Syllabus Requirements
University of Arizona School of Journalism
August 2017

The university takes the syllabus very seriously as an implied legal contract between you and the students. This is a document that combines the School of Journalism’s policies with those required and/or recommended by the university and the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

We have noted below all the sections that a syllabus should include. Most of it can simply be copy and pasted, but some parts will need to be tailored to your course. We have pointed out in italics where some language is required and where some can be adjusted by instructors.

If you teach a co-convened 400-500 class with master’s students you may provide separate syllabuses, or one syllabus, but you must provide additional work for master’s students beyond what the undergraduate students are required to complete. Also, inclusion of discussion about diversity in syllabuses is necessary for national accreditation.

You may distribute your syllabus on D2L, via email, or in another electronic means. If you provide the syllabus online only, then you must instruct students to review it. Some instructors give a quick quiz the first week on the syllabus and academic integrity policy to make sure students review the materials and understand them.

The College of Social and Behavioral Sciences offers teaching resources and policies that can be found at: http://web.sbs.arizona.edu/college/instructional-policies-resources.

Any rule or procedure that affects the conduct of your class needs to be spelled out. You can make changes as the semester progresses, but if you do, you need to give students a revised syllabus and it should be in the students’ favor. However, you cannot change your grading system, which is a legally binding contract between you and your students. If you make an adjustment for one student, it should apply to all students (e.g., you should not grant extra credit to only one student; if you provide it to one student you must offer it to all).

Each semester you are required to send the office staff an electronic version of your syllabus; the office is required to keep this on file for one year, under Arizona Board of Regents policy. Email your syllabuses to Celina Centeno centenoc@email.arizona.edu before the first day of class. With 48 hours of lead time, the office staff will make copies of your syllabus for you. You should go through the syllabus during the first day of class and provide copies for students on paper or via email or D2L, or both.
Course Number, Title, Location and Times

Description of Course
- What the course will cover. Short and concise, giving enough detail to be useful
- Lecture only, lecture and lab combination, seminar, studio, small group activities or group projects, experiential or service learning, in-class discussion, web-delivered content or assessment, etc.

Course Prerequisites or Co-requisites
- List all course prerequisites and any courses that must be taken simultaneously with this course.

Instructor and Contact Information
- Instructor name, office location, telephone number, e-mail address
- Office Hours/“Open Door Policy”; If an online class, clarify your response time (e.g., within 24 hours)
- Teaching assistants (if applicable) and their contact information and office hours (if applicable)
- Web information including course homepage, instructor homepage, and D2L information
- Means by which online communication will be conducted (e.g., official UA email address, D2L)
- A little about you, and, if you have one, a URL for your webpage

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes
- What does the instructor/department expect the student to accomplish? These have been set for each skills class. Contact the office for the outcomes for the class you are teaching. You must include on your syllabus the outcomes and goals as determined by the school
- Relate objectives and outcomes to Catalog description and class topics
- State intended learning outcomes in measurable terms
- Courses included in a major or minor should link course learning outcomes to undergraduate program assessments listed for the program (see http://assessment.arizona.edu/academic_degree_programs)

Makeup Policy for Students who Register Late After the First Class
- Statement on whether missed assignments/quizzes may be made up and the deadline for doing so if they missed the first day of class.
  Here is we handle the first day of classes: On the first day of class, after waiting 10 minutes for latecomers, call the roll. If anyone on the roster is not present then drop them from the class if there are other students wanting into the class. If a student on the roster contacted you ahead of time to explain they would be gone for a legitimate reason, and you accept that reason, you may leave that student on the roster. If there are still openings in the class, add students from the wait list in the order they are listed, if they are present. If you still have openings after that, take walk-ins, checking with them to make sure they meet the pre-reqs of the class. For classes that meet just once a week, close the course to additional students after the
first day. For classes that meet two or three times a week, accept students on the first and second meetings. If a student was on the roster and didn’t show up the first day and was dropped, allow the student to get back at the second meeting time, if there is room. If there is no room in the class, then that student is out of luck and can’t get in. Students from the wait list, or who just showed up, who are admitted to the class on the first day should not be bumped from the class later; They have been admitted permanently. No one should be admitted after the first week of classes because they have missed too much material.

Required Texts, Readings or Special Materials
- List both required and recommended texts, books, articles, etc.; delineate required versus optional. Specify required versus optional.
- Explain where they can get readings: Purchased, library reserve, class handouts or D2L
- Special tools or supplies needed: camera, sound equipment, laptop, flash drives, etc.

