rounded? Identify how each assignment/assessment contributes to the final grade? If there are more than one examination/test, what material will they cover? Is the final examination comprehensive? How will missed examinations be made-up (i.e. a predetermined date and time, or other)?

#### Summary of Grade Criteria

Assignment	Points	Weight
Discussion x 5		%
Quizzes x 10		%
Assignments x 2		%
Final Exam		%
Self-Checks x 10	ungraded	
Labs	ungraded	
		<b>100%</b>

The grading scale is:

93-100%	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	63-66%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
77-79%	C+	<60%	E

### Course Management & Policies

The various schools and colleges of the University have different academic policies and procedures, so it is important to be aware of what differences exist. What an instructor also needs to keep in mind is that policies that apply to a given student are determined by that student's unit, not by the school or college in which the course is offered. Below are some sample policies:

#### Attendance/Participation Policy

If attendance is required, indicate the number of classes that may be missed without a penalty, as well as the penalties that accrue thereafter.

#### Example 1 (from Cornell University)

In this course, the main focus of each class session will involve continuing discussions with your colleagues. Therefore, attendance in this class is mandatory. We will be doing many in-class activities as well as peer reviewing during class time, so a missed class is an inconvenience to your fellow classmates. Please come to class on time. You have three “free pass” absences during the semester. If you have special circumstances (i.e., illness, family emergency), please come talk to me or email me. If you have more than three absences from class, your final grade for the discussion will be dropped by five points for each additional unexcused absence.

#### Example 2 (from Melanie Overby (GSI, U-M PSYCH 350))

Your participation is expected and required! Class participation is awarded based on written class assignments and your contribution to class discussion. You are responsible for doing the reading in advance of class, and taking an active role in class activities and discussion. I value most those discussions in which *you* are doing most of the talking. Aside from voicing comments, actively paying attention to each other is key. Engaging in distracting activities (e.g., working on the Daily crossword puzzle) will result in points deducted from section participation.

I understand that some students may feel uncomfortable sharing thoughts in large groups, nevertheless I encourage you to express yourself. To facilitate ease, discussions will also vary in format (e.g., small group discussion, activities, classroom demonstrations). We will be covering a variety of controversial issues and topics that may hold special significance for students. It is important to discuss ideas in a *cooperative* and *respectful* manner, recognizing that others may have differing opinions. This is one of the most valuable aspects of section! Challenge yourself to see things from others’ points of view and use feedback from each other to augment your ideas.

### **Academic Integrity/Honor Code Policy**

#### Example 1: College of LSA

The University of Michigan community functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The college promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity, and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to [the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education]. Being found responsible for academic misconduct will usually result in a grade sanction, in addition to any sanction from the college. For more information, including examples of behaviors that are considered academic misconduct and potential sanctions, please see [lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html](http://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html)

#### Example 2: U-M School of Dentistry

The School of Dentistry’s Code of Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct (“the Code”) has two basic premises. First, it assumes that individuals uphold values of honesty, ethics and professional behavior and support others in maintaining these same values. Second, it implies that the same personal integrity that prevents people from acting dishonestly or unprofessionally compels them to do something about unethical behavior that they observe. The members of the faculty of this School believe in these principles and responsibilities.

Nothing in this policy prevents a faculty member from assigning grades or course work that he/she determines to be appropriate as a result of an evaluation of a student’s performance. When a faculty member determines that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, the faculty member may either file a charge under the Honor System Policy or exercise his/her authority with regard to assessing the student’s performance in that course, such as assigning a failing grade, issuing an incomplete, or assigning additional coursework for evaluation. Any student who feels that his/her performance was evaluated unfairly may follow the School of Dentistry Appeal Procedures.

Faculty members are responsible for informing the Assistant Dean for Student Services of all cases of academic misconduct that they resolve independently.

### **Religious/Cultural Observance**

Students who have religious or cultural observances that coincide with this class should let the Course Director know in writing within 3 weeks of the beginning of the term. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance will continue to be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete their academic responsibilities. However, if a student does not contact their Course Director within 3 weeks of the beginning of the term, the Course Director will assume the student plans to attend all class meetings.

