

Cedar Crest College Syllabus Guidelines (updated 7-06-06)

These guidelines have been developed to assist Cedar Crest College faculty in the construction of a course syllabus. Syllabi are required for every course, as they are valuable in providing students with the information they need to be successful in our courses. A well-designed syllabus clarifies, in writing, your expectations for student performance in the course, your methods of assessment, and the policies and protocol you will follow in your classroom.

The following are guidelines for the minimum information that should be included in a syllabus. There will undoubtedly be additional information you will want to include, departmental-specific policies and any other important information pertinent to you or your course that the student will find helpful and/or which will clarify your policies and procedures for the course. NOTE: The syllabus is considered to be an agreement between the student and the professor. If a dispute concerning policy or procedure should arise, the first document that will be referenced is the course syllabus. Therefore, be as specific and complete as possible. Also, include the caveat that the instructor may find it necessary to revise the syllabus to meet course objectives.

All course syllabi will be collected in electronic form by the Academic Administrative Assistant in your department and sent to syllabi@cedarcrest.edu during the first week of classes each semester.

1. College name

2. Instructor Information

- Name of professor
- Location of office, office hours
- Contact information (phone number, email address)

3. General Course Information

- Course number and title; semester and year; number of credits
- Course website URL (if applicable)
- Course or grade prerequisites/co-requisite, if any
- List of topics to be covered, including dates if appropriate
- Required and/or suggested textbook and/or reading list
- Required/suggested supplies and materials
- A clear and complete course description, providing an overview of course content
- Format of course: lecture, seminar, laboratory, studio, etc.
- Course objectives: a statement of the broad course goal(s); if possible, put these in the context of the student's major, general education program, or other aspect of her academic program so that she will see its value in her total education and professional preparation. Most courses will have 2-3 broad course objectives.

4. Course Outcomes

- List the specific learning outcomes you will be addressing in your course. Upon successful completion of your course, the student can expect to have achieved these outcomes. These outcomes will connect directly to the content you will cover in your course and will be very specific.
- These should be “clearly articulated written statements, expressed in observable terms, of key learning outcomes: the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students are expected to exhibit upon successful completion of a course” [Middle States Commission on Higher Education]. Your course should be designed to “provide intentional opportunities for students to achieve those learning outcomes” [MSCHE].

5. Assessment of Student Learning

- You should provide appropriate activities for assessing student achievement of your course’s key learning outcomes. These activities will vary by department and by course and may include exams, assignments, projects, presentations, papers, and class participation.
- Assessment of students should be a semester long process. You should provide feedback to your students about their achievement regularly throughout the semester. If possible, you should periodically inform each student of her grades; this allows her to assess her progress and make changes to improve her performance, if necessary. Open communication regarding grades helps to avoid surprises at the end of the semester which may lead to a grade dispute. More importantly, it demonstrates your concern for student learning and achievement.
- The syllabus should include a clear and thorough description of how you will be grading students. This may be a percentage system in which each activity comprises a percentage of the final course grade [Note that there is no college-wide policy stating letter grade equivalents for percentages; some departments have such a policy, others let this to the instructor’s discretion. Please check with your department chair.] You may prefer to use a point system or other rubric. If possible, state due dates and deadlines. You may also wish to include your policy on extra credit.
- A clear and complete statement on attendance and its importance in your course; if you have an attendance policy, include very specific details as to what constitutes an excused/unexcused absence, how absences will affect the student's grade, requests for extensions, and how work/exams will be made up. Keep in mind that the Dean of Student Affairs cannot provide documentation for excuses such as illness, child care problems, car trouble, etc.; faculty must establish and police their own policy (see Faculty Handbook, Book 4 for College’s attendance policy).
- If you plan to give an exam during the final exam period, include a statement similar to the following:

“Your obligations for this course include attendance at the final exam, on the day and time scheduled by the Registrar's Office. You should not make travel arrangements until the final exam

schedule is published; if you must make plans early, you should schedule your travel after the last final exam day."

6. Issues of Honor, Disability Accommodation

- You should reference the honor code and its relevance to your course. Students have a complete statement of the Cedar Crest College Honor Code in Section A of "A Student's Guide to Cedar Crest College", a dayplanner distributed to all students and faculty.
- Give a clear and complete explanation of your policies with regard to plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Reference the College's plagiarism policy and include an explanation of how you will respond to evidence of plagiarism. Section A of "A Student's Guide to CCC" contains sections on academic integrity and academic dishonesty, which you may reference, but each course will present its own unique "temptations" that should be discussed.
- A statement of college policy regarding accommodation for learning disabilities as follows:

"Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact Academic Services."

7. Classroom Protocol and Student Behavior

You may want to address issues relating to classroom protocol and student behavior, as these seem to have become more problematic over the past few years. Section A of "A Student's Guide to CCC" contains a section on classroom protocol, but some faculty believe it is necessary to specifically address disruptive behaviors which have become common. Some examples of these behaviors** cited by Cedar Crest faculty include:

- a. Persistent speaking without permission
- b. Use of electronic devices, cell phones, or pagers during class
- c. Threats or harassment of any kind
- d. Poor personal hygiene
- e. Revealing dress
- f. Working on homework for other classes
- g. Inappropriate personal disclosures during class (sharing too much information)
- h. Sleeping in class
- i. Entering class late or leaving early (without permission)
- j. Eating/drinking in class without permission
- k. Disputing authority and arguing with faculty and other students
- l. Physical disruptions or physical altercations

**Note: This list is excerpted from a document on disruptive behavior compiled by Dr. Cate Cameron. If you would like copies of this and other related materials, please contact Cate.