Bibliography
- Recommended, not required.
- Additional current research and/or writings, along with how they can get them (e.g., library)

Required Extracurricular Activities (if any)
- Explain field trips, service learning projects, etc., with the expected time commitment

Attendance policy
Attendance is a source of a lot of conflict every semester. Instructors need to record attendance in every reporting and editing class. Your attendance policy needs to be stated clearly in the syllabus and you need to follow it exactly with a process that is defensible – shoddy bookkeeping can result in error and successful grade appeals. Most instructors in the School of Journalism allow no more than one unexcused absence in a once-a-week class and no more than two unexcused absences in a twice a week class. After that, you can administratively drop the student if the third absence occurs before the add/drop deadline (the end of the eighth week of classes) or give him/her a failing grade if the absence occurs afterward.

Make clear what your own policy is – and do not allow wiggle room. Online classes must state the class participation policies – what constitutes participation and how that will be evaluated. Most of the following language below is recommended and you are advised to copy and paste it into your syllabus, but you may adjust the first paragraph and the number of unexcused absences allowed:

Attendance in journalism classes is mandatory. Students who don’t attend class miss a lot. Many of our classes are taught without textbooks and are highly experiential in nature, making it difficult to make up later. Unexcused absences will have a major impact on your grade, because in most cases, you will not be permitted to make up missed assignments. [XX number] of unexcused absences will result in your being dropped from the class. If the [XX] absence is after the drop deadline then you will receive an E in the course.

Recommended Language by UA – we don’t have to follow: Participating in course and attending lectures and other course events are vital to the learning process. As such, attendance is required at all
lectures and discussion section meetings. Students who miss class due to illness or emergency are required to bring documentation from their healthcare provider or other relevant, professional third parties. Failure to submit third-party documentation will result in unexcused absences.

Excused absences are granted only for valid, documented reasons and only if the reason makes your presence at the scheduled time impossible. By school policy, acceptable excuses are limited to five: serious illness, jury duty, religious observance, dean’s excuse and military reserve obligation. If you have a reason for missing class that you think is legitimate, it is your responsibility to ask your instructor ahead of time if at all possible. This is expected even if you are ill. Absence excuses are subject to verification. Presenting a false excuse will be considered cheating, a violation of the academic integrity rules.

*These three following bullet points are required by the UA to be included:*

- The UA’s policy concerning Class Attendance, Participation, and Administrative Drops is available at: [http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/classatten.htm](http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/classatten.htm).
- The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, [http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy](http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy).
- Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored. See:[https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences](https://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/absences)

A Dean’s Excuse provides excused absences for university-sponsored events/activities for academic, non-academic, and recognized student organizations. If a student must miss a class or classes for a university-sponsored event, the faculty or staff responsible for that event request a UA Official Activity Excused Absence Request Form from the Dean of Students Office. A Dean’s Excuse is not available for personal absences including illness, family emergency, scheduled vacations, etc.

The Dean of Students Office does not have oversight of academic departments or faculty members and does not grant individual excused absences. Each faculty member manages his or her classroom in the manner in which they see fit and are the only ones who may determine what constitutes an excused absence. Therefore, Dean of Students is unable to excuse absences for students, grant extensions, require that professors allow students to make-up missed work, or ensure students may miss class and submit late work without penalty, etc.

The best thing to do is for you to communicate directly with me regarding your absence. I am the only person who can excuse your absence, and determine if alternatives or make-up work is an option. The Dean of Students Office does provide Emergency Notifications in situations where students must be absent from class due to an emergency situation but are unable to contact their instructors themselves due to their condition. Be aware that Emergency Notifications are not excused absences.

**Grading standards**

Grades are paramount to students. The grading plan you outline in the syllabus must be followed throughout the semester since it is legally binding. It is very important that your standards be high, your grading process transparent and evenhanded. If you plan to grade on the curve, or if you will drop the lowest of the scores on exercises, as some instructors do, specify this in your policy. Add as much detail as possible on how you will determine grades, including whether you will use rubrics and where to find them. You should include:

- Specify the grade distribution for the course. Provide a detailed explanation of the methods of evaluation and how the final grade will be calculated, including: components/assignments, weightings, evaluation criteria, an explanation of how late work will be
Graded, and a description of extra credit opportunities. University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm

- A clear explanation of how the overall course grade is assigned based on the sum of the various grading factors (e.g., 90-100 of possible points is a grade of A, etc.)
- A full explanation of the differences in grading factors/weighting between the 400- and 500-level versions of a co-convened course
- Provide the acceptable time period for disputing a grade on a paper, project, or exam.
- State how late assignments and extra credit opportunities, if any, will be handled
- For 205 and 208 classes, a minimum grade of C is a requirement to advance to many of the upper-division courses in the skills sequence.
- Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies available at http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#I and http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#W respectively.