<http://www.provost.umich.edu/calendar/>

### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities/Disability Statement**

The University of Michigan recognizes disability as an integral part of diversity and is committed to creating an inclusive and equitable educational environment for students with disabilities. Students who are experiencing a disability-related barrier should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://ssd.umich.edu/>; 734-763-3000 or [ssdoffice@umich.edu](mailto:ssdoffice@umich.edu)). For students who are connected with SSD, accommodation requests can be made in Accommodate. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your SSD Coordinator or visit SSD's Current Student webpage. SSD considers aspects of the course design, course learning objects and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SSD, instructors, and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

### **Student Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, which includes sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage anyone dealing with sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support and academic advocacy can be found with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) on their 24-hour crisis line, 734.936.3333 and at <https://sapac.umich.edu/>.

Alleged violations can be non-confidentially reported to the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) at <https://oie.umich.edu/>.

### **Expectations & Resources for Student Success**

*What is expected of students in your course? What can students expect from you? What class behaviors are important for successful students? Why are you asking students to do certain things? Consider drafting an inclusivity statement that best fits your expectations regarding an inclusive learning environment that promotes civil, respectful, and supportive interactions in class. If you will use an online or hybrid mode, you might also consider a "digital etiquette" or "netiquette" policy indicating guidelines for online discussions and activities. Below are some sample policies:*

#### **Expectations for Success**

Example 1 (from UC SanDiego):

What I expect of you	What you can expect of me
<b>Be informed.</b> Read this syllabus carefully and completely so you understand the course structure and expectations.	<b>Enthusiasm.</b> To be prepared for each class and to bring my enthusiasm for teaching to each lecture, lab, and student hour meeting.
<b>Be attuned.</b> Keep up with readings and lab assignments, as each one builds on the previous one.	<b>Responsiveness.</b> To respond to emails within 24 hours. For those that know me already, you know that I usually respond faster than this. Emails received on weekends or while I'm traveling may take longer.
<b>Be ethical.</b> A good attitude and maintenance of honest and ethical principles towards me, your classmates, and the execution of the course. Please read xxxx	<b>Timely feedback.</b> To make every effort to return graded assignments within one week of the submission date and to post solutions or code as soon as is reasonably possible after the submission date.
<b>Have integrity.</b> An honest, fair, responsible, respectful, trustworthy, and courageous effort on all academic work and collaboration. Please read xxxx	<b>Integrity.</b> To uphold integrity standards and create an atmosphere that fosters active learning, creativity, critical thinking, and honest collaboration.
<b>Be flexible.</b> Sometimes my schedule gets affected by unavoidable work travel, necessitating some office hour rescheduling at the last minute.	<b>Reasonable</b> accommodation and understanding for student situations that arise; however, I will not make exceptions for one person that are not available to every other person in the course.

Example 2:

*What you can expect of me*

- To plan the course AND alter that plan as needed. The best curriculum comes from the student. That means that we will adapt class time to student needs and adjust course topics as necessary.
- To provide you with ongoing feedback—both written and oral. I have designed class assignments to help you succeed and have made giving feedback a top priority.
- To bring my expertise into the classroom. This includes formal study, professional experience, and stories from real life. You are encouraged to do the same.
- To be patient when you are struggling with ideas; the struggle reveals that learning is taking place.
- To provide clarity when the struggle gets too strong.
- To be open about options. I think it's great when students bring ideas of how to form a class session or request a topic for discussion.
- To treat you, as adult learners, with respect.

*What I expect from you*

- Participation in class, which includes attending, speaking up, listening, and asking questions.

- Be attuned. Take good notes in class and then do something with them. Completion of assignments – including keeping up with the readings and reviewing your notes *as you go!*.
- Effort to make this class your own. What will you do to foster your learning? For instance, try explaining material to a study buddy to practice for exams.
- Honesty: "I don't know" and "I need to pass on that question" may be acceptable answers.
- Courage to challenge what you read or hear (even from me) and to talk with me if there are concerns before they become burdensome. I can help you more along the way if you think you might be struggling—it's much harder/impossible to "catch up" at the end.

