



# MANAGING YOUR COURSES: BEYOND THE CONTENT

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## **SYLLABUS: ANALYZE BY ASKING YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS**

- What are your overall impressions about this syllabus?
- What are the expectations for the course? What is important to the instructor? How do you know?
- What is the homework? When are the assignments due?
- How many tests will there be? Where will the test questions come from?
- How will the grades be calculated?
- Does the professor invite you to contact him/her with questions?
- What are some things you think you probably shouldn't do in this class?
- What are the policies for this class? What is the attendance policy? Does the instructor allow late assignments and/or makeup work?

Make a semester chart of all course syllabi that condenses the following information onto one page. List the hardest class in first column and easiest class in last column.

Course				
Class Times				
Instructor				
Office Hours				
Final Grade Desired				
Exam Dates and % of Grade				
Assignment Dates and % of Grade				
Other				
Late/Makeup				
Extra Credit				
Attendance Policy				

### **GETTING TO KNOW THE INSTRUCTOR and OFFICE HOUR ETTIQUETTE**

It is important to get to know the instructor by visiting during office hours within the first two weeks of class. This is an important “tool” for success in the course before the time arises when you are too shy to ask questions in class or need help with the assignments and/or exam preparation. Come prepared with a few questions about the syllabus, recommended ways to study, and “tips” for success for the course. Don’t use office hours to kiss up to the instructor.

- Be sure you know what you want to cover before you go. Use a list.
- Greet the instructor and introduce yourself, stating your name and the course/section that you are in. Then, tell the instructor why you are there.
- If you are there to discuss a poor exam grade, do not begin the conversation by explaining that you always do well on other teacher’s tests and never on this teacher’s test. You are implicitly blaming the professor for your performance, and this is not the way to encourage the instructor to help you.
- Thank the instructor for his/her time.

### **QUESTIONS TO NEVER ASK THE INSTRUCTOR**

- Do I need the textbook?
- Do I need to read the textbook?
- Do I need to know this for the test?
- How do I get an “A” in this class?
- I missed class...did you do anything important? Or, I missed class...did I miss anything?
- Can I do extra credit (when the course syllabus clearly states no)?
- Are the grades done yet? (Never to be asked less than a week after the exam or assignment date. And, never ask the day of the final.)

### **BASIC TERMINOLOGY**

Credit Hours	The amount of academic credit awarded per course and the number of hours per week you are physically in each class.
Semester Hours	The amount of academic credit awarded per course and the number of hours per week you are physically in each class.
Syllabi	Documents of varying degrees of quality that map the course demands.
Syllabus	The singular form of the word syllabi and a guide to course.
Advisor	A faculty or administrative staff member who gives advice and a person you want to get to know during your college years.
Student Engagement	When students are actively involved in the learning process for a course and participating in course activities. Students may also be participating in extracurricular activities on campus.

Registration	Electronically entering your courses for the semester and receiving a fee payment invoice.
Faculty	Teachers, instructors, researchers, and those who profess knowledge.
Personal Responsibility	The concept of a student - being responsible for understanding all rules, regulations, and expectations...being responsible for him/herself.
Self-directed Learner	A student who can set goals and do what it takes to reach those goals, making corrections and adjustments as he or she progresses.
Probation	A period of time when you must prove you can make the grades to keep financial aid and to remain "academically eligible" to return to school.
Distance Education	An umbrella term used in referring to courses that use technology to drive instruction and one that can possibly be completed without setting foot on campus
Off-campus Courses	Classes taught in an auxiliary site, not on the main campus.
Blackboard	Computer program used to manage an on-line course.
Email Address	Campus generated address for school communication.

Works Cited:

"Anticipating and Planning for Courses." Academic Resource Center, Sweet Briar College, Sweet Briar, Virginia. 2005  
 Kilburn, Kerry S. "Dr. Mom's Guide to College." Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. 2005  
 Stedie-Larsen, Linda "Managing the Hidden Curriculum." Wingate University, Wingate, North Carolina. 2005