SAMPLE TEXT: My grading system

In this school, we grade on results, not effort. I am always willing to discuss a grade and I will gladly change it if I have made an error. But an argument that “I really worked hard on this assignment so I deserve better” will not be a sufficient reason to reconsider the grade. If you wish to dispute a grade, please see me within two weeks of receiving it.

**Here is how I evaluate your work:**

- **A** Superior in all or nearly all areas. Requires little to no editing. Publishable (print, broadcast, online).
- **B** Professional quality/publishable. Overall, sound work, but editing/revision required before publication. Generally readable/usable and interesting.
- **C** Competent but not ready for publication. Generally acceptable work, but may need more sources or reworking.
- **D** Substandard. Demonstrates effort by the student, but fails to meet competency standards because of mechanical errors, lack of clarity or lack of content.
- **E** Fails to meet minimum expectations in most or all areas.

**How your final grade will be determined:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular assignments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 research papers, 15% each</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If the course is a 400/500:** include a grading scale as per above that is specific to graduate students. Also, include a description of how the experiences of undergraduate and graduate students will be differentiated in addition to information on how this requirement/experience figures in the grading scheme.
The following is required in syllabuses by the college and UA: University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm. Requests for incompletes (I) and withdrawal (W) must be made in accordance with university policies which are available at http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#I and http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/grade.htm#W respectively.

Makeup work, late work, and extra credit policy

The school policy is that extra credit be allowed only if it is available to the entire class.

Deadlines are crucial in journalism, and therefore any assignment that is turned in late will receive a 0. Assignments or tests can be made up only if you have a valid excuse for missing them, and if pre-approved before your absence. Extra credit opportunities are not available to an individual student, only to the entire class. Exams may not be retaken in an effort to improve your grade. You will receive the grade you earn on the original work.

Minimum grade for Jour 205 and 208

In Jour 205 and Jour 208 only, include the following statement:

You must earn a grade of C or above in this class to enroll in most of the school’s upper-division reporting and editing classes. If you earn a D or E, you may repeat this class, but be aware that the school makes no guarantee that the course will be available to you in the following semester. As a result, it is entirely possible that your progress could be set back not one, but two semesters.

Classroom behavior

The school takes professionalism seriously, and many instructors have strict class policies to help ingrain a sense of professionalism that is expected by intern supervisors and employers. Some instructors deduct 1 percent or more of course grades for coming to class late, leaving class early, texting, checking Facebook, listening to music, talking, and other distracting behaviors. If you do this, it must be included in your grading policy. Suggested language:

Journalism demands a high level of professionalism. Because our undergraduate program is professionally oriented, each faculty member has a special obligation to ensure that students behave in the class as they will be expected to at work. To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities (i.e. texting, chatting, reading a newspaper, making phone calls, web surfing, etc).

Students are asked to refrain from disruptive conversations with people sitting around them during lecture. Students observed engaging in disruptive activity will be asked to cease this behavior. Those who continue to disrupt the class will be asked to leave lecture or discussion and may be reported to the Dean of Students. The university’s no-smoking policy applies in our classrooms, and we also prohibit e-cigarettes as disruptive.

To encourage this behavior, faculty members make professionalism a component of the evaluation of every student. It will count for [__ points or __ percent] of your final grade in this class. Professionalism includes the following:
• **Being responsible.** Being punctual and attending all classes. Being prepared for class and participating actively. Avoiding disruptive behavior. Approaching your assignments with resourcefulness, and with the goal of completing them as thoroughly as possible. Doing your share when working on group projects. Requesting help from the course instructor, just as you would request assistance from an editor or producer in the newsroom.

• **Being respectful.** Recognizing that you need to be as respectful of the opinions of others as you would have them be of yours. Being courteous in class and on assignments, such as avoiding distracting behavior such as texting, coming in late, leaving class early, talking, checking Facebook, etc. Being sensitive to the needs of news sources.

