

DePauw University
Tips for Planning Course Syllabi and Other Course Information
July 22nd, 2020

A. The Course Plan.

State the course's objectives and how they fit with the department/school/program's student outcomes. Indicate what teaching/learning strategies will be used to achieve these objectives. Provide any other information that will help students understand how the course will be conducted and what will be expected of them.

Include a description of how grades will be determined and what weights the various course components will have in the final grade. If you are teaching a course that carries a special designation because it meets the W (Writing), S (Speaking and Listening) or Q (Quantitative Reasoning) competency requirement, please also include information explaining what a student must do to meet the relevant competency requirement.

B. University Policies.

It is important to be aware of University Policies when crafting your syllabi. The full set of University policies will be made available to you as part of DePauw's academic handbook. In the meantime, here are key policies to consider as you develop your syllabus. Please feel free to contact Dave Berque, Dean of Academic Life and Associate VP for Student Academic Life, if you have questions about these policies as they apply to your syllabi. You can reach Dave at dberque@depauw.edu.

1. Examinations in Courses

Available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018117>

This policy outlines rules for giving examinations and other assignments during the last five days of the semester as well as during exam week.

While it is important to read the entire policy, one key section states: "No hour examinations may be given the last five class days of the semester except for laboratory portions of final exams. (Note: If Thursday is the last day of classes, this period includes the previous Friday.) Only assignments that substitute for a final exam should be given a due date during finals week. In addition, instructions for paper and project assignments due in the last five days of class or asynchronous online final exams should be provided at least 14 calendar days prior to the due date."

Please adhere to this policy as you plan exam and assignment dates for your courses. Adhering to this policy means, for example, that you should not assign a paper with a scheduled due date during exam week if you also have an exam scheduled during exam week. However, if a paper has an announced due date earlier in the term (and could reasonably be completed by that due date) there is nothing in the policy that prohibits you from agreeing to a student's request to extend the due date into exam week. Of course, you are also free to deny such requests. Please feel free to consult Scott Spiegelberg (DeanAcademicPrograms@depauw.edu) if you have questions about this policy and the ways it applies to your course.

If you plan to give a final exam, refer to the final examination schedule (available on the [Academic Calendar](#) page). Include the final exam date and time for your course in the syllabus, and on the first day of class inform students that you expect them to be there for the exam.

2. Academic Integrity Policy

Please include a written statement on your syllabi stating that you will uphold the DePauw Academic Integrity Policy. Suggested wording:

Cheating, plagiarism, submission of the work of others, etc. violates DePauw's policy on academic integrity and may result in penalties ranging from a lowered grade to course failure, suspension or expulsion.

The policy and discussion of each student's obligations and rights can be found in the Student Handbook. The policy is also available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018101> If you have any questions about my expectations regarding academic integrity, including my expectations regarding group work, it is your responsibility to ask me.

In May 2013 a faculty committee shared the results of an academic integrity survey that was completed by more than 700 DePauw students. Based on the results, the committee recommended that faculty members continue discussing academic integrity in their classes and further recommended that faculty members develop "exam practices and assignment procedures (e.g., clearly defining group work) that make cheating more difficult." Including a clear statement of your expectation on your course syllabi, as well as on individual assignments and exams, is a great starting point. This may be a good time to update statements to include the latest technology. For example, if you prohibit the use of cell phones during an exam you may also want to prohibit the use of smart watches.

Several faculty members have pointed out that resource sharing web sites such as Course Hero (www.coursehero.com/study-materials/) are becoming more popular with our students. You should be aware of these sites as you consider your academic integrity policies and assignment design.

This is also a [student-facing academic integrity resource page](#) that you may want to share with your students, especially first-year students. This short page is designed to help students learn about academic integrity and contains links to several resources about quoting, paraphrasing and summarizing appropriately. Comments about this resource, including suggestions for improving it, are most welcome.

Questions about Academic Integrity should be addressed to Scott Spiegelberg.

3. Timely Feedback

Available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018119>

This policy discusses the importance of providing timely feedback to students. This policy is important both because your feedback is paramount to student growth, and also because it ensures that in cases of academic dishonesty, students are not accused in a second assignment before they have had time to learn from feedback on a first assignment. Keep this policy in mind as you consider due dates for various assignments.

4. Class Attendance Policy (Including medical and personal issues)

Available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018113>

Create your attendance policies with the understanding that all students on campus will be required to stay in their rooms if they are symptomatic or test positive for the coronavirus. You should be prepared for any of your students to attend class or submit required work remotely, and to be compassionate for students who are sick or coping with sick family members. Your attendance policies should discourage students from trying to attend class while sick, and should provide flexibility for students who may need time away from even remote attendance.

