



APPENDIX

Creating Your Course Syllabus: A Brief Overview

Getting started

Many instructors learn they'll be teaching a particular course on very short notice. This happens quite often in the lives of adjunct faculty, but it may be true for some full-timers as well, whether they're brand new instructors or seasoned veterans.

If this is the situation you find yourself facing now, you might be tempted to just "throw together" a course syllabus as quickly as you can. Or ... if the course will be the first you've *ever* taught, you might simply be panicking about how to put together a syllabus in the first place. Or ... maybe you've taught many times before and you already have a syllabus you *could* use — but you're just not very happy with it.

Whatever your particular circumstances, developing a clear syllabus is a critical first step toward the "successful beginning" of any course you teach. So whether you're starting from "square one" or you just need a "refresher discussion," here are some strategies for making your course syllabus the most effective it can be.

A critical document

The importance of the course syllabus cannot be overestimated. In fact, in academia these days the syllabus is more important than ever before, since many students see themselves as "customers" of higher education and the syllabus as a "contract" for the course.

The syllabus explains to your students what the course is all about and specifies what your expectations are. Thus, it must be as clear as possible so that it doesn't lend itself to multiple interpretations. There may be times

when it's necessary to deviate from the syllabus — for example, when inclement weather interferes with the college calendar. However, you should try to adhere to the syllabus as closely as possible, because your students may hold you accountable for what you've committed to in the document. If you do deviate from the syllabus, announce the departure in class — well in advance of the change — and put it in writing as well.

Why is the clarity of your syllabus so essential? There are many reasons. For starters, if a student wants to contest a grade, and your grading policy is clearly stated in the syllabus, it will be more difficult for you to be challenged. But the reasons for having a clear syllabus go far beyond such legalistic-sounding concerns. The *most* important benefit of a clear syllabus, for both you and your students, is that it serves as a road map through the course.

In the first class period of your course, give students the syllabus. It should contain:

- Your name.
- The name of the textbook(s).
- Your office location and office hours.
- Your telephone extension.
- Your e-mail address.
- Information on whether there are prerequisites for the course.
- The course assignments.
- A description of the exams (with exam dates if possible).
- A description of all other assignments, with as much clear detail as possible.

Your syllabus should also describe any extra materials you're requiring or recommending — for example, supplementary readings, study guides, practice test books, and web sites associated with your text or discipline.

The syllabus should then spell out your attendance policy, your policy concerning missed or late exams and late papers, your grading policy, your policy concerning students who don't complete their work by the end of the course, the institution's policies on auditing a course, and the campus policy on academic integrity. Explain the institutional policy concerning how students will be notified of class cancellations in the event of inclement weather or your unforeseen absence.

When you distribute the syllabus, discuss the relevance of the course to your students' lives. Give them a pep talk about achieving success in your

course. Discuss your expectations about their performance and what will be required of them to do well. Talk about your role in their learning and about your hopes for their accomplishments. Showing concern for your students' academic success seems to be a crucial factor in motivating them to persevere and do well. In many of the focus groups I've run with students about their perceptions of what pushes them to do well, students frequently say that what makes a difference is whether they feel their instructors care about their success — or not.

Syllabus Resources and Examples

An extended discussion of syllabus development is beyond the scope of this book. But if you'd like more-detailed information on creating an effective syllabus, the following resources will be helpful to you:

- Lefton, L. 2000. Creating your syllabus. In M. Ellis (Ed.), *Instructor's Resource Manual for Lefton, Psychology: Seventh Edition*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Grunert, J. 1997. *The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company.
- Prégent, R. 1997. *Charting Your Course: How to Prepare to Teach More Effectively*. Madison, WI: Atwood Publishing.

The following syllabi are models you can use for creating your own syllabus.

Semester, Year

(Class Number) Course Syllabus

Instructor Name and Office Location

Phone Extension and Office Hours

E-mail Address

This course is designed to give you some insight into behavior. Psychology is the study of behavior and mental processes. I am fascinated with this subject, and I hope you will become interested students of psychology with me. Perhaps you will learn a little more about your own behavior and your relationships with other people.

There are 7 multiple-choice exams for this course. You may take each test two times; you will receive the higher of the two scores. You are responsible for taking each test during the assigned time period in the ACADEMIC TESTING CENTER (second floor of the Liberal Arts Building). You will need a No. 2 pencil and your student identification card in order to take the tests. Your test can be graded while you wait so you will know immediately how well you have done. **BE SURE TO TAKE THE TESTS DURING THE DESIGNATED TIMES.** You must take all 7 tests to complete the course. Failure to take the test during the designated dates, for any reason, will result in a penalty of four points (equivalent to one letter grade).