• **Being accountable.** Remembering that when you are on assignment, your behavior, attitude and dress reflect not only on you, but also on the school and the university. People have long memories, and your actions can influence your reputation – and ours – for years to come.

**Threatening Behavior Policy**

*The following language is required by the university:*

The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the university community, including to one’s self. See [http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students](http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students).

**Electronic Devices**

*Some professors ban all electronic devices from the classroom. Some allow them. Up to you. Here is some possible boilerplate (choose one or the other and edit as you like):*

**Banned option:** The use of personal electronics such as laptops, iPads and other such mobile devices is distracting to the other students and the instructor. Their use can degrade the learning environment. Therefore, students are not permitted to use these devices during the class period and will be deducted points from their course grade if they do.

**Allowed option:** Some learning styles are best served by using personal electronics, such as laptops and iPads. These devices can be distracting to some learners. Therefore, people who prefer to use electronic devices for note-taking during lecture should use one side of the classroom.

**Course topics and schedule**

*This is an important element that is sometimes overlooked or glossed over. The more detailed a schedule the more students will be prepared, the more organized you will appear, and the higher the students’ evaluation of you.*

• Divide course into logical units
• Flow in a logical sequence from objectives
• Specify number and due dates of exams, papers or special projects. Describe the various assignments they will need to complete. For co-convened classes, note any difference in exams and/or papers for 400 vs. 500 level
• List the assignments/exams class by class, or week by week. Students appreciate a paragraph description of major assignments – it gives them a heads up and something to look forward to
• Provide your policy on revision and resubmission of assigned papers, with appropriate
deadlines The date and time of the final exam or project, along with links to the Final Exam Regulations, http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/schedule101/exams/examrules.htm, and Final Exam Schedule, http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/schedules/finals.htm

Academic Integrity

The School of Journalism takes academic integrity very seriously – probably more seriously than most departments on campus. After all, we are in the truth business, and journalists who get caught plagiarizing ruin the profession, their employer, and their personal careers. Most violations of academic integrity in the school result in an E in the class and referral to the dean’s office. In some cases, students are expelled from the program. *This paragraph is specifically required by the UA:*

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. Students can find the information at the following site: http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policies-and-codes/code-academic-integrity

Every instance of verified cheating will be penalized, generally with a failing grade for the course, but severe or repeated violations can result in more severe penalties, including suspension or expulsion from the school or even suspension or expulsion from the university. The journalism school subscribes to the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity. Prohibited conduct covers all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, fabrication and facilitating academic dishonesty by others.

The university's Code of Conduct prohibits such behavior as threatening fellow students or faculty, false identification or documents, false alarms, fabricating sources, quotes, video, or stories, forgery or misuse of documents or records, plagiarism, lying, stalking or discrimination against individuals or groups. Even an accidental copying and pasting of information without attribution and without being in quotes can result in a violation of the policy. You can fail a class even if you did not intend to plagiarize. Complete details are covered by the school’s Academic Integrity Handbook, which you are required to read. Also, University Libraries have some excellent tips for avoiding plagiarism available at http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html

According to Section D (6) (a) of the University’s Intellectual Property Policy (which is available at http://ogc.arizona.edu/node/16), faculty own the intellectual property for their course notes and course materials. The instructor holds the copyright to his/her lectures and course materials, including student notes or summaries that substantially reflect them. Student notes and course recordings are for individual use or for shared use on an individual basis. Selling class notes and/or other course materials to other students or to a third party for resale is not permitted without the instructor’s express written consent. Violations to the instructor’s copyright are subject to the Code of Academic Integrity and may result in course sanctions. Additionally, students who use D2L or UA email to sell or buy these copyrighted materials are subject to Code of Conduct Violations for misuse of student email addresses.

Collaboration policy

Although the school’s classes often involve students working on team projects and peer reviewing, most assignments require individual attention and effort to be of any benefit. Unless
otherwise stated by the instructor, all work is expected to be that of each student alone, without consultation with others. Prohibited activities include asking other students for access to their work, asking other students for help during lectures or labs, or sharing information during a quiz or exam.

**Accessibility and Accommodations**

*The following language is required.*

Our goal in this classroom is that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish reasonable accommodations. For additional information on Disability Resources and reasonable accommodations, please visit http://drc.arizona.edu/.

