Instructions and Guidelines for Course Syllabi

Faculty of Science

Last Updated: December 2022

*WITH ADDITIONS FOR WINTER 2023 BASED ON THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE CONTINUITY PLAN

As per university regulations, a course syllabus shall be made known to students before the end of the *first* week of lectures in any semester or session either in class in paper form and/or electronically, preferably using the learning management system (Brightspace). It is recommended that students be referred to the course syllabus frequently, for communicating dates of assessments, highlighting how a lesson connects to course outcomes, reiterating important instructions, providing reminders regarding assessment policies, or directing students to supports.

Instructors are required to file a copy of their syllabus with the appropriate unit no later than the end of the first week of classes.

For per course instructors the course syllabus shall be provided to the department head by the end of the *second* week of lectures in any semester or session.

For more information on instructor duties and responsibilities, please refer to the:

- General Academic Regulations (Undergraduate), Undergraduate Calendar
  (https://www.mun.ca/regoff/calendar/sectionNo=REGS-0601)
  All instructors should read through section 6.7, Evaluation of Student Work in the above link
- Duties and Responsibilities of Faculty Members, MUNFA collective agreement
  (http://munfa.ca/agreements-cat/current-collective-agreements/)
- Duties and Responsibilities, LUMUN collective agreement
  (https://www.mun.ca/hr/myhr/my-employment/collective-agreements/)

Instructors using the Brightspace Course Set-up Kit also have access to a course syllabus template within the kit. Instructions for the kit, including CITL supports for its use, may be found here:
https://blog.citl.mun.ca/technologyresources/course-set-up-kit/brightspace-course-setup-kit/

Sample statements and other optional elements for consideration can be found at https://blog.citl.mun.ca/instructionalresources/syllabus/

Developed by Amy M. Todd, CITL, and edited by the DoS office. Questions can be directed to adsu@mun.ca

Required and Recommended Information to Include in the Course Syllabus

Instructor Information
Provide students with your name, office location, contact information, availability, and any expectations around interactions.

Required
- Information about your availability for consultation (in-person and, where appropriate, by other means of communication) outside of class.

Recommended
- Office hours as prescribed by MUNFA and LUMUN collective agreements (i.e., not less than 2 hours per course per week, to a maximum of 5 hours per week).
- A statement regarding response times for inquiries. *e.g., Every effort will be made to respond to emails within 24h, with the exceptions of evenings, weekends and holidays.*

Course Information
Along with the standard course information (course name and number), you may highlight the focus of your course, its purpose or relevance, questions that are addressed by your course, and/or indicate where your course fits within the context of the program.

Required
- Any required prerequisites or co-requisites.

Recommended
- Course description. Available from the University Calendar, Faculty of Science, Section 12.
- Mode of delivery, as coded in Banner (In-person, Independent Study, Flexible, Blended, Remote, Online). *Flexible, Blended, or Remote courses must have been pre-approved by the Department Head and Dean of Science.*
- Course format. *e.g., team taught, lecture based, laboratories, tutorials, field work.*
- Course expectations such as classroom etiquette, importance of attendance, use of formative/ungraded evaluations during class, and/or professional conduct statement.
- Statement of fair warning. Outline content that may be personally offensive or otherwise troubling. Include instructions for students seeking alternate accommodation.

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*FOR WINTER 2023: According to the Faculty of Science Continuity Plan, it is important for course syllabi to clearly indicate the following:
- Method of Instructional Continuity should courses be disrupted due to COVID-19 or other causes (e.g. courses will transition to remote delivery, some individual topics/labs may be cancelled, etc.)
- A statement specifying how students will be notified of course cancellations

Example: "*In the case of a class disruption or cancellation, and in the case of revisions to evaluation methods, the instructor or the Head of the department will notify all students registered in the course via the course shell in Brightspace. Any necessary revisions to the evaluation methods will be made in consultation with the students registered in this course. If a student demonstrates that they would be disadvantaged by the change, then, as per 6.7.4 of the University Calendar, accommodations will be made.*

See CITL's COVID-19 statements: https://blog.citl.mun.ca/instructionalresources/syllabus-covid-19/

Learning Goals
Clearly outline what you want students to be able to demonstrate at the end of your course. These broader course goals do not necessarily result in measurable behaviour, but they will provide students with a clear purpose to focus studies on, and provide direction for the specific learning outcomes and assessment strategies within the course.

Recommended
- Big ideas, essential understandings, theories or approaches students will learn.
- Equations, strategies and core knowledge students will apply.
- Key skills students will develop (*e.g., specific laboratory skills, critical thinking*).
- Threshold concepts or attitudes students will develop (*e.g., evolutionary thinking, uncertainty in measurements, the Nature of Science, structure and function relationships*).

Required Text and Resources

List any textbooks, articles, books, media or other resources that students should consult. Be clear about which resources are required in the course and why, which are optional, and where these resources may be accessed. You may also wish to include a statement regarding how the text and resources will be used and how students should approach them.

Required
- Required textbooks, materials or other resources that must be purchased by students.

Recommended
- Any additional resources that students should access (*e.g., Brightspace, online programs and tools, free classroom response systems, library reserves, additional readings*).

Method of Evaluation
Clearly outline how students will be evaluated in your course. This includes how assignments are counted, participation expectations, how overall grades are calculated, and submission policies (*e.g., how late submissions or missed assessments will be handled*).

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*FOR WINTER 2023: According to the Faculty of Science Continuity Plan, it is important for course syllabi to clearly indicate the following:
- How evaluation methods will be modified due to absenteeism by individual students or course cancellations (including for group projects).

See example syllabus statement in the textbox on p. 2.