### Hints for Success

You will need to learn a great deal of information for this course and will probably have to add to your vocabulary up to 500 new words over the course of the semester. Part of any science is learning the language. Memorize a word and its definition or a fact but don't forget to understand the process it is part of before you go on. Think about how a fact fits into a concept and how the concept is part of a bigger picture.

One way to do this is talk about what you have learned in a study group. You will find that each of you may learn and understand some things easily but other concepts are difficult. Many times the diversity of a group means that there may be one person who does understand a concept and can explain to the others. If nobody does, then it's time to come see me.

One more thought about studying: *Don't leave it until the night before an examination*. There is too much material in this course to learn in one night or even one weekend. This is why the study groups can be so useful. The key is come prepared to each study group meeting. By meeting once a week in a study group, you are held accountable to review the material regularly. Studying for exams will be much easier if you do this and likely will be reflected in your grade.

### Guidelines for Classroom Behavior

Example (from U-M Faculty Member Evelyn Alsutany, American Culture)

Class Conduct: A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not acceptable.

Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom.

More sample statements can be found [here](#)

### Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The University of Michigan Biological Station is committed to creating a culture of engaged learning and establishing a climate of inclusion and harmony. We are all here to learn from each other. In this spirit, we will work to actualize UMBS' community standards of integrity and respect by practicing active listening and respectful communication. By acknowledging differences amongst us in our backgrounds, skills, interests, and values, we will collectively grow and improve our understanding of the world. Together, we strive to cultivate a camp where each individual feels a sense of belonging and well-being.

This atmosphere is most conducive to teaching, learning, and building community. (University of Michigan Biological Station)

### Discussion Etiquette

“...At the beginning of the course, we will create discussion guidelines together, which will help us create a space where everyone has equal access to participation. This is especially important in a class that focuses on controversial social and political issues. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must also listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on exploring the issues in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom. Please see me at any time during the semester if you feel that the class atmosphere is not conducive to your participation.” (Charlotte Karem Albrecht, American Culture)

### Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734.764.8312 and [caps.umich.edu](https://caps.umich.edu) during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult University Health Service (UHS) at 734.764.8320 and <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see <https://www.uhs.umich.edu/aadresources>. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <https://caps.umich.edu/article/um-mental-health-resources>

### Educational Support Services (ESS)

Name

Office

Telephone

E-mail

### Course Schedule

Provide an outline of the content of the course with dates for readings, assignments, midterms, quizzes, exams, etc. It may help to organize everything within Weeks/Modules and/or Dates so students understand, at a glance, what they are learning and how that correlates with assignments and due dates. If there is more than one course component (e.g. lecture, discussion, lab, studio, etc), consider how best to denote that (e.g. making a separate course schedule for each component, adding an extra column, etc).

Week or Module & Date	Content/Topics	Resource Material	Assignments & Due Dates
Week 1/Module 1 Date	List each course content piece students need to engage in	List the specific course resources the student will use (e.g. textbook)	Discussion Board (due 9/15) Practice Quiz (due 9/18)

		<i>chapters, articles, online content)</i>	
Module 2 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		<i>List assignments or “none,” as needed</i>
Module 3 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		<i>List assignments or “none,” as needed</i>
Module 4 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		<i>List assignments or “none,” as needed</i>
Module 5 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		<i>List assignments or “none,” as needed</i>
Module 6 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		
Module 7 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		
Module 8 Date	<i>List each course content piece students need to engage in</i>		
	<i>Continue table for each week/module in the course</i>		

\* Schedule and assignments subject to change. Any changes will be posted in the learning management system.

## Continuous Course Improvement

**This course has been modified based on last year’s student course evaluations as follows:**  
(recommended)

## Additional Examples

This supplementary document has additional [examples of Content-centered & Learner-centered syllabus components](#)