If you have reasonable accommodations, please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

**Computer security rules**

It is very important that students know and observe the following rules that help protect the security of the computer equipment:

1. Absolutely no food items or drinks are allowed in any lab or near any computer.
2. Use only your university e-mail account to correspond with journalism faculty and staff.
3. Use free virus protection software, provided by the UA.
4. Watch out for scammers posing as UA computer IT or security, wanting your passwords.
5. You may not connect your laptops to our networks or computers. E-mail material to your UA e-mail account or transfer it to a CD, DVD or USB flash drive. You may connect a laptop to the video inputs on projectors if you are making a class presentation.
6. No students are allowed in classrooms outside of class hours, except for students in capstone courses and then only with the instructor’s permission.
7. Computers in the student reading room, 312, are available for use outside of class. Students who wish to use the reading room before or after hours must bring their CatCard to the journalism office for approval and access. Friends who are not journalism students are not to be in the room or allowed to use the equipment.

**Diversity**

*The school requires every syllabus to include an explanation of your approach to diversity in the class, as required for national accreditation. Here is sample material:*

The School of Journalism values diversity and attempts to communicate clearly the value of diversity in journalism to better represent society. Unfortunately, the media industry does not accurately reflect the people it serves – only about 12 percent of journalists are racial minorities (compared to nearly a third of the U.S. population), and men still dominate newsrooms even though two-thirds of journalism grads are women. Diverse views are crucial in journalism – including those from different racial, gender, religious, socio-economic and political backgrounds. We encourage students to participate in school clubs and activities that enhance diversity in journalism, including the student chapter of the National Association of Hispanic
Journalists. We will discuss these issues during class, including the ethical responsibilities of journalists to, as the SPJ code of ethics says, “Give voice to the voiceless,” “Avoid stereotyping,” and “Boldly tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience. Seek sources whose voices we seldom hear.” To find out more, check out the school’s diversity page at https://journalism.arizona.edu/diversity or contact the school’s diversity coordinator, Maggy Zanger, at zanger@email.arizona.edu.

Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy

*The following wording is required.*

The University is committed to creating and maintaining an environment free of discrimination, http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/nondiscrimination-and-anti-harassment-policy. University and journalism school policy prohibits faculty, staff and students from discriminating against any person on the basis of age, ethnicity, gender, disability, color, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or veteran status. If you feel that you are being discriminated against, please see me, the school director, the UA Office of Institutional Equity (http://equity.arizona.edu/) if it involves a faculty or staff member, or the Dean of Students Office if it involves another student (http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu).

Notification of Objectionable Materials

*This language is recommended, but not required.*

Journalism is a vital part of the democratic process. We deal every day with what happens in the world, both good and bad. That means you may hear discussions about news coverage that could be offensive to you, such as ugly crimes, political controversies, sexual situations, or conflicting religious beliefs. People might disagree in class, and that’s OK, but let’s try to do it in a civil and respectful manner. I will provide advance notice when such materials will be used. Students are not automatically excused from interacting with such materials, but they are encouraged to speak with me to voice concerns and to provide feedback.

Reporter’s Handbook

The Reporter’s Handbook covers most of the basic operational guidelines for student conduct in our reporting and editing classes. They are to be followed unless you are told otherwise. The handbook also summarizes some of the style usage rules that most often cause students problems. For fuller explanations and other rules, see *The Associated Press Stylebook* or contact me.

Honors Credit

Students wishing to contract this course for Honors Credit should email me to set up an appointment to discuss the terms of the contact and to sign the Honors Course Contract Request Form. The form is available at http://www.honors.arizona.edu/faculty-and-advisors/contracts

Confidentiality of Student Records

The school values your privacy and I will do my utmost to protect your grades. Your right to privacy is protected by the U.S. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. For more information, see http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm

Accountability

The journalism school goes to great length to inform students of its policies and
procedures. This information comes to you through class syllabi, your instructors, the school Listserv, our bulletin boards and the advisors. We make a special effort to put the most important instructions in writing. Because of these multiple communication channels, we feel it is only reasonable to assume that students are fully aware of the information and will act on it accordingly. For that reason, “I didn't know...” is not considered a valid excuse.

**Additional Resources for Students**

- UA Academic policies and procedures are available at http://catalog.arizona.edu/2015-16/policies/aaindex.html
- Student Assistance and Advocacy information is available at http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/student-assistance/students/student-assistance

**Subject to Change**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as I deem appropriate.