See CITL's recommended statements for course assessments:
https://blog.citl.mun.ca/instructionalresources/syllabus-covid-19/

Required
- The allocation of marks for all parts of the evaluation including assignments, laboratory projects, presentations, tests, mid-term examinations, and/or final examinations.
- Wherever possible, an explanation of the alternate evaluation which will be offered to students who are unable to complete a part of the evaluation due to acceptable cause, as described under Exemptions from Parts of the Evaluation (University Regulation 6.7.5).
- With the exception of final examinations, and in accordance with Scheduling of Parts of the Evaluation (University Regulation 6.7.3), the probable dates of all in-class parts of the evaluation, and the probable dates on which all take-home parts of the evaluation are due.

As per University Regulations, evaluations must abide the following:
- Students must receive **20% of course grade** by final drop date (6.7.6.1) of **MARCH 2, 2023**
- Exemptions due to illness must be in keeping with University Regulations, Exemptions from Parts of the Evaluation (6.7.5)
- Only certain evaluations are permitted in last two weeks of lectures (6.7.3.4)
- Attendance regulations may not be included without Senate approval (6.6.1)
- The return of graded work and notification of grades must be in keeping with the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (6.7.2.5)

Recommended
- Information regarding any final examinations. This may include the format, cumulative nature of the exam, and/or final exam policies. Policies can be indicated by a simple reference to University Regulations 6.8, or specific aspects of the policy may be highlighted for students.
- Information regarding any supplementary exams in the Departments of Biochemistry, Computer Science, and Mathematics & Statistics. This must abide by the Supplementary Examinations regulations (Faculty of Science, 8.1).

Additional Policies
Students should be made aware of other policies relating to the course, as well as applicable university wide policies.

Required
- A statement of Memorial University of Newfoundland's commitment to accommodation of students with disabilities (see also https://www.mun.ca/student/faculty-and-staff-resources/accessible-education/syllabus-statement-for-instructors/).
  e.g., Memorial University of Newfoundland is committed to fostering equitable and accessible learning environments for all students. Accommodations for students with disabilities are provided in accordance with Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy (www.mun.ca/policy/site/policy.php?id=239) and its related procedures. Students who feel that they may require formal academic accommodations to address barriers or challenges they are experiencing related to their learning are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (the Blundon Centre) at the earliest opportunity to ensure any required academic accommodations are provided in a timely manner. You can contact Accessibility Services (Blundon Centre) by emailing blundon@mun.ca.
- A statement regarding academic integrity, including a reference to the entry on Academic Misconduct (University Regulation 6.12).

e.g., Students are expected to adhere to those principles which constitute proper academic conduct. A student has the responsibility to know which actions, as described under Academic Offences in the University Regulations, could be construed as dishonest or improper. Students found guilty of an academic offence may be subject to a number of penalties commensurate with the offence including reprimand, reduction of grade, probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. For more information regarding this policy, students should refer to the University Regulations for Academic Misconduct (Section 6.12) in the University Calendar.

Instructors may also refer students to the Memorial University Library's Academic Integrity webpage, specifically the "Fast facts about academic misconduct", which provides information on writing online tests and exams, and using "homework help" sites:
https://www.library.mun.ca/researchtools/guides/integrity/

Recommended
- A statement regarding any restrictions around the use of visual and/or audio recording in the classroom, excluding any provisions made for students with special needs.
- A statement regarding any restrictions or classroom etiquette around the use of personal electronic devices or programs during class (*e.g.,* social media, phones, laptops, tablets), excluding any provisions made for students with special needs.
- In line with the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Act, a statement regarding student equity and the provision of a safe learning environment regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, social origin, religious creed, religion, age, disability, disfigurement, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, source of income or political opinion.
- Memorial University's Land Acknowledgement (may be obtained from the Office of Indigenous Affairs, https://www.mun.ca/indigenous/). If used in syllabus, it is also recommended to deliver the acknowledgement verbally during the first synchronous or face-to-face class.

Additional Supports
Memorial University offers a broad range of supports that may not be known to your students. Instructors are encouraged to direct students to academic supports as well as those listed at www.mun.ca/student/ and https://munsu.ca/resource-centres/

Recommended
- A list, statement, or link outlining available academic supports including, but not limited to: *Memorial University Libraries, The Commons (QEII Library), The Glenn Roy Blundon Centre, The Writing Centre, Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning Support Centre, Information Technology Services, Academic Advising, and specific departmental help centres.*
- A list, statement, or link outlining available student life supports including, but not limited to: *Student Wellness and Counselling Centre, Student Support and Crisis Management, MUN Chaplaincy, Sexual Harassment Office, The Circle: First Nations, Inuit & Métis Students Resource Centre, Disability Information Support Centre, International Students Resource Centre, Sexuality and Gender Advocacy, Student Parent Assistance & Resource Centre, Students Older Than Average, Intersections – A Resource Centre for Marginalized Genders, and specific departmental societies.*

Instructor Feedback

Instructors may wish to include a statement regarding the use of any feedback mechanisms used in the course, such as instructor developed feedback forms, prior-learning assessments, learning outcomes questionnaires, or the Course Evaluation Questionnaire.

Recommended
- A brief statement regarding the timing of feedback, how feedback is used, and the value of feedback in improving the course for current and/or future students.

Tentative Course Schedule

A tentative schedule helps to ensure course expectations are clear, and aids students in time management during their studies.

Recommended
- A tentative timeline (*e.g.,* a table) of topics broken down by week, including any tutorials, online meetings, assignments, tests, or assigned readings.
- An indication of alignment with any required resources (*e.g.,* what sections of the text correspond with scheduled topics or lectures).
- A statement regarding the procedure for lecture or laboratory cancellations.
- An intellectual property statement regarding lecture and course material (*e.g.,* permissions required for the reproduction of material).