BSPH Syllabus Guidance

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Introduction to the BSPH Syllabus

Your syllabus is a vital document that outlines essential information students need to navigate and succeed in your course. A well-designed syllabus establishes clear communication between you and your students and provides information and resources that promote active, purposeful, and effective learning. Often, the syllabus gives students a first impression of what to expect from the upcoming learning environment. The syllabus is often thought of as a contract, setting the class climate, identifying expectations, and providing transparency about the course logistics.

A Syllabus for All Learners

A learner-centered syllabus shifts the focus from merely outlining course content to providing the information and tools that promote learning and intellectual development. In this approach, the syllabus emphasizes the active roles and responsibilities of both the instructor and the students, fosters a sense of community and accountability, and clearly documents your expectations and the rationale behind them. Learner-centered syllabus design transforms your syllabus into a learning tool that supports and enhances the educational experience, offering your students a roadmap to success and empowering them to understand their journey and thrive in your course.

To create a learner-centered syllabus, consider where you can include information and guidance about the learning community, student and instructor roles and responsibilities, and evaluation and assessment. Focus on providing details that support learning and academic growth.

Community

- Does your syllabus clearly indicate how students can reach you and each other?
- What activities or resources connect students to the broader research community?

Roles and responsibilities

- How can you clarify the responsibilities you and your students will have in achieving course goals?
- What resources do you offer to empower students in managing their own learning?

Evaluation and assessment

- In what ways can students obtain feedback?
- How can students assess their progress?

Creating a learner-centered syllabus is an ideal opportunity to support elements of universal design for learning (UDL) for all incoming learners, demonstrating multiple paths for learning and achievement within the course.

References

Altman, H. B., & Cashin, W. E. (1992). *Writing a syllabus*. IDEA Paper No. 27. Kansas State University Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development in Higher Education. Retrieved July 9, 2024, from *https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573642*

O'Brien, J. G., Millis, B. J., Cohen, M. W., & Diamond, R. M. (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach* (2nd ed.). Wiley.

Richmond, A. S. (2016). *Constructing a learner-centered syllabus: One professor's journey*. IDEA Paper #60. IDEA Center, Inc. Retrieved July 9, 2024, from *https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED573642*

About the CoursePlus Syllabus Tool

Your CoursePlus (CP) syllabus is linked from the course directory and is always publicly available. It consists of three pages:

1. **The Overview page** contains the goals, expectations, and policies of your course. It is organized by sections, many of which can be customized and reordered using the CP Syllabus Builder tool. With the "Print to PDF" option, you can create a single document that includes the overview, schedule, and activity objectives (as entered using the Objectives Page Builder sections).
2. **The Schedule page** mirrors the Content page, which includes class sessions, lectures, and assignment schedules and displays the main structure of the course pacing.
3. **The Faculty page** provides a brief overview of faculty, guest speakers, and teaching assistants, with options to include affiliations, credentials, biographies, and images. It can be customized by editing the Manage Faculty and Faculty Groups tool.

Syllabus Components

At a minimum, every syllabus contains the following default sections, populated from the BSPH course system database:

- Contact information
- Course description
- Course learning objectives
- Methods of assessment
- Intended audience
- Prerequisites
- Why take this course (this section will be hidden when left empty)
- Additionally, the following schoolwide policies are included:
  - Academic Ethics and Student Conduct Code
  - Student Health and Well-Being
  - Students with Disabilities—Accommodations and Accessibility

Essential Sections to Add Manually

When applicable to the course, the following components must be included:

- Required texts and course readings
- Use of Turnitin
- Attendance policy or LiveTalk requirements

Recommended Sections to Add Manually

We strongly encourage you to include the following components, many of which have example texts in corresponding, prebuilt CoursePlus syllabus sections:

- Contact information (for additional contacts beyond the BSPH system, i.e., TAs)
- Methods of assessment details
- Course competencies (may be required for accreditation purposes)
- Office hours
- Communication
- Course policies and expectations
- Grading policy
- Late submission/make-up policy
- Use of artificial intelligence software
- Use of technologies beyond CoursePlus
- Group work
- Service learning

Sample Syllabus

Contact Information
Faculty
[populated from the BSPH system]

Teaching Assistants
Ronit Quinn(xx@jhu.edu)

Course Description
[populated from the BSPH system]

Course Learning Objectives
[populated from the BSPH system]

Course Schedule
Please see the course schedule for a full list of dates and items for this course.

Intended Audience

Students in Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Global Disease Epidemiology & Control, and in the Infectious Disease Concentration of the MPH program who are interested in further developing an understanding of the concepts and methods used in infectious disease epidemiology.

Why Take This Course

This course offers a rigorous introduction to infectious disease epidemiology, combining foundational methods with detailed case studies of critical disease syndromes. You will master key techniques including outbreak investigations, disease surveillance, and molecular epidemiology, while examining high-impact diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and emerging infections. Upon completion, you will be well-versed in the epidemiological characteristics of major infectious diseases, their transmission dynamics, and the implications for detection, diagnosis, and public health policies. This course is designed to equip you with the knowledge to effectively contribute to the prevention and control of infectious diseases.

> Understanding the course's relevance and benefits motivates students and helps them see how it aligns with their personal and professional objectives. This clarity enhances engagement and commitment, leading to a more successful learning experience.

Communication

To help you get the support you need:
- **Email the Teaching Team:** Reach out via email for personal matters, such as questions about your grades, special accommodations, or anything that requires private discussion.
- **Use the Discussion Forum:** Post general questions about course content, assignments, or procedures in the discussion forum so everyone can learn from the answers.

A clear communication policy helps streamline interactions, ensures timely responses, and reduces misunderstandings. It guides students on the most effective ways to get support and helps maintain an organized and efficient communication process.

Response Time: We aim to respond within 24 hours on weekdays. For urgent concerns, please mark your email as "Urgent" in the subject line and use the CoursePlus email tool so your email is clearly identified. We're here to support your learning journey!

Adding specifics about response time helps manage student expectations and promotes transparency, which reduces anxiety and encourages timely communication, fostering a more supportive learning environment..

Technical Difficulties: If you are having trouble with CoursePlus, email CTL Help: *ctlhelp@jhu.edu* or click on the HELP tab in the course site.

Office Hours

If you have questions about the materials and concepts, we'd love to hear from you!
- If you have a general question from which everyone could benefit, please submit your questions via the discussion board.
- If you need additional support, please come to office hours. Office hours are held weekly from 12:05–1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Room W2033.

Holding office hours ensure students know when and how to seek help, promoting better communication and support. This helps students get timely assistance and fosters a more accessible and responsive learning environment.

Methods of Assessment
[populated from the BSPH system

Methods of Assessment Details

- **Lab Assignments (60%)**
  - Students will complete an on-site or remote lab with their assigned groups weekly.
  - After each lab, students will submit a written 1–2-page individual assignment, reflecting the individual student's analysis and interpretation of the group's work.
  - Please review the individual lab assignments on the course schedule for due dates.
- **Quizzes (10%)**
  - All quizzes will be asynchronous and open note. However, each student must work independently and may not consult with other students during the quiz. Please see the schedule for additional details and due dates.
  - Quiz 1 (5%): This quiz will have 10–15 multiple-choice questions on the material from Weeks 1–4 of the course.
  - Quiz 2 (5%): This quiz will have 10–15 multiple-choice questions on the material from Weeks 5–8 of the course.
- **Participation (5%)**
  - Participation is an important part of this course, and each student's participation (online and onsite) will be assessed based on their involvement in every class session and attendance.
- **Final Exam (25%)**
  - The final exam will be synchronous, open-book, and open-note and consist of multiple-choice questions, short answers, and one essay question.
  - The exam will be held from **3:30–4:50 on Thursday, March 14**.
  - If you have a foreseeable conflict with this time, please contact the faculty at least two weeks in advance, and reasonable accommodation will be arranged. After this point, students claiming a conflict with the exam time will be asked to show documentation (e.g., doctor's note) of an unforeseeable conflict.

> Providing opportunities like draft submissions or quizzes, along with clear guidelines and rubrics, helps students improve and manage their time effectively. Clarifying assessment details and offering study tips further supports student success by aligning their efforts with learning goals.

Grading Policy

- Students may receive a letter grade or receive a pass/fail grade.
- You will receive your grades within seven days of its submission.
- If you have concerns about a grade, you must reach out to your TA within one week of receiving the grade. The assignment cannot be reviewed after that. Any requests for regrading an assignment will result in a thorough review and may result in a lower grade.

> Clear grading policies help students understand how their work will be assessed, reducing confusion and ensuring transparency. This allows them to focus on meeting expectations and improves their ability to manage their coursework effectively.

Late Submission/Make-up Policy

Please be aware that we have a limit of three days after the due date to turn in assignments. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for every day late (including Saturdays and Sundays). After three days, the assignment will receive a zero grade. If illness or special circumstances impact completing an assignment on time, students must contact the instructor or TA before the due date to discuss options.

> A clear late submission and make-up policy sets expectations and helps students plan accordingly. It also ensures fairness and consistency, allowing students to manage their responsibilities and address any issues that may arise.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Software

Use of artificial intelligence software (including tools such as ChatGPT, Bard, or Microsoft Copilot) to assist in completing assignments is permitted when explicitly stated. However, as with all sources, its use must be accompanied by a proper reference and use of quotation marks (if precise language generated by the software is used). The reference must include the website and specific prompts used to generate the referenced output. See Sheridan Library's resources for _Chicago_, _APA_, _MLA_, and _other styles_.

> In the syllabus, it's crucial to clearly outline expectations for student AI use. This section should: Explain the rationale, align with learning goals, guide proper use, set clear consequences, and offer support.

Academic Ethics and Student Conduct Code
[populated from the BSPH system]

Student Health and Well-Being
[populated from the BSPH system]

Students with Disabilities — Accommodations and Accessibility
[populated from the BSPH system]

Syllabus Checklist

As you work through the checklist and finalize your syllabus, you should build your syllabus sections in the CoursePlus Syllabus Tool.

Lay the Foundation

☐ Information is current for the offering, including course expectations, course description, intended audience, learning objectives, methods of assessments, and methods of assessment details.

☐ The CoursePlus syllabus is the only syllabus available to learners.

☐ Provides current contact information for faculty team and teaching assistants.

☐ Provides appropriate guidelines for successful participation regarding technical requirements for any technologies beyond CoursePlus.

☐ Course materials and information on how to purchase or access them provided.

☐ Key course policies are described.

Set the Tone

☐ Tone is respectful and welcoming.

☐ Flexibility, communication strategies, and help is clearly explained.

☐ Be transparent about grading.

Provide Structure

☐ Course activities, assignments, assessments and deadlines are clearly conveyed.

☐ Course deadlines align with the Academic Calendar.

☐ Overall course sequence and pacing is logical, consistent, and easy to follow.

If you want guidance editing your syllabus, refer to the *CoursePlus Faculty Help Guide*. For further questions regarding the syllabus or course design, we invite you to set up a consultation with an instructional designer by emailing CTLHelp@jhu.edu or reaching out directly to the *instructional design team*.