The multiple-choice tests are based upon objectives. Your objectives booklet will be presented in class. The textbook used for the course is *Psychology*, Seventh Edition, by Lester A. Lefton and published by Allyn & Bacon (1999). There is an accompanying study guide called *Keeping Pace Plus: An Active Reading Study Guide*. This guide is optional for you to buy. There is also a practice tests book that comes free with the purchase of your textbook.

FINAL GRADE AND REQUIREMENTS

The 7 multiple-choice tests will consist of 40 questions for a total of 280 possible points. Also required is a one-page, typewritten, double-spaced paper due on or before *Tuesday, November 6*. This paper will be weighted 70 points. The paper should be a summary of an article described in another handout. *Late papers will be subject to a lowering of the score by the equivalent of one letter grade.* The 7 tests and the paper will total 350 points, so the grades can be computed as follows:

To receive an "A" in the course: $350 \times 90\% = 315 = A$

"B": $350 \times 80\% = 280 = B$

"C": $350 \times 70\% = 245 = C$

"D": $350 \times 60\% = 210 = D$

"F": Below 210 = F

Attendance is required. If you miss class, please take responsibility to find out what you have missed. *Lecture/class notes are crucial in this course.* Missing the equivalent of 6 class hours may result in a 10-point reduction in total points and/or the lowering of your final grade by one letter grade. Missing more than 6 class hours may

result in withdrawal from the course. Please see the late-to-class policy on the last page of this syllabus.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity refers to the “integral” quality of the search for knowledge that a student undertakes. The work a student produces, therefore, ought to be wholly his or hers; it should result completely from the student’s own efforts.

A student will be guilty of violating Academic Integrity if he/she a) knowingly represents work of others as his/her own, b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work, or c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.

ASTERISK GRADE

If you do not complete the course requirements by the end of the semester, and you have a prior agreement with the Instructor, you may be given an INC (incomplete). You will have two months from the last day of classes to complete your work. When I receive your completed work, you will receive the appropriate grade. Please complete your work by the end of the semester so we can avoid use of the asterisk grade. You are responsible for getting your completed work (test scores, papers, etc.) to the Instructor and for following up to make sure a grade change has been processed.

AUDIT

If you audit the course, you will receive an “AU” grade. This cannot be changed to a letter grade.

TEXTBOOK

The textbook is very important for this course. It is suggested that you first read the chapter summaries and then read the chapters. This way, you will be alerted to the important aspects of the chapters. The accompanying study guide will be very helpful to you. There is also a practice tests book. Additionally, the objectives booklet I have prepared for you will help you prepare for your exams. *Reading assignments* in the textbook are given on the next page, along with test dates.

TO SUMMARIZE

You are required to:

1. Attend classes.
2. Read the assigned textbook chapters.
3. Take 7 multiple-choice tests and receive a total number of points, which is at least at the 60% level to pass the course. Test questions are based on the objectives outlined on the handout presented in class.
4. Submit a one-page, typewritten paper on or before *Tues., November 6.*

I sincerely hope you will enjoy this course in Psychology. I have attempted to make it interesting, and I will make every effort to help you learn the material.

Please feel free to contact me in class, in my office, or by e-mail or phone if you think you need help in this course.

TEXTBOOK ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAM DATES

What is Psychology?	Ch. 1	EXAM 1	Week 3	9/13-9/19
Learning	Ch. 5			
Memory	Ch. 6	EXAM 2	Week 5	9/27-10/3
The Brain & Behavior	Ch. 2	EXAM 3	Week 7	10/11-10/17
Sensation & Perception	Ch. 3			
States of Consciousness	Ch. 4	EXAM 4	Week 9	10/25-10/31
Child Development	Ch. 10			
Personality	Ch. 12	EXAM 5	Week 11	11/8-11/14
Stress & Health	Ch. 14			
Psychological Disorders	Ch. 15	EXAM 6	Week 13	Tues-Tues 11/21-11/28
Therapy	Ch. 16			
Social Psychology	Ch. 13	EXAM 7	Week 15	Thurs-Wed 12/7-12/13

*** PAPER IS DUE ON OR BEFORE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6

*** One-letter-grade penalty for late papers

*** TESTS must be taken during the designated dates or there is a four-point late penalty

Poor attendance may result in a 10-point penalty, a letter-grade penalty, or withdrawal from the course.

Lateness to class: If you come to a seminar class or to a large lecture late two times, it will be considered equivalent to one absence from class.