Religious Holy Days

DePauw University embraces the religious diversity of its students, faculty, and staff. Accordingly, faculty members are expected to excuse students from class and be flexible with respect to deadlines for required coursework in order to enable students to observe religious holy days. Faculty are also expected to make it possible for students observing holy days to make up any work they miss, provided arrangements are made in advance. Students are expected to notify their instructors of their intent to observe holy days at least one week in advance of these days. For the sake of this policy, “holy days” are defined as periods of time in which either:

a) activities required by normal class participation are prohibited by a religious tradition, or

b) a special worship obligation is required by a religious tradition.

Students with questions or concerns about this policy should contact the Office of Academic Affairs.

Classes may not be conducted during study days or the final examination period.

Any classes held after November 20 must be conducted remotely, as the campus will depopulate on November 21.

Whenever possible, out of class requirements (including exams) should be specified in the syllabus and/or the schedule of classes. Faculty members should provide options, or alternative times, for students who have other obligations scheduled at the same time.

The faculty adopted a policy that classes must be conducted as listed in the schedule of classes on the days just before the start of scheduled vacations and just after the end of scheduled vacations. Students should not be excused from class attendance or from taking examinations at the announced times to accommodate vacation travel schedules. It is the responsibility of students and their families to make travel arrangements accordingly (this is published each year in the Student Handbook).

5. Conflict between Class Attendance and Extra-Curricular Activities

Available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018114>

Faculty members are encouraged, but not required, to accommodate students who have conflicts between approved activities of University organizations (these include such things as debate tournaments and intercollegiate athletics, among others) and scheduled classes. Please see the policy for details.

6. Classroom Atmosphere Policy

Available at: www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018116

The policy describes expectations about general classroom atmosphere. It also provides information about specific situations, such as dealing with electronic distraction and the steps a faculty member would take in the unusual case that a student is disrupting a class.

7. Faculty Absence Policy

Available at: www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018175

This policy provides information about situations in which faculty members need to miss class sessions, for example due to illness or professional travel.

If you will be away during the term, include the dates in the syllabus (if known now). Consider having a colleague give a guest presentation, having assignments for students to work on in your absence and/or scheduling optional make-up class time after your return. Notify your department chair if you will miss classes. Notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs if you will be absent for a total equivalent to more than one week of class time in one or more courses.

You should have a plan in place if you contract COVID-19. Have a colleague identified who can provide continuation of learning while you are incapacitated, and have the relevant course information accessible to that colleague or to the department/program chair or administrative assistant.

8. Exam Proctoring Policy

Available at: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/academic/#Toc459018223>

This policy outlines the expectation that in-class exams should be proctored by faculty members rather than by department secretaries or staff members. Exceptions are provided for student athletes and for students with ADA accommodations (see below).

9. ADA Accommodations

Please watch for an email from "Student Accessibility Services" or Meggan Johnston for a sample ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) statement to include on your syllabi.

Providing students with a written accommodation statement is an essential part of maintaining institutional compliance with the ADA. An example statement from a recent semester looks like:

It is the policy and practice of DePauw University to provide reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Written notification from Student Accessibility Services is required. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for

this course, please contact Student Accessibility Services. Allow one-week advance notice to ensure enough time for reasonable accommodations to be made. Otherwise, it is not guaranteed that the accommodation can be provided on a timely basis. Accommodations are not retroactive. Students who have questions about Student Accessibility Services or who have, or think they may have, a disability (psychiatric, attentional, learning, vision, hearing, physical, medical, etc.) are invited to contact Student Accessibility Services for a confidential discussion in Union Building Suite 200 or by phone at 658-6267.

Please also consider appending a personal statement that invites the student to speak to you privately and in a confidential manner to discuss course requirements and their need for accommodations.

The syllabus statement is an essential part of our compliance with ADA law. More importantly it normalizes the accommodation process by making it just like any other part of the course. As such, students are more likely to feel comfortable approaching you about their disability and need for accommodation. This statement is intended for all students in the course. You will receive written notification for individual students with documented disabilities who require reasonable accommodation.

Questions about academic accommodations should be directed to by email to StudentAccessibilityServices@depauw.edu. Depending on the nature of the question, Megan Johnston, Director of Student Accessibility Services or Shelle Malayer will reply.

C. Enrollment Adjustments.

1. Students may drop or add classes to their schedules during the first six class days using the on-line registration system. Faculty members must give permission for new enrollments which exceed the posted class size limit for the class. Special electronic codes (SPACs) are available for each faculty member from the Special Permission Access Code link on e-services. You may give these codes to students you approve above the class limit. Faculty can also track SPACs they've issued through a second menu item on e-services. You may also choose to wait list one or more of your courses. Once a course is wait-listed, a student may not add the course without a SPAC, even if there is an opening. ([Academic Calendar](#))
2. The last day students may withdraw from a full-credit course is Friday, November 6. For those students who withdraw after the first six days and by November 6, the course is still listed on their transcript with a W. It would be best if you provide significant graded feedback before this date (via exams, papers, or other assignments). Students considering withdrawal from the course then have these measures of their performance before they must make their decisions about withdrawing. Students must get your signature on a withdrawal form they obtain from the registrar's office so that you will know of their decision. The deadline is strictly enforced unless the student arranges for an extension before the deadline with the Registrar's staff. (See # 11, Petitions, below.) Consider putting the November 6 date on your syllabi.

