

**DePauw University**  
**Tips for Planning Course Syllabi and Other Course Information**

A. The Course Plan.

State the course's learning objectives and indicate what teaching/learning strategies will be used to achieve them. Make sure the objectives mesh with the objectives of the department and the university, especially if you are teaching a General Education course (PPD, GL, W, Q, S, or one of the liberal arts foundation courses). Provide any other information that will help students understand how the course will be conducted and what will be expected of them, including how you will assess their progress towards the learning objectives (what performance indicators you will use).

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, 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 Scott Spiegelberg, Dean of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Policies, if you have questions about these policies as they apply to your syllabi. You can reach Scott at [DeanAcademicPrograms@depauw.edu](mailto:DeanAcademicPrograms@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 be aware of 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 should be provided at least 14 calendar days prior to the due date." For this coming semester, this means that you should provide instructions for final paper or project assignments by November 22, and no hour examinations may be given between November 29 and December 6.

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.

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 (please customize to make it specific to your discipline, course, and pedagogy):

*I take academic integrity very seriously and fully expect each of you to do the same. In particular, you must uphold the academic integrity policy found in the Student Handbook ( [www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/](http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/) ) which means you must refrain from all forms of dishonest academic behavior (e.g., cheating, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, double-submissions). Lapses of academic integrity will be dealt with according to the policies set forth in the student handbook. If you are not sure what constitutes dishonest academic activities, please make sure to discuss any questions you may have with 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 websites such as Course Hero ( [www.coursehero.com/study-materials/](http://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 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.

The Writing Center has a [handout on plagiarism](#) that you can point your students to, and this [Library Guide](#) has instructions for specific citation styles.

## **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, and ability to drop a student from a course due to poor attendance)**

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

Faculty members have broad discretion to set attendance policies for their courses with only a few exceptions such as those noted below. Because of this, attendance policies vary from course to course, which makes it important to indicate your policy, including any penalties, very clearly on your syllabus. The limitations on the broad discretion granted to faculty members are as follows:

- 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.
- Classes may not be conducted during study days or the final examination period.
- 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).
  - Fall break is October 12-20. No classes meet Monday-Friday during those days.

- Thanksgiving Break is November 27-December 1. No classes meet Wednesday-Friday during those days. Tuesday evening classes do meet on November 27.
- Absences for medical reasons: Make sure you specify how students should notify you of medical reasons that prevent the timely completion of papers, exams, or other course projects.

### **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](http://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](http://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.

### **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**

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 [StudentDisabilityServices@depauw.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@depauw.edu). Depending on the nature of the question, Meggan 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, October 25. For those students who withdraw after the first six days and by October 25, 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 October 25 date on your syllabi.

### D. Exams/Feedback.

1. Progress Reports (midterm grades) are due by 10:00 a.m. on Monday, October 7. 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 7 (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 provide effective assistance 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. Final Grades are due by **10:00 a.m., Thursday, December 19**. Be sure to set deadlines for student work and plan your grading schedule so that you can meet that deadline for submitting your grades.

E. How can students reach you?

1. You should list your office address, email 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.
3. Consider requiring students to come to at least one office hour early in the semester. Studies have shown that students are more likely to ask for extra help after they have visited a professor's office the first time.

F. 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 tool for sending email to every member of the class.

G. 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 publicly 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. If you wish to use student work as a teaching example in another class, first get the student's permission and take steps to protect the student's identity.

#### H. 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.

#### I. 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. The Acquisitions staff, 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.