Below you will find a list of seminars that accompany the large-lecture class. The large lecture meets twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00-11:50 a.m. in CM 110. You are required to attend an additional 50-minute class; this class is known as the seminar class or discussion group, and it meets in LA 147. You are to attend the seminar on your assigned schedule every week. However, if you are unable to attend your seminar during a particular week, you may attend a different seminar for that week. Because we do not meet for classes on Labor Day, from the second week of classes up until the week of Thanksgiving the seminars run from Tuesdays through Mondays. If you are enrolled in a Monday seminar, it is impossible to make it up since Tuesday will begin the new seminar for the week. If you know ahead of time that you

will be missing a Monday seminar, you can make it up during the previous Tuesday-Friday week. After Thanksgiving recess, the seminars run on a Thursday through Wednesday schedule for the last two weeks of the semester.

PSY 101 Seminar Classes: All meet in LA 147

<u>SECTION NUMBER</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>
2027	Tuesday	1:25-2:15 p.m.
2028	Monday	11:00-11:50 a.m.
2029	Monday	9:00-9:50 a.m.
2030	Tuesday	9:35-10:25 a.m.
2031	Wednesday	11:00-11:50 a.m.
2032	Wednesday	10:00-10:50 a.m.
2033	Thursday	9:35-10:25 a.m.
2034	Thursday	1:25-2:15 p.m.
2035	Friday	9:00-9:50 a.m.

Semester, Year

PSY 104 SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY; Prerequisite: PSY 101

Instructor Name and Office Location

Phone Extension and Office Hours

E-mail Address

POLICY STATEMENT AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

There will be 4 tests during the semester; the dates of the tests can be found below. You will be evaluated on the basis of these tests; a two-page, typewritten, double-spaced paper; and a one-page, typewritten, double-spaced final integrative essay to be discussed below. Each test will consist of multiple-choice questions taken from your textbook and from class lectures/discussions/films. The tests will be taken in the Testing Center, LA 215. You must take these examinations at the scheduled time. Failure to do so, for any reason, will mean you will need permission to take a make-up examination, with a late penalty equivalent to one letter grade. IN ORDER TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS COURSE, YOU MUST TAKE ALL FOUR TESTS AND SUBMIT THE TWO PAPERS. You must accumulate at least 270 points, which is equivalent to a "D" (minimally passing).

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND LATE POLICY

Institutional policy is that you attend all classes for which you are scheduled unless there is a serious reason for your absence. If you miss the equivalent of one week's classes, your final grade may be lowered by 5 points. If you miss the equivalent of two weeks' classes, your final grade may be lowered by 10 points, or one letter grade. If you miss more than the equivalent of two weeks' classes, you may be withdrawn from the course. If you miss more than three class hours, please inform the Instructor of your absence so that you will not be withdrawn. If you miss any class, please be responsible for getting class notes, handouts, etc. (It may help to have available telephone numbers of one or two classmates). LATE POLICY: If you arrive to class after attendance has been taken, please take a seat near the entrance and see me after class so I can change your absence to a lateness. Two latenesses equal one absence. Remember, if you voluntarily withdraw from any course prior to the 10-week withdrawal deadline, you must fill out the appropriate forms, so as not to receive an "F" (failure) for that course.

WRITING REQUIREMENTS

The first required paper is a two-page (no more, no less), typewritten, double-spaced research summary paper (stapled and NOT IN A FOLDER) due on or before 3/08 or 3/09 depending on when your class meets. Please sign the back of the paper only! The assignment involves summarizing any two articles from scholarly journals. You will be writing a one-page summary of each article and then stapling the two pages together. The articles must relate to the content of the course in some way. The articles must be selected from psychology journals or from professional journals in

other fields – e.g., nursing – and must be current (1995-present). Books, encyclopedias, and popular magazines are not acceptable sources of information. Internet sources must be scholarly and documented. You should use the APA (American Psychological Association) format for your paper. This format will be explained in class, and a handout called “APA Format” will be distributed in class.

Papers submitted after the deadline will have the same late penalty as a make-up examination. In order to receive credit for the course, you must take all 4 tests, submit a two-page research summary paper, a one-page final integrative essay, and achieve at least 60 percent of the total possible points for the course.

To write the research summary paper, you may want to use the journals in psychology.

OUR INSTITUTION HAS THE FOLLOWING PSYCHOLOGY JOURNALS:

American Psychologist

Child Development

Contemporary Psychology

Developmental Psychology

Journal of Abnormal Psychology

Journal of Applied Psychology

Journal of Educational Psychology

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Journal of Psychology

Journal of Social Psychology

Psychological Abstracts

Teaching of Psychology

Access to full-text journal articles in psychology is limited on the Internet. There will be a separate handout explaining how to use the Internet if you choose to do your research online.