D. Breaks.

1. Thanksgiving Break is November 21-29.
2. Classes and exams will be remote after Thanksgiving Break.
3. Classes on the days before and after breaks may not be cancelled. Faculty rules require that faculty members must meet their classes on the days before the start of breaks and immediately following breaks. Students have been advised to make their travel plans so that they can attend all of their scheduled classes.

E. Exams/Feedback.

1. Progress Reports (midterm grades) are due by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, October 12. These reports may be submitted on the web to the Registrar's office. They are required for students who are on warning or probation for Satisfactory Academic Progress. The names of students for whom midterms are required will be highlighted on the midterm grade sheet in e-services. Faculty members should also submit midterm grades for any other students earning a C- or lower. Be sure to have enough graded feedback before October 12 (tests, quizzes, papers, presentations) so that you can provide accurate information to students on their levels of mastery in the course. After classes begin you will receive instructions about submitting "alerts" if you have concerns about a student's attendance or work prior to midterms. Submitting alerts as early as possible can help us to assist students.
2. If possible, include your schedule for assignments, exams and feedback in your syllabus so that students know when to expect these activities. Try to assign papers early in the semester so that students spread their preparatory work over the semester and so that you can check their intermediate work and provide feedback.
3. If you plan to give a final exam, refer to the final examination schedule (available on the [Academic Calendar](#) page). Include the final exam date and time for your course in the syllabus, and on the first day of class inform students that you expect them to be there for the exam. See section above entitled "Examinations in Courses" for additional information about guidelines for exams and final papers and projects.
4. Final Grades are due by **10:00 a.m., Thursday, December 16**. Be sure to set deadlines for student work and plan your grading schedule so that you can meet that deadline for submitting your grades.

F. How may students reach you?

1. You should list your office address, e-mail address and phone number on the syllabus.
2. Office hours should be posted; times should be varied so you are accessible when students are not in class. It is helpful to let students know how and when to reach you. Please also share this information with your department secretary. (Do you have a schedule on your door for students to sign up for appointments or leave messages? Is there a secretary who will know your schedule? Is it OK for students to call you at home?) Give students some idea of how much advance notice you need, for example: Evening e-mail is not sufficient notification that the student cannot give a presentation at 8:00 a.m. the next day.

G. Providing and sharing information electronically to students.

You are encouraged to place your syllabus and other assignments on the Moodle site for the course (<https://moodle.depauw.edu/login/index.php>). Staff members in the [Faculty Instructional Technology Support \(FITS\)](#) program can provide you with additional support, such as setting up an electronic bulletin board/discussion group, a Moodle course web site or a shared class network folder. The staff in FITS (765-658-4389) will be happy to talk to you about other technology resources and services you can use in your courses. Class lists are available in the Class Information section of your [faculty e-services](#), where there is also a utility for sending email to each member of the class.

H. Confidentiality.

Federal law places requirements on all of us with regard to privacy of students' academic information. Do not use names, student ID numbers, or social security numbers when you post test or other grade information. Don't put graded papers outside your office unless they are in individual envelopes to protect privacy. Be sure that there is adequate privacy when you talk with students and be sure to keep student confidences when talking with other faculty members, students and friends.

I. Petitions for course adjustments.

The Petitions Committee is very reluctant to grant permission for students to withdraw after the deadline in the eighth week. Similarly, they are reluctant to allow a student to enter a class after six class days have passed. There may be a late fee if a petition is granted to adjust a student's schedule after the deadline.

J. Library services.

Click here for a [welcome message](#) from the library. [Tiffany Hebb](#), Coordinator of Instruction Services (765-658-4409), will be happy to work with you to plan instruction and orientation sessions for your students on using the library facilities and electronic services. From past experience, we find that these sessions are most effective when they are linked to particular course assignments and projects. If you plan to assign library-based projects, please discuss these assignments with the reference librarians to better prepare them to assist your students. The reference librarians can also help you by suggesting specific resources that support your assignments. [Joyce Dixon-Fyle](#), Coordinator of Collection Development (765-658-4361), will work with you to acquire any library materials you may need for your classes. You can also put print and electronic media resources on reserve at any of the three libraries. Contact the [Media and User Services Team](#) (765-658-4790) for your instructional media equipment needs.

Note that Roy O. West will be closed for the academic year, and none of the libraries will be doing physical reserves during the pandemic.