

Developing an Online Syllabus

Workshop Materials

Workshop Overview:

Welcome to the "Developing an Online Syllabus" workshop. In this workshop, you will learn critical items that should be included in every online syllabus as well as a design technique that provides students repeated access to consistent information. You will spend hands-on time exploring and critiquing online syllabi as well as discussing guidelines for online syllabus creation.

Workshop Objectives:

- Evaluate existing online syllabi (pgs. 2-5)
- List information categories an online syllabus should contain (pgs. 6)
- Discuss design issues including navigation and layout (page 7)
- Begin design of your own online syllabus (pgs. 8-9)

Guidelines for Comparison/Contrast

Site 1 - Mountain View College - Technical Writing (?)

<http://www.mvc.dcccd.edu/ArtScien/Engl/INSTRUCT/grimes/2311/SYLLABUS.HTM>

| Navigation | |
|---|--|
| Scrolling ■ Assess opening page and sampling of links. None, some, or too much? | |
| Download time ■ Assess opening page and a sampling of links for download time. Fast, medium, slow? | |
| Internal Linking ■ When following links, is it easy to return to the homepage or otherwise know where you are on the site? | |
| Layout | |
| Visual Effect ■ Simple (lots of white space, easy to read) or Busy (too much text, not sure where to focus) | |
| Colors ■ Effective color scheme? | |
| Fonts ■ Consistent fonts? Easy to read? | |
| Linked documents ■ Documents in universal file format (.pdf or .rtf or .html?) or specific (.doc)? | |
| Information | |
| Make a list of the information categories that are included. | |

Site 2 - Villa Julie College - Technical Writing
http://www3.vjc.edu/academics/faculty/julius_marilyn/eng212/

| Navigation | |
|---|--|
| Scrolling ■ Assess opening page and sampling of links. None, some, or too much? | |
| Download time ■ Assess opening page and a sampling of links for download time. Fast, medium, slow? | |
| Internal Linking ■ When following links, is it easy to return to the homepage or otherwise know where you are on the site? | |
| Layout | |
| Visual Effect ■ Simple (lots of white space, easy to read) or Busy (too much text, not sure where to focus) | |
| Colors ■ Effective color scheme? | |
| Fonts ■ Consistent fonts? Easy to read? | |
| Linked documents ■ Documents in universal file format (.pdf or .rtf or .html?) or specific (.doc)? | |
| Information | |
| Make a list of the information categories that are included. | |

Site 3 - Texas Tech University - Technical Writing
<http://english.ttu.edu/grad/AHanson/2309/syllabus.html>

| Navigation | |
|---|--|
| Scrolling ■ Assess opening page and sampling of links. None, some, or too much? | |
| Download time ■ Assess opening page and a sampling of links for download time. Fast, medium, slow? | |
| Internal Linking ■ When following links, is it easy to return to the homepage or otherwise know where you are on the site? | |
| Layout | |
| Visual Effect ■ Simple (lots of white space, easy to read) or Busy (too much text, not sure where to focus) | |
| Colors ■ Effective color scheme? | |
| Fonts ■ Consistent fonts? Easy to read? | |
| Linked documents ■ Documents in universal file format (.pdf or .rtf or .html?) or specific (.doc)? | |
| Information | |
| Make a list of the information categories that are included. | |

II. List information categories an online syllabus should contain.

- Turn back to the comparison/contrast sheets that you completed for the previous activity.
- From the Information section, compile an unduplicated list of information categories contained in the reviewed syllabi and write that list in the space below.
- Compare your list with one or more of the syllabus checklists found at the following URL's and fill in any missing information categories.

| | |
|--|---|
| Syllabus Checklist | Author unkown http://host.cvc4.org/bbdev/syllabus_checklist.htm |
| The Online Course Syllabus | Cabrillo College http://www.cabrillo.cc.ca.us/instruct/tlc/online/onlinesyll.html |
| Distance Education Syllabus Check List | Parkland Community College (?) http://online.parkland.cc.il.us/ofh/tools/syllabus.htm |

III. Discuss design issues including navigation and layout.

- Revisit the English syllabus from the Objective I activity that was most suited for the online environment.
- Visit one or two of the syllabi below as well.
- In the open space below, generate a list of important guidelines for the navigation and layout of an online syllabus.
- Working with a partner, narrow your lists by choosing your top 3.

Biology -

- Life Science - Georgia Middle Grades Math & Science Initiative
http://www.mgmsi.usg.edu/instruct/manual/courses/life_sci/syllabus/overview.htm
- Unknown
<http://www.butte.cc.ca.us/~jfourcro/biology/0course/syllabus.html>
- St. Louis Community College Meramec
http://www.stlcc.cc.mo.us/mc/dept/biology/biology_online.html

Mathematics -

- Athens Technical College - College Algebra
<http://www.athens.tec.ga.us/mat191web.html>
- Elgin Community College - College Algebra
<http://instruction.elgin.cc.il.us/classes/mth112/index.htm>

History -

- Midlands Technical College - American History
<http://classes.mid.tec.sc.us/his201i01/SYLLABUS.HTM>

- Don't say too much at once! Include lots of white space in your page design.
- Provide clear navigation structure (site map, navigation bar on each page, links to top, identifiers on pages).
- Use soft colors and choose complementary color scheme.
- Don't overuse images.
- Use appropriate extensions for files (.pdf or .html are best)
- Don't bury the important information.
- Don't overwhelm the homepage.

IV. Begin design of your own online syllabus.

Now that you have an understanding of the information to be included in an online syllabus as well as how that information can be designed, it is time to begin the planning or modification of your own syllabus.

- Using what you have learned from the activities this morning, begin your paper planning of your online syllabus.
- Begin by listing the information categories you plan to include.
- Then, sketch out your ideas for layout and navigation.

Information categories I plan to include in my online syllabus:

Sketch of layout and navigation for my online syllabus:

Resources

The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning at Brown University
http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/pubs/wkshpIndex.shtml

Constructing a Syllabus - same resource location as above
http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Sheridan_Center/pubs/syllabus.html

Tutorial on Creating an Online Syllabus - Towson University
<http://wwwnew.towson.edu/facultyonline/TutorialsAndResources/courseinformation/>

Organizing your Syllabus for Online Students - Univ. of San Diego
http://www.onlinelearning.net/InstructorCommunity/tips_dec2000.html?s=821.e020u635v.072x317e10

Syllabus Writing 101: A Template - Pennsylvania State University
<https://courses.worldcampus.psu.edu/public/atb3/syllabustemplate/syllabus.html>

Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, (Ch. 4) by Susan Ko and Steve Rossen

Ten Simple Steps to Creating an Online Syllabus - The Northeast Texas Network Consortium
<http://www.netnet.org/instructors/coursedev/webcourse/syllabus.htm>

Tips for an Effective Syllabus - Penn State
<http://tlt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/syllabus/>

Create your Web-Based Syllabus - University of Tennessee
<http://itc.utk.edu/itc/courses/webit232/>

Creating an Online Syllabus - University of North Florida
<http://www.jhargis.com/syl.htm>

The Online Course Syllabus - Cabrillo College
<http://www.cabrillo.cc.ca.us/instruct/tlc/online/onlinesyll.html>

Creating an Online Syllabus
http://host.cvc4.org/bbdev/online_syllabus.htm

Syllabus Checklist
http://host.cvc4.org/bbdev/syllabus_checklist.htm

Distance Education Syllabus Checklist - Parkland Community College
<http://online.parkland.cc.il.us/ofh/tools/syllabus.htm>