The short research summary paper should follow the psychology shorthand format for citing references. Your paper should include REFERENCES at the end of the body of the paper. This reference list should give the following information: author(s), title, name of journal, volume, and date of publication. Use your textbook or the journals themselves for examples of citing books, journal articles, etc, or see my APA format handout.

In the body of your paper, you need not footnote in the traditional way. Instead, if you quote directly, indent and single-space the quote. Do not use quotation marks. Following the quote, put parentheses, the author’s name, the date of publication and the page number.

If you do not quote directly but use someone else’s idea, you may follow the idea with parentheses as above. Or, within your paper you may say, for example: “As Jones, 1999, points out...” or “In an article by Jones, 2000, it was suggested that...” There are several variations you may use.

This paper will be judged on the quality of the presentation of the material: coherence, organization, and clarity. You have nine weeks to prepare this paper; it is expected to be a scholarly and professional job. This paper is worth 75 points toward your final grade.

FINAL CRITICAL THINKING INTEGRATIVE EXERCISE (Second Paper Due)

Please write (double-spaced, typed) a one-page reflective essay discussing how the perspective of a "social psychologist" differs from that of other psychologists. In your essay, you will be explaining an essential theme underlying many of the topics of this course. Essentially, you will be describing a "social psychological perspective." This paper is due on or before 4/20 or 4/21 (depending on when your class meets) and is worth 75 points toward your final grade. Late papers will be subject to a late penalty equivalent to one letter grade.

TEXTBOOK:

Social Psychology: The Heart and the Mind. Aronson, E., Wilson, T., and Akert, R., Addison-Wesley-Longman Publishers, Third Edition, 1999.

CHAPTERS

1. Introduction to Social Psychology

2. Methodology: The Process of Doing Research

3. Social Cognition: How We Think About the Social World

TEST I: Ch. 1, 2, 3
2/10-2/16

Week 4

4. Social Perception: How We Come to Understand Other People

5. Self-Understanding: How We Come to Know Ourselves

6. Self-Justification and the Need to Maintain Self-Esteem

TEST II: Ch. 4, 5, 6
3/2-3/8

Week 7

10. Interpersonal Attraction: From First Impressions to Close Relationships

11. Prosocial Behavior: Why Do People Help?

7. Attitudes and Attitude Change

13. Prejudice: Causes and Cures

TEST III: Ch. 10, 11, 7, 13
4/6-4/12

Week 11

8. Conformity: Influencing Behavior

9. Group Processes

12. Aggression: Why We Hurt Other People

Module 1: Social Psychology and Health

TEST IV: Ch. 8, 9, 12, Module 1
5/04-5/09

Week 15

TESTS

There will be 4 multiple-choice tests, occurring in the Testing Center, LA 215. Failure to take the test during the designated dates, for any reason, will mean you will need permission to take a make-up examination, with a starting grade one letter grade lower than your exam merits. Tests will be based on your reading, on films, and on lecture/discussion classes.

ALL EXAMS MUST BE TAKEN IN THE TESTING CENTER, LA 215, during these designated dates:

Test I	2/10 – 2/16
Test II	3/2 – 3/8
Test III	4/6 – 4/12
Test IV	5/04 – 5/09

Summary papers will be due on 3/8 or 3/9 (depending on when your class meets).

Final papers will be due on 4/20 or 4/21 (depending on when your class meets).

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A student will be guilty of violating Academic Integrity if he/she a) knowingly represents work of others as his/her own, b) uses or obtains unauthorized assistance in the execution of any academic work, or c) gives fraudulent assistance to another student.

ASTERISK GRADE POLICY

If you do not complete the course requirements by the end of the semester, and you have a prior agreement with the Instructor, you may be given an I* (incomplete). You will have two months from the last day of classes to complete your work. When I receive your completed work, you will receive the appropriate grade. Please complete your work by the end of the semester so we can avoid use of the asterisk grade. You are responsible for getting your completed work (test scores, papers, etc.) to the Instructor and for following up to make sure a grade change has been processed. If you do not complete the work, I* automatically changes to an “F.”

AUDIT

If you audit the course, you will receive an “AU” grade. This cannot be changed to a letter grade.

FINAL GRADE DETERMINATION

Test I	60 Questions	60 Points
II	70 questions	70 points
III	90 questions	90 points
IV	80 questions	<u>80 points</u>
Exam TOTAL =		300 points
Two-page research summary paper =	75 points	
One-page final integrative essay =	75 points	
		450 Total points

$$450 \times 90\% = 405 = A \quad 450 \times 80\% = 360 = B$$

$$450 \times 70\% = 315 = C \quad 450 \times 60\% = 270 = D$$

Below 270 = F