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# CREATING A COURSE SYLLABUS

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# THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE STARTING...

- × Your audience
- × Your topic
- × Your delivery style
- × Goals of the course
- × Learner centered environment
- × What tools are you giving your students to achieve the class goals ?
- × How much time are you willing to spend on this class ?

# YOUR AUDIENCE

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- ✘ What level are they ?
  - Freshmen, sophomore, junior or senior
- ✘ Have they had the prerequisites for this class ?
- ✘ Is this a class in their major ?
- ✘ Is this a required class ?
- ✘ How many credits is it ?

# YOUR TOPIC

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- ✘ How technical is this topic ?
- ✘ Do the students need a special kind of vocabulary ?
- ✘ How abstract / difficult is this topic ?
- ✘ How much will the students know about this topic ?

# YOUR DELIVERY STYLE

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- × Powerpoint vs. transparencies
- × How much talking are you prepared to do ?
- × Straight lecture ? (Oh No!!!)
- × Guided discussions (How ??)
- × Lab ???
- × Handouts ?

# GOALS OF THE COURSE

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- × Need to be clearly defined
- × Do you know what they are ?
- × Major vs. non-major
- × Required vs. elective course

# LEARNER CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

- × Syllabus as a learning tool
- × Gives rationale for the course
- × Gives organizational info'
- × Clarifies responsibilities (student + professor)
- × Allows students to control / manage their own process of learning
- × PROMOTES student learning
- × Has lots of information!!!!
- × Is a contract with the students

# TOOLS

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- × What technology ?
- × Handouts ?
- × Course manuals ?
- × Slides ??
- × On-line discussions
- × Textbooks

# TIME COMMITMENT

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- × How much time can you devote ?
- × Lecture time
- × Preparation time
- × Office hours
- × Time outside class to help students

# WHAT IS A SYLLABUS ?

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- × Defines course goals
- × Defines course content
- × Defines course assessment tools
- × Schedules lectures, recitations and labs
- × Schedules exams/ project due dates/ paper due dates
- × Defines grading policy
- × Defines student role in course
- × Defines instructor role in course
- × **Allows students to manage their own learning = learner centered**

# WHAT ARE THE COURSE GOALS ?

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- ✘ This defines what you want the students to get out of taking your course
- ✘ Knowledge ?
- ✘ Technique ?
- ✘ Some deliverable ?

# WHAT CONTENT TO INCLUDE TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS ?

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- × Define the content
- × Limit content
- × Consider the background of the students in the class
- × Consider their preparedness for this class
- × WHAT IS WORTH KNOWING ABOUT THIS SUBJECT ?

# ASSESSMENT / EVALUATION OF SKILLS

- × Decide what skills you are looking for
- × Is it only knowledge based ?
- × What about critical thinking skills ?
- × What about techniques ?
- × What about technology ?
- × Straight exams ?
- × Projects ?
- × Papers ?

# SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

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- ✘ Allows student to prepare ahead of lecture
- ✘ What content will you cover at every lecture ?
- ✘ Can you follow through with this schedule ?
- ✘ Time commitment
- ✘ Does it accurately reflect the workload ?

# SCHEDULE OF EXAMS ETC.

- ✘ Again, allows student to assume control of learning
- ✘ Give students (and you) advance notice of what happens when
- ✘ Allows you to prepare your activities accordingly

# GRADING POLICY

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- × Needs to be very clearly defined
- × Once written into syllabus, do NOT change it
- × Think carefully about weight of every deliverable
- × Curve or no curve ?

# STUDENT ROLE IN CLASS

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- ✘ Good if you can define this
- ✘ What are some of your assumptions about the students ?
- ✘ How much work / time does this course require ?
- ✘ Make your expectations clear !
- ✘ Passive vs. active role
- ✘ Learner centered environment

# INSTRUCTOR ROLE

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- × Top down
- × Facilitator
- × Mentor
- × Combination

# OTHER STUFF

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- × Policy on academic dishonesty
- × Policy on attendance/ tardiness
- × Use of computers in class
- × Food and drink
- × Policy on cell phone usage
- × Expectations
- × Use of textbook

# QUESTIONS ?

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