Course Syllabus Template

Instructions

What

We are providing you with a template syllabus for JHU Whiting School courses. It is provided in three formats:

- MS Word
- HTML (you’ll need both the .html and the logo.png files)
- LATEX (you’ll need both the .tex and the logo.pdf files)

Faculty are strongly encouraged to use this template when preparing the syllabus for their courses.

Most faculty will use the wse-syllabus-template.* documents, except as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Please use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemical &amp; Biomolecular Engineering</td>
<td>chembe-syllabus-template.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>cs-syllabus-template.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Science &amp; Engineering</td>
<td>mse-syllabus-template.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These specific versions reflect those departments’ modified ABET outcomes.

The syllabus templates can be found online here:

http://engineering.jhu.edu/about/faculty-staff-resources/

Why

First, there is certain key information that students ought to be provided at the start of the semester. This template will ensure that they have that information. For example, many faculty may be unaware that we should be providing information about disability services on our syllabi; this template gives you wording to fulfill that. Further, a clear statement on ethics will help to avoid problems down the road. Different faculty members have
different expectations on how students collaborate; laying out those expectations clearly is important.

Second, nationally—and at JHU—there is a growing emphasis on student learning outcomes. Students should be given (and regulators expect us to provide) information about the objectives of your course and the expectations of what they will learn.

Third, a consistent format across the school not only is helpful to students, but will be valuable during accreditation (for ABET and for Middle States). We’ve set up this template to be sure that the information accreditors want to see is present and easy to find.

**Do I have to follow this format exactly?**

No. Indeed some departments use a variation on the template because their ABET Outcomes are different (as in Computer Science) or arranged differently.

There may be parts of this that simply do not apply to your course. For example, an advanced graduate research course might require rather different information and various pieces of the template might not apply.

**I already have my own template. Can’t I just use that?**

Yes, but we really hope you will change to this format. This will be helpful for the sake of consistency and accreditation. Be sure your version includes the important information as laid out here.

Also: The syllabus tool in Blackboard is woefully inadequate. Don’t bother using it.

**OK. What do I do?**

Copy the template file you prefer (Word, HTML, or \LaTeX) and go through editing. Here’s a checklist:

- **Header**: The heading at the top of the first page needs lots of update: department, course number, course title, semester/year, number of credits, and distribution codes.

- **Description**: Copy/paste from the catalogue description.

- **Prerequisites**: Include formal (mandatory) prerequisites and add comments (e.g., “familiarity with a programming language”).

- **Instructor**: I miss Rob Roy! This needs revision and include all co-instructors.

- **Teaching Assistant(s)**: Edit or delete if there are no TAs.
• Meetings: Edit and include location(s) if known. If locations are not yet posted, ok to write “Location TBD, check ISIS”.

• Textbook(s): Provide info here and distinguish between recommended and required. If you are putting materials on reserve, you can list those here.

• Online resources: If you are using Blackboard (recommended) or some other website for communicating with students, explicitly mention it here (with URL if not Blackboard).

• Course objectives: These are different from ABET outcomes. It’s a short list of key skills/concepts that students will be learning in this course. It adds a bit to the course description.

• Course topics: This is a (typically chronological) list of topics that will be covered.

• Course expectations and grading: Explain what work students will be expected to do and how they will be graded.

• Key dates: Some instructors know well in advance exactly when tests will be given and projects/papers will be due. List them here (or refer to Blackboard/website).

• Assignments and readings: This can be here or online. For example, if there are weekly problem sets, the choice of problems you assign might be decided later. In which case, it makes more sense to direct students to an online resource.

• Ethics: Keep the introduction the same, but edit the “In addition. . .” paragraph. Be clear with students what your rules are for collaboration. Can they work on homework together?

• Students with disabilities: Leave this as is.

• ABET Outcomes: Simply delete from this list outcomes that don’t apply and keep the ones that do.

Thank you!

Use of this template will help students (most important) and all of us at accreditation time. The JHU University Committee on Learning Assessment will also be appreciative!

Please send comments and requests to Ed Scheinerman ers@jhu.edu.