

Course Syllabus Guidelines

Approved by the Chairs of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty on July 13, 2021

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Introduction

A clear, complete syllabus is essential for any course taught at MICA. It serves as the fundamental instrument of communication and accountability between faculty member(s) and students, describing the content of the course, how it will be taught, and how students will be evaluated. Syllabi also make clear MICA policy and legal obligations to establish the expected protocols and agreements within our learning communities.

These Course Syllabus Guidelines were created to assist you in drafting clear and complete syllabi that make pertinent information equitably available to students within individual courses and across the curriculum.

Expectations

Organization: The syllabus should be well-organized, easy to navigate, and convey to students that they should refer to it frequently in order to keep up with course activities. To ensure accessibility, faculty are encouraged to use minimum 12-point fonts on uncluttered pages with ample white space. Also, since screen readers recognize the hierarchy of built-in headings, faculty should use existing heading font features in Canvas, Word, PowerPoint, etc..

Tone: The syllabus should set a positive, respectful, and inclusive tone that communicates high expectations for student learning along with strategies that students should use in order to do well and achieve the course learning outcomes.

Course Modality: Courses should adhere to the definitions and expectations for their particular instructional modality as set forth in [MICA's Course Modality Definitions/Expectations](#) policy, and those should be reflected in the syllabus.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs): CLOs may come from both the department/program and the instructor. These should communicate the specific take-aways from the course that students are meant to apply in future settings. In total there should be 5-8 CLOs for any one course. For more information see the [Writing and Aligning Student Learning Outcomes](#) guide.

Assessment: Assessments and/or graded assignments should be appropriately paced, scaffolded, and clearly articulated on the syllabus. In addition, the syllabus should include adequate opportunities for low-stakes and/or formative assessments to support student achievement of course learning outcomes.

Changes to the Syllabus: Opportunities to enhance the learning experience of students may arise after the semester has begun and the syllabus has been circulated. Any changes to the syllabus after it is initially distributed on the first day of class need to: (a) be communicated clearly in class and in writing--documented along with the syllabus in Canvas--and (b) be cost neutral to the students. In addition, the grading schema cannot be adjusted after the first graded assignment has been submitted.

Distribution to Students: Canvas is MICA's learning management system (LMS). You are required to post your syllabus to your course site in [Canvas](#); this can be accomplished by using the syllabus tool in Canvas or by uploading your syllabus as a file to your course. The Syllabus must be posted no later than the beginning of the first scheduled class session, however, posting it earlier benefits students--especially those in Hybrid and Online courses who need to know how to access the first day of class. If you need assistance posting your syllabus to Canvas, contact EdTech@mica.edu.

Submittal to the College: It is the responsibility of each faculty member to submit digital files of their syllabi to the College a week before the first day of classes of the term in which the courses are being taught.

When saving files use this naming convention: "[LastName_FirstName_CourseTitle](#)" (e.g. Smith_Jane_IntroToPhoto). Share files as a [Word file or PDF](#) in the manner required by your department/program (e.g. send email attachment, upload into Google Form, etc.). Do not share your syllabus as a Google Document. If sent as an email, include in the subject line information about the semester and course (e.g. "Spring 2024 Syllabus Intro to Photo") to the appropriate administrative/program coordinator or office manager for your area.

If you need help developing your syllabus in accordance with these expectations, please contact your department chair/program director and/or the [Center for Teaching Innovation & Exchange](#).

Syllabus Components

All syllabi should contain the following components in this order.

Course Identification:

- Course title as it appears in the Academic Catalog [name and number]
- Semester [Fall/Spring/Summer]
- Year [20XX]
- Meeting day(s), time(s), and location(s)

Instructor(s) & Contact Information:

- Name
- MICA E-mail address
- Phone number [Optional]
- Office location if applicable [[Zoom ID](#) if applicable]
- Office hours (in person and/or virtual) [It's good practice to identify your preferred method of contact/communication and expectations for turnaround/response time]

Course Description:

- Official course description, verbatim, as listed in the Catalog (copy and paste!).
 - Elaborate if the course you are planning departs from the catalog by indicating a course overview describing your own particular vision and expectations as the instructor.
- Course type [Lecture, Seminar, Studio, Practicum, etc.]
- Course requirements [Pre/co-requisites according to the Catalog]
- Credit hours
- [Course modality](#) [Face-to-Face, Hybrid, or Online]

Course Learning Outcomes:

- For degree requirements and/or discipline-specific courses with department/program-determined course learning outcomes (CLO's), list those here (copy and paste!).
- For courses with learning outcomes authored by the instructor, list them here. Remember that these are specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students are expected to demonstrate during the course. Achievement of a CLO should be observable and measurable. Use action words. For additional help in writing CLOs, see: [Writing and Aligning Student Learning Outcomes](#)

Course Structure/Format:

- Briefly describe...
 - Course duration [traditional 15-week semester, a compressed semester of fewer weeks, or a full year]
 - If broken into component parts, then time devoted to each component and whether there are different meeting places or scheduled times for F2F, hybrid, or online engagements.
- Canvas (LMS) organization [attendance, pop quizzes, access to readings, slides, etc.]
 - Supplemental web platforms [Google Apps, Discord, Perusall, Slack, Miro, etc.]

Materials & Costs:

- Required course textbooks [Full name of textbook, author, edition, ISBN, description (optional), and where to acquire/purchase]
 - If a required text is available online or on reserve in the library, indicate where it can be accessed
- Equipment and materials [PPE, Tools, Computer Hardware and Software, etc.]
 - Where to acquire/purchase/access
- **Field trips:** Per the [undergraduate](#) or [graduate](#) field trip policies, if a field trip is required it must be on the syllabus distributed on the first day of class. Field trip or site visit opportunities added after the first day of class (when the syllabus is distributed) must be optional.
 - Travel costs if applicable

Attendance:

- Expand as needed on MICA's [Policy](#): Allowed absences and tardies
 - Explain clearly what constitutes an absence or tardy
 - Explain clearly the consequences [Letter grade drop, incomplete, etc.]
 - Explain clearly the process for getting an absence excused
- Hybrid and Online courses should clearly indicate how you will evaluate student engagement in course activities when those are not in-person or synchronously online.

Assessment/Grading:

- Assessment criteria that is connected to CLOs
- If applicable, assessment criteria for graduate students taking undergraduate courses
- Weight of types of work and assignments, e.g. participation, weekly sketching or reading response, large projects
- Grading scale [[Use MICA standard](#) - alphabetical, numerical, pass/fail]

Schedule:

- List of classes with topics, required readings or viewings, and due dates for major assignments.
 - Hybrid and Online courses should clearly indicate which sessions/portions of sessions students are expected to attend in-person--hybrid courses--or synchronously online-- hybrid and/or online courses--and how you will evaluate student participation/progress toward course learning outcomes during the online instruction/remote learning portions of the course schedule.

Academic Policy & Title IX:

- Reference to MICA's full set of [Academic Policies](#) and procedures, and full statements of the policies pasted into the syllabus or shared in a separate document.

Academic Policy & Title IX

All faculty are required to share with students the following full statements.

Accessibility and Disability Services

MICA makes reasonable accommodations for qualified students with documented disabilities. The Office of Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS) facilitates equal access for students who self-identify as having a disability and provide appropriate documentation. All accommodations must be approved through ADS. If you are a student with a disability who needs accommodations in this class, please contact ADS to schedule an appointment. ADS is located in Bunting 110 and can be reached at 410-225-2416 or ads@mica.edu. Once accommodations are authorized by ADS, please provide me (your instructor) with your approved accommodation memo as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to make an accommodation request in a timely manner. Accommodations are not retroactive.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

Students are responsible to follow health and safety guidelines relevant to their individual activities, processes, and to review MICA's Emergency Operations Plan and attend EHS training. Students are required to purchase personal protection equipment (PPE) appropriate for their major or class. Those students who do not have the proper personal protection equipment will not be permitted to attend class until safe measures and personal protection are in place.

Plagiarism

Each discipline within the arts has specific and appropriate means for students to cite or acknowledge sources and the ideas and material of others used in their own work. Students have the responsibility to become familiar with such processes and to carefully follow their use in developing original work.

Policy

MICA will not tolerate plagiarism, which is defined as claiming authorship of, or using someone else's ideas or work without proper acknowledgement. Without proper attribution, a student may NOT replicate another's work, paraphrase another's ideas, or appropriate images in a manner that violates the specific rules against plagiarism in the student's department. In addition, students may not submit the same work for credit in more than one course without the explicit approval of all of the instructors of the courses involved.

Consequences

When an instructor has evidence that a student has plagiarized work submitted for course credit, the instructor will confront the student and impose penalties that may include failing the course. In the case of a serious violation or repeated infractions from the same student, the instructor will report the infractions to the department chair or program director. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the department chair or program director may then report the student to the appropriate dean or provost, who may choose to impose further penalties, including expulsion.

Appeal Process

Students who are penalized by an instructor or department for committing plagiarism have the right to appeal the charge and penalties that ensue. Within three weeks of institutional action, the student must submit a letter of appeal to the department chairperson or program director, or relevant dean or provost related to the course for which actions were taken. The academic officer will assign three members of the relevant department/division to serve on a review panel. The panel will meet with the student and the instructor of record and will review all relevant and available materials. The panel will determine whether or not to confirm the charge and penalties. The findings of the panel are final. The panel will notify the instructor, the chairperson, division, the student, and the Office of Academic Affairs of their findings and any recommendations for change in penalties.

Title IX Notification

MICA faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. The College strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, I am required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center, counseling@mica.edu, 410.225.2367. For more information about reporting options at MICA, please visit [here](#).

Students with Extended Illness or Absence

In the case of extended illness or other absences that may keep the student from attending a class for more than three meetings, undergraduate students must contact the Student Development Specialist in the Division of Student Affairs or have an official disability accommodation letter issued by the Learning Resource Center that specifically addresses class absences. For students who have not been approved for academic disability accommodations, the Student Development Specialist will work with the student to determine the cause and appropriateness of the absences and subsequently notify instructors as necessary.

Graduate students must contact the instructor, director, and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies. Students in professional studies programs must contact the Associate Dean for Open Studies. The appropriate administrator will facilitate a conversation with relevant faculty to determine whether the student can achieve satisfactory academic progress, which is ultimately at the sole discretion